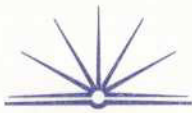


Elective 1: Transformations

How has the composer of the contemporary text used the earlier text to say something new?

The composer of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* are dead, Tom Stoppard, has made a lighter hearted and in depth look at the characters Rosen and Guil from Shakespeare's original, *Hamlet*. Stoppard chooses to focus on Hamlet's good friends Rosen and Guil to come to a conclusion about what they are about. The new thing he is portraying, from the original text to *Rosen and Guil*, is that there is more than meets the eye of these two weird and wonderful characters.

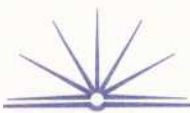
Hamlet is a love tragedy. It is full of death, betrayal, love and lust, and madness. However it does not probe into the lives of the two most unusual characters, Rosen and Guil. Through Tom Stoppard's contemporary text he asks the questions, who are Ros and Guil? What is their purpose? What do they want out of life? These questions are exactly how Stoppard.



uses the earlier text, Hamlet, to say something new.

When exploring the two lives of Ros and Guil a excellent example is their games of question and answer (or otherwise known as verbal tennis). In this game Ros and Guil shoot questions at the other, in which the receiver must answer in the form of a question. It can be asked - 'what is the point?'. The point is that the strange yet wonderful activities these two gentlemen take part in, is what answers the questions, which Stoppard uses to say something new.

It is not exactly what new thing Stoppard has said, through Ros and Guil are Dead, however it is the way in which he uses Hamlet to express it. Another example is the flipping of the coin. The fact that the coin lands heads time and time again, is not uncommon due to the fact that Ros and Guil are a part of it. It only adds another small chapter to the quirky lives of Ros and Guil.

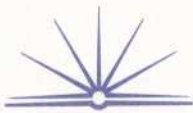


Stoppard also uses an indepth look into the lives and activities of the players to say something new. In Hamlet they are only used and seen for reacting the murder of King Hamlet. As Hamlet yells to Claudius "Frightened with false fire," he realises that Claudius is to blame for his fathers death. After this the players are seen to be singing and dancing with Hamlet. Joyous of their accomplishment. However when Stoppard delves deeper into the minds of the players he show another side of them.

Stoppard acquires the fact that they are only mere actors. This can be seen in the head players quote to Ros and Guil - "We play dead very well, thank you".

Stoppard enquires through Ros and Guil "How can you play dead if you have never experienced it?"

This itself says something new about who the players really think they are. Are they actors or are they're merely pretenders and liars. Another question is asked.



In conclusion it can be seen that by many means whether it be in depth search, looking for the truth or even finding the truth, Stoppard has said something new. Stoppard, the composer of the contemporary text 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead', has used the earlier text, Shakespeare's 'Hamlet', in many different ways and techniques to say something new.