

## Contemporary Literature

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So, we were on page 164 and we saw how Shakespeare himself all of a sudden, I mean we are not told that some of (include of) it is a student acting as Shakespeare or somebody playing Shakespeare. Shakespeare just arrives, Shakespeare just burst on the scene and he takes a bow and then he starts rattle of lines, original lines, authentic lines from Hamlet and something emerges some kind of a hotchpotch speech emerges. Again you can see what Tom Stoppard is doing, it is a very clever play on Shakespearean soliloquies and his language. Going down a bit, a castle battlement, thunder and wind, so you just imagine all those artificial sounds being created somewhere in the background, you know all those kinds of sounds which usually accompany a typical amateurish kind of a school play. Enter two guards, Bernardo Marcellus and Francisco Horatio. The guards are played by Abel and Baker respectively, their costume for a typical Shakespeare play except that they have short trousers, they have short trousers because they are just school boys.

So, they are typical Shakespeare, but so do you feel that there is some kind of a punning going on here also, dressed up like as if in a typical Shakespearean play, but in short trousers. Any comments on this? Well, the play itself is so abridged and it is so, it is no wonder that the boys are dressed in shorts. Guards on the platform, platform if you remember constructed by Evie, the only person who speaks the language. Bernardo, now these are again my please pay attention, this is actually the lines from Hamlet, there are no changes, it is not a, it is not as if he is parodying anything, it is these lines are in fact from Shakespeare, but heavily truncated, heavily abridged.

Bernardo, who is there? Francisco, nay answer me. Bernardo, long live the king, get thee to bed, for this relief much thanks. What has this thing appeared again tonight? The ghost of Hamlet's father. Peace break thee off, look where it comes again, looks it is not like the king, by heaven I charge these peak, points and looks left, it is here, points and looks right, it is there, it is gone, but look the morn in russet mantle clad, walks over the dew of yon high eastern hill, on but look a cut out sun shoots up over the stage, left screen and descends here. Let us impart what we have seen tonight, unto young Hamlet,

exant and seen, a room of state within the castle, a cut out crown hinges over stage left screen, flourish of trumpets, again those artificial sounds, enter Claudius and Gertrude, who is played by Mrs.

Dogg, Mr. Dogg's wife and then you have Claudius and they have just are. So, who is Claudius and who is Gertrude? You know Claudius is the uncle and Gertrude is Hamlet's mother. Claudius though yet of Hamlet are dear brothers dead, the memory be green, enter Hamlet who is played by fox major, no wonder, because he is the topper of that school, the star. So, naturally he gets the lead role, sometimes sister now a queen have we taken to wife, but now my cousin Hamlet and my son.

So, fine I will go on read on a bit more, a little more than kin and less than kind, exit Claudius and Gertrude, that this too too solid flesh would melt, again this is the very celebrated soliloquy from Hamlet, this too too solid flesh would melt, that it should come to this, but two months dead, two months my father has been there only for two months. So, loving to my mother frailty thy name is woman, I am sure all of you are familiar with this very famous line from Shakespeare, frailty thy name is woman, that means that inconsistency, women are of inconsistent nature, that is the idea, it is not physically frailty, frailty thy name is woman that weak in character, my father died dead only for two months and look at her, she married again. Married with mine uncle, my father's brother, the funeral baked meals did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables, again you know renowned lines from Hamlet, the for funeral you have a kind you know some kind of a lunch, some kind of a preparation, meal preparation and he says that the same food was served for the marriage, it is not like they were they actually did so, but it was so swift and so fast, you know there was not much of a gap between the two events, there should be a decent you know gap between a funeral and a marriage, but here it almost seemed as if in a straight from a funeral you have embarked upon a marriage. The crown hinges down, Horatio, Horatio is Hamlet's best friend rushes on, my lord I think I saw him yesterday night, the king, your father upon the platform where we watched, it is very strange, armed my lord, a countenance more in sorrow than in anger, my father spirits in arms, all is not well, would the night were come, the moon hinges up, exone to parapet and scene. The castle battlements at night, noise of carouse, cannon, fireworks, Horatio and Hamlet appear on platform built by easy, the king doth wake to night and take his rouse, though I am native here and to the manner born, it is a custom more honored in the breach than in the observance, wind noise, look my lord it comes, enter ghost above the wall built of blocks.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us, something is rotten in the state of Denmark, alas poor ghost, I am thy father's spirit, revenge his foul and most unnatural murder, murder, the serpent that did sting thy father's life, now where is his crown, oh my

prophetic soul, mine uncle, exit ghost to Horatio, there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, exit Horatio, here after I shall think me to put on an antique disposition, to put an antique disposition on, the time is out of joint, oh cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right. So, again celebrated lines from Shakespeare, but then abridged, truncated, what do you think now Stoppard is doing, one is that he is calling attention to himself, it is not easy to adapt Shakespeare, but if Stoppard is able to do this, that means that he is a genius in his own right. So, that could be one purpose, one very obvious purpose that it is extremely self referential and at is not at as if you know at any moment he lets us forget that we are indeed watching a play, all these artificial sounds, artificial sounds of set construction mentioning of you know easy and the platform built by easy and the crown hinges on and the sun sets and the sun rises, moon rises and all these things. So, these are artificially created effect and Stoppard never lets us forget that we are watching a play and a play not necessarily by Shakespeare by Stoppard. So, it is a play within play.

So, he is using all of Shakespearean devices, but to his own purpose. So, he at one level you can even say that he is being irreverential, it is not like you know it is like Shakespeare can be you know I can do this with Shakespeare, it is with that arrogance he approaches the most celebrated play by Shakespeare. So, Shakespeare shakes a room within, crown hinges up, flourish of trumpets leading into flute and harpist chord music, enter Polonius, Polonius is Ophelia's father, Ophelia is Hamlet's lady love, Ophelia rushes on, Ophelia is of course played by Charlie. So, Charlie is another school boy and of course, Charlie is going because it is an all boys school. Perhaps who else would play Polonius how now Ophelia what is the matter my lord as I was sewing in my chamber, lord Hamlet with his doublet all unbraced, no hat upon his head, tail as his shirt, his knees knocking each other and with a look so piteous he comes before me.

Mad for thy love I have found the very cause of Hamlet's lunacy, enter Hamlet exit of Ophelia. Look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading, what do you read my lord, words words words though this be madness yet there is method in it. I am but mad north north west when the wind is suddenly I know a hawk from a hands off, slams book shut and against Polonius's chest. The actors are come hither my lord exits, we will hear a play tomorrow. I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play have by the very cunning of the scene been struck at so to the soul that presently they have proclaim their malefactions.

I will have these players play something like the murder of my father before mine uncle if he but blanch I know my cause. The play is the thing wherein I will catch the conscience of the king. If you remember we did this when you were talking about meta theater. This is the scene where play within play where Hamlet tries to catch his uncle

red handed. Red handed in the in the in the sense that if he is indeed guilty then it will show.

He will he will an uncle will you know somehow get extremely nervous and perhaps that would be the proof of his guilt. So, play within play structure. So, wherein to be or not to be puts dagger pulled from his sleeve to heart and the Claudius and Ophelia. Now see these little stage directions to be or not to be what is it about? It is supposed to be one of the best existential lines. Hamlet is actually you know thinking about pondering over the nature of life to be or not to be to exist or not to exist and then because the entire soliloquy which cannot be compressed here.

So, he has just taken the best and the most well known the beginning of that soliloquy and then given these stage directions puts dagger pulled from his sleeve to heart mimicking suicide because that is that is the essence of to be or not to be whether it is better to suffer and live and suffer or just end one's misery by committing suicide. That is the essence of to be or not to be and it is a very lengthy soliloquy. Here just one sentence to be or not to be dagger and that is it, but the meaning is conveyed somehow. So, Stoppard is just again as I have been telling you that it is he is trying to tell us that you see I am Tom Stoppard and I can do this to Shakespeare. My lord get thee to a nunnery exit Ophelia and Hamlet.

Love his affections do not that way then there is something in his soul over which his melancholy sits on brood. He shall with speed to England exit Claudius and scene. A hall within the castle flourish of trumpet enter Hamlet and Ophelia Marcellus and Horatio joking Claudius and Gertrude puppet player appear above stage left screen Hamlet to puppet player. Speak the speech I pray you as I pronounced it to you trippingly on the tongue hold as it were the mirror up to nature. We did this particular section when you were doing meta theatre all set to where Hamlet or it could even be Shakespeare giving directions to actors.

How to act? How to pronounce? How to enunciate certain words? All set to watch puppet play mask music madam how like you the play the lady doth protest too much me thinks. He poisons him in the garden of his estate you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife Claudius rises the king rises music stops hubbub noise starts what righted with false fire exit Claudius all give over the play puppet disappear puppets disappear crown disappear Hamlet lights lights lights I will take the ghost word for a thousand pound pounds exant all except Polonius. Polonius he is going to his mother's closet behind the aris I will convey myself to bear the process and see the queen's apartment Polonius stands by stage right screen and hinges a curtain out from behind it lute music enter Hamlet and Gertrude. Now, mother what is the matter Hamlet

thou has thy father much offended mother you have my father much offended. So, this is Shakespeare's fund you offend your father she means Claudius and he says you offend my father he means elder Hamlet what will thou do thou will not murder me help help who Polonius behind the aris help how now a rat stabs Polonius that for a deuce at that Hamlet actually stabs Polonius because he is hiding behind the curtains thick curtains and assuming that it is his step father king Claudius hiding behind he murders Polonius that is the idea and having murder because now he realizes that he has actually murdered Ophelia's father who also happens to be the minister of the state.

Oh me what has thou done nay I know not alas he is mad I must be cruel only to be kind good night mother exit Hamlet dragging Polonius exit Gertrude sobbing aris hinges back and scene another room in the castle flourish of trumpets crown hinges up enter Claudius and Hamlet now Hamlet where is Polonius at supper Hamlet this deed must send the hence we will skip a bit we will come to now yet another room in the castle flourish of trumpets enter Claudius and Lertes Lertes is Polonius son. So, now, we have two sons seeking vengeance for their father's murder one is Hamlet and another is Lertes because Hamlet has accidentally killed Polonius Claudius dead enter Ophelia in mad trance singing and carrying a bouquet of flowers wrapped in cellophane and the with a red ribbon lute music we will skip and go to page 170. Oh he dry up my brains oh kind sister Ophelia falls to ground she catches a flower thrown from stage right screen. Hence thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge it could not move thus and when the where the offenses let the great acts fall. So, Claudius is now instigating Lertes to kill Hamlet because he says because of Hamlet your father died because of Hamlet your sister has gone mad.

So, there is all the more reason for you to have your revenge exit Claudius and Lertes Ophelia sits up to reach gravestone which she swings down to conceal her bell tolls four times and seen. So, we are told that now Ophelia is dead as well because she drowns herself in Shakespeare she drowns herself because she goes mad and here how does she die Ophelia sits up to reach gravestone. So, she sits and reaches touches a gravestone on stage which she swings down to conceal her. So, look at another very brushtian technique she is going behind a gravestone suggesting because you cannot in a school play naturally you cannot show a lake where Ophelia goes and drowns herself how do you do that. So, there is a gravestone and Ophelia goes behind that and that is that is suggest that she is dead.

A churchyard enter gravedigger and Hamlet I am sure you are familiar with the gravedigger scene where Hamlet finds the skull of Yorick Yorick happen to be his you know court jester Hamlet. We were two days at sea a pirate of very war like appointment gave us cheese in the grapple I boarded them on the instant they got clear of our ship. So,

I alone became their prisoner they have dealt with me like thieves of mercy I was abducted when I was going to England because in the last scene you remember Claudius say that you are off to England and here although we are not shown Rosencrantz and Guildenstern appear in Shakespeare at this moment they appear they are supposed to escort Shakespeare to England and you know help Claudius in assassinating Hamlet. However he turns the table on the his friends and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead by the hired assassins and Hamlet is abducted by you know by some pirates, but they release him. So, all this while when Ophelia went mad and she kills herself all this while Hamlet was not there that is the reason for you know he does not know anything.

So, what is he that builds a stronger than either the mason the shipwright or the carpenter a grave maker the houses he makes will last till doomsday grave digger gives skull to Hamlet this same skull skull this same skull sir was Yorick's skull the king's jester alas poor Yorick, but soft that is Lertus. So, you know you the famous Yorick speech there Hamlet I do not know how many of you are familiar with this very enduring image of Hamlet holding a skull in his hands most Hamlet posters you know they come with that that is you know an enduring image from Hamlet Hamlet holding this Yorick's skull in his hands and talking it is all about you know pondering over the issues of life death mortality and all. So, he says this is the man who used to play with me who he would make everybody laugh he was the court jester, but now he is dead and he has turned into skeleton and he holds his skull. What ceremony else lay her in the earth at the same time Lertus also comes to the grave yard and this time he is here to bury his sister Ophelia enter Claudius and Gertrude sorry Gertrude Hamlet what the fair Ophelia oh triple woe hold of the earth a while till I have caught her once more in my arms Hamlet reentering acting area what is he whose grief bears such an emphasis that is I Hamlet the Dane the devil take thy soul the grapple away thy hand Claudius and Gertrude pull them apart Hamlet Hamlet I loved Ophelia what will thou do for her oh he is mad Lertus exit Claudius Gertrude and Lertus a hall in the castle flourish of trumpets crown hinges up enter Hamlet there is a divinity that shapes are end rough you them how we will, but thou wouldest now think how ill all's here, but about my heart, but it is no matter we defy augury there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow if it be now it is not to come if it be not to come it will be now if it be not now yet it will come the readiness is all. Lattice enters with Osric bearing source followed by Claudius and Gertrude with goblet.

So, this is the final scene from Hamlet where and now see how quickly they have come to the end of Hamlet here come my lord oh one no judgment a hit a very palpable hit stay give me a drink Hamlet this pearl is thine here's to thy health drops pearl in goblet look the king has made all arrangement for Hamlets death. So, he not only has poisoned Lattice's sword. So, that even a minor cut would kill Hamlet because it is the sword is

poisoned, but he also in just assuming that in case Hamlet wins this sword play against Lattice. So, you know as a winner Hamlet has to take a drink from the king and then he poisons the drink as well. So, he is extremely well prepared to kill Hamlet give him the cup the queen caroses to thy fortune Hamlet Gertrude do not drink now mother says I drink to your health and she drinks the poison wine I will my lord my lord I will hit him now have at you now they grapple and fight part them their incense incense they bleed on both sides Osric and Claudius part them I am justly killed by my own treasury the drink the drink I am poisoned dies treachery seeks it out enter Fortinbras it is here Hamlet Hamlet thou art slain lo here I lie never to rise again the king the kings to blame the point and venom to then venom to thy work kills Claudius crown hinges down exchange forgiveness with me noble Hamlet I follow thee I cannot live to hear the news from England the rest is silence good night sweet prince and flights of angels sing to thy rest turns to face away from audience go bid the soldiers shoot four shorts heard from off stage all stand bow once and exit end.

This is how the play ends now again as we have been talking about how quickly the play begins and ends and everybody is happy although we doubt whether they understood it at all because they speak in which language dog language and this is Shakespeare is completely foreign to them do you think that Stoppard is also saying something here when he talks about you know when he abridges Shakespeare so mercilessly he cuts out all the you know philosophical and ruminative points from Shakespeare you see you we have done that article the essay by Freud Hamlet and Oedipus there is no mention of that particular passage where Hamlet you know rebukes his mother for bedding her own brother in law. So, there is a because that is the point which Freud highlights that Hamlet has a problem it is mother sex life. So, that that issue is never brought up because it is a school play after all you see and then all the soliloquies are chopped off then we also Fortinbras who is Fortinbras enters Fortinbras who Fortinbras who is he he is the one who eventually takes over the kingdom and peace is finally, restored in Denmark, but there is no absolutely no mention of Fortinbras throughout although he is also an minor yet important character of Hamlet no mention of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern no mention of or no description of Ophelia's madness. So, there is nothing however the audience seem to enjoy the play although they do not understand it at all the encore now they have actually enjoyed it a lot and there is an encore and encore signs appear above each screen. So, you just think brushed a signs appear on screen and again stop it nodding at brushed also.

Flourish of trumpets crown hinges up enter Claudius and Gertrude are sometimes sister now our queen enter Hamlet now see already he has truncated it, but now look again now there is an encore and what to do and we do not have time. So, look at the further abridgement of Hamlet Claudius are sometimes sister now our queen see they are dead,

but they are back you know it is a they have to they just they have just received thunderous adulation and applause enter Hamlet here have you taken two wives Hamlet that it should come to this exit Claudius and Gertrude wind noise moon hinges up enter Horatio my lord I saw him yesterday night the king your father angels and ministers of grace defenders exit running through rest of speech something is rotten in the state of Denmark enter ghost above I am thy father spirit the serpent that did sting thy father's life enter Hamlet above now where is his crown oh my prophetic soul here after I shall think me to put an antique disposition on moon hinges down exant look where sadly the poor wretch comes exit Polonius running enter Hamlet I have heard that guilty creature sitting at a play have by the very cunning of the scene been struck enter Claudius Gertrude Ophelia Marcellus and Horatio joking all sit to watch imaginary play puppets appear above screen if he but blanch I know my cause mask music Claudius rises the king rises give over the play exant all I will take the ghost word for a thousand pounds mother you have my father much offended Gertrude help Polonius help ho steps Polonius dead for a ducet dead Polonius falls dead off stage exit Gertrude and Hamlet short flourish of trumpets enter Claudius followed by Hamlet Hamlet this deed must send the hence exit Hamlet do it England exit Claudius enter Ophelia falls to ground rises and pulls grave stone to cover herself bells bell tolls twice enter grave digger and Hamlet a pirate gave us chase I alone became their prisoner takes a skull from grave digger alas poor Eoric but soft returns a skull to grave digger this is I Hamlet the Dane exit grave digger enter Lartus the devil take their soul they grapple they break enter Oseric between them with swords Claudius and Gertrude with goblets come on sir Lartus and Hamlet fight a hit a very palpable hit give him the cup Gertrude do not drink I am poison dies Hamlet thou art slain dies then venom to thy work kills Claudius crown hinges down the rest is silence dies two shorts off stage and they already have another rendering of the play. So, now, look at the structure of the play also compare it to the five act structure and look at dogs Hamlet's structure what do you think can you comment on that see earlier you have seen that a classically constructed play has five at least you know it can be divided into five parts the exposition the rising action climax falling action and the denouement now what happens here in dogs Hamlet do you find a structure yes you tell me the actors stand up to take their curtain call while this is going on easy walks on whistling now our friend easy who the only person who speaks English the way it should be spoken lifts lid from steps now he had come here to build step the stage and now the job is over. So, he is putting it folding the stage removes the cube and walks off with it the actors retired easy to audience cube now there is again a fun on the word cube cube is also a structure a part of the stage and cube is also in dogs language thanks. So, now, easy comes forward and thanks the audience and in their language dogs language to audience cube he walks out and here you know you will find when you read Kahoot! smack Beth easy appears again.

So, at this point we can anticipate what is going to happen in Kahoot! smack Beth however coming back to the structure part of it do you think the play has a beginning a middle and an end like a conventional play not really and that is what absurd is like Tom Stoppard try to tell us that you know life really does not have a structure. So, you do not have a structure. So, life is chaotic its order less and therefore, this kind of dramatic structure which is completely devoid of order. smack Excuse me you also look at futility of speech because the way easy now converts dogs language the way he started off this morning and by the end of the evening he is now speaking dogs language. So, futility of language futility of speech banality of everyday speech that impedes communication.

So, language itself as we have been talking about is just not enough to support communication. So, for people like Stoppard language is the ultimate anthropistic or useless force or because at one point he is also saying that although this audience the dog speakers they do not understand understand English, but they are able to admire hamlet for whatever reason they do not follow the language at all. So, language therefore, becomes absolutely banal absolutely useless because they are asking for an encore they are receiving it well they are receiving the play extremely well therefore, it suggest that language is after all not everything you can see that here that is dogs hamlet and what they do to Shakespeare. So, any questions at this point any observations on the wave the plays then apart from language part difficult to understand unless you have some background understanding of hamlet. It must have been extremely difficult for the actors absolutely yes to get familiar with that language itself must have been quite a task.

Yes and also notice the way easy convert at the end because it is also he is also like a child. So, you know you spend some time with the speakers of a particular language and it is a so called native language and perhaps you would learn it as well that is also stoppers supposition also consider the way these things were you these this play has was being rehearsed and enacted at one point we also see that the actors are rehearsing and speaking out the lines without emotions without really feeling the lines they do not have a feel for the language yet they are able to speak and they are able to memorize it is not their language they do not know what they are saying, but somehow they have memorized it so well that they are able to speak and actually do a play which is quite a task. Do you think Stoppard is also trying to tell us what has what has become of Shakespeare and his art in contemporary times? You know he has Shakespeare perhaps has become a cliché anybody can do Shakespeare that is the idea perhaps that is the premise anybody can do Shakespeare in any way they want to they do not really need to be really need to have that love for the language they do not have to be great actors they just have to memorize a couple of lines and the so Shakespeare perhaps has turned into some kind of a commodity especially in a land where he was born and he was revered so much. So, that could be you know Stoppard's commentary on his own people and also

you know most of the philosophical most of the reflective parts of Hamlet are just expurgated here they are just left out what we find woman marrying her husband's brother that idea is brought about girl falling in love with the prince and going mad and killing herself yes it is there then another son taking revenge on his father's murder Polonius' son Lartus and he is seeking revenge that is there and then at the end we find so many deaths so many dead bodies on stage. So, perhaps Shakespeare is more appreciated for the melodrama and less for his language perhaps that could be one idea, but again as we have been talking about the postmodern element postmodernist literature it could you know Stoppard does not really consider himself a postmodernist however you can see the traces it is an open ended play you can have multiple interpretation of the ending it does not provide for an easy closure right.

So, it could be anything and from yeah. Throughout this play we have about I think two or three instances where they fight in the wall that they are building falls down. Yeah. The wall may be a symbol of language or understanding of each other's language as such because every time or before the wall falls as such they seem to be moving towards understanding each other to a certain extent and then the wall falls and everything becomes chaotic all of a sudden again and then again they move towards it and again the wall falls I do not know. You know what is the origin of a theater of the absurd? We had done that two friends Abhay and Ronak they had talked about Commedia de alliaert remember that was an Italian farcical comedy lots of horse play lot of physical comedy happening then at the same time they were also the exponents of the theater of the absurd the early ones they were also influenced by the dadaists the surrealists and also the circus players the circus actors who would involve who would be involved in plenty of horse play and you know several different kinds of physical act also the silent films of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin who were you know totally slapstick.

So, that could be one reason. So, you know Stoppard again because Stoppard being a Britisher Charlie Chaplin also an Englishman. So, perhaps a homage paid to those comedians of yester years well comedy would arise from physical from slapstick acts. So, that could be one explanation for what is happening why are they at one point easy makes a mistake and then he himself goes and breaks through the wall that is also that is very chaplainess that is very bust you know in the tradition of the Marx brothers Buster Keaton and all. So, perhaps that could be one explanation to provide laughter for the audience. So, we will continue with Kahoot!'s Macbeth and meet on Thursday. Thank you.