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Reflections of Historiographic Metadrama in Tom Stoppard's
Travesties, Arcadia, Indian Ink and Invention of Love

MA Thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
PREFACE	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
ÖZET	vii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
I. 1. Defining Historiography and Historiographic Metadrama	1
I. 2. Development of Postmodernism	7
I. 3. Tom Stoppard as a Postmodern Playwright	9
II. THE SKEPTICISM OF POSTMODERNISM	11
II. 1. Lyotard and Disbelief toward the Past	12
II. 2. Michel Foucault and Subjectivity in History.....	13
II. 3. Jacques Derrida and Deconstruction.....	17
III. METADRAMA AND ITS DEVELOPMENT	20
IV. REFLECTIONS OF HISTORIOGRAPHIC METADRAMA IN STOPPARD'S PLAYS	26
IV. 1. The Meeting of Historical Figures in <i>Travesties</i>	26
IV. 2. In Search of the Past in <i>Invention of Love</i>	31

IV. 3. Shifting Perspectives in <i>Arcadia</i>	38
IV. 4. Chaotic Relations in <i>Indian Ink</i>	44
V. CONCLUSION	49
WORKS CITED	51
BIOGRAPHY	53

PREFACE

Tom Stoppard was born on 3 July 1937 in Zlin, Czechoslovakia, as the second son of Martha and Eugene Straussler. In his earliest years, he survived a succession of twentieth-century extremities. His family fled twice for their lives, initially, from the Nazis whose concentration camps brought death to some of his relatives. Secondly, they escaped from the Japanese who killed his father. Leaving his father behind, Stoppard had to go to India with his mother and brother, and stayed there until 1946. After his mother's marriage to Kenneth Stoppard, an English major in India, they moved to England. Having gone through so many disasters, Stoppard decided to leave school at seventeen, and work as a reporter in Bristol. During his career as a theatre critic, he started to write radio and television plays.

The year 1966 marked a turning point in Stoppard's life and career when he wrote and staged *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. His later works also created so much interest in England that he was knighted in 1997, becoming 'Sir Tom'. He also received the Order of Merit, which is rarely offered to an artist. Although his plays are occupied with postmodern elements, he rejects the "postmodern" label for his works. It is possible to suggest that after the 1970s, Stoppard's plays have been more involved with writing history or the remembered pasts of minor historical figures. While he successfully invites readers into dream-like settings, he also makes them become aware of the artificiality of both the fictional and the real world.

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ABSTRACT

With the emergence of postmodern theory, certainties about historical knowledge have been challenged in the second half of the twentieth century. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how postmodernism has contributed to contemporary drama by problematizing the narration of past events with the help of metadramatic techniques in Tom Stoppard's plays. His plays portray this difficulty by drawing attention to the constructedness of both history and fiction by depicting unreliable characters as narrators of the past.

Accordingly, the thesis first discusses the transformation of historiography and its reflections on historiographic metadrama. This part is followed by a brief survey of postmodernity together with its consequences in the world. Thus, it aims to display how certain opinions about the world have changed. In order to acknowledge these changes and their effects on contemporary drama, a general view of postmodernism is given together with major postmodern theorists. By using *Travesties*, *Invention of Love*, *Indian Ink* and *Arcadia* as primary texts, this thesis attempts to display the metadramatic elements that are applied in these texts. With the use of these metadramatic devices, this thesis also indicates that the reader's role in creating the text is significant.

By displaying the unreliable narrators as well as the intertextual allusions in these texts, this thesis aims to point out to the fictionality of the plays, and how they have become puzzle-like structures with the help of Tom Stoppard's creative intellect.

ÖZET

Yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında ortaya çıkan postmodern teori sayesinde tarihi bilgiler hakkında kesin görüşler reddedilmiştir. Bu tez Tom Stoppard'ın oyunlarında üst kurmaca tekniklerinin yardımıyla geçmişteki olayların anlatımını sorunlaştırarak, postmodernizmin günümüz tiyatrosuna nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu mercek altına alır. Onun oyunları bu zorluğu tarih ve kurmacanın düzenlenişine dikkat çekerek ve geçmişi aktaran güvenilir karakterler kullanarak tasvir eder.

Bu çerçevede, tezin giriş kısmında tarih yazmanın geçirdiği değişim ve bunun tarihsel dramaya yansımalarını irdeler. Bunu postmodern duruma genel bir bakış ve dünyadaki sonuçları izler. Böylece, dünyayla ilgili kesin fikirlerin nasıl değiştiğini göstermeyi amaçlar. Bu değişiklikleri ve günümüz tiyatrosuna olan etkilerini ortaya koymak için postmodernizmin genel görüşleri başlıca postmodern teorisyenlere değinerek verilir. Bu tez, başlıca metinler olarak *Travestiler*, *Aşkın İcadı*, *Hint Mürekkebi* ve *Arkadia*'yı kullanarak, bu metinlerde uygulanan üstkurmaca öğelerini ortaya koymayı amaçlar. Ayrıca bu tez, üstkurmaca öğelerini kullanarak okuyucunun metni yaratmadaki rolünün önemine işaret eder.

Bu metinlerdeki güvenilir anlatıcıları ve metinlerarası imaları göstererek, bu tez oyunların kurmacalığına ve Tom Stoppard'ın yaratıcı zekâsının yardımıyla nasıl bulmaca yapısına büründüklerine işaret eder.

I. INTRODUCTION

I. 1. Defining Historiography and Historiographic Metadrama

‘The past should be revisited with irony because it cannot really be destroyed and also its destruction leads to silence’ (Eco, qtd. in Hutcheon 1998: 90).

History is among the metanarratives of the Enlightenment Period that has been attacked by postmodernist thinkers in the second half of the twentieth century. The suspicious attitude of the postmodernists toward writing history stems from the fact that past events have been transformed by the historians. Thus, it has become difficult to reach the truth about the past. In Tom Stoppard’s plays, this difficulty is portrayed by drawing attention to the constructedness of history with the help of metadramatic techniques as well as by depicting unreliable characters as narrators of the past.

According to postmodernist thinkers, narrators of the past have generally presented history under the influence of people who held authority in their hands. In his essay “Historiography and Postmodernism”, F. R. Ankersmit observes that historiography has left “its traditional, self-legitimizing, theoretical jacket” aside together with the emergence of postmodern thought (Ankersmit 279). He believes that the objectivist assumptions of historical tradition have started to be questioned by postmodernists in order to draw attention to the fictionality of historical writing as well as the inability to reach the truth about the past (Ankersmit 279).

However, previous forms of historiography such as the Christian and modernist historiography have a belief in the truth that has been presented by the historians. In the introduction of his book, *The Politics of Historical Vision: Marx, Foucault, Habermas*,

Steven Best remarks that in Christian historiography, “truth” was found in biblical revelation (1). Thus, the historian’s role was to present the events according to the divine law. However, with the emergence of the Italian Renaissance, these basic notions of Christian historiography were refused. According to Steven Best, history had gained a scientific status by the nineteenth century. Thus, Best argues that modernist historians have tried to make laws by organizing the facts that they have found (Best 2). Moreover, he notes that unlike the Christian tradition that acted according to religious doctrines, modernist historians believed that they could form their own history by making scientific researches (Best 1). For this reason, Best thinks that modernist historians aimed to examine the causes and the consequences of human actions so that they can lead people to live in a more secure world than it is now (Best 1).

Moreover, Best maintains that by reconstructing history in an objective way, modernist historians have paid attention to narrating events as they have actually occurred. In order to be liberated from dogmatic and superstitious thoughts, these modernist historians believed in the significance of rationality (Best 3). Thus, these historians aimed to prevent any false representations. However, according to Best, after the chaotic events that have taken place in the twentieth century, these modernist assumptions to solve everything with the help of science have been undermined by the postmodernists. Best concludes that contrary to the modernist hope to follow a route that would lead people toward progression, postmodernists have maintained a skeptical world view (Best 3).

What postmodernists, such as Lyotard and Foucault, aim to do is to undermine the truth claim of history. Thus, rather than depending on historical details in order to show people what happened in the past, these postmodernist theorists challenge the claim to present the hidden reality. They assume that nothing can prevent a biased interpretation of the past by the historians. According to these postmodernists, who assume that it is impossible to prevent subjective interpretation, “[e]vidence is not a magnifying glass through which we can study the past” (Ankersmit 287). With the belief that evidence about the past can only make us question about past events, postmodernists attempt to present different

interpretations of historical documents than the previous ones. They believe that this can be possible only if the traditional accounts of the past are questioned (Best 2).

For this reason, Ankersmit remarks that postmodern historiography challenges the “stabilized” modernist form of history. In other words, it aims to “pull the carpet out from under the feet of science and modernism” (Ankersmit 283). In order to accomplish this task, postmodern historiography presents the historical interpretations of the past, and compares them with the current ones (Ankersmit 283). Thus, postmodern historiography tries to prove that “scientific language is no longer a “mirror of nature” but just [...] a part of the inventory of reality” (Ankersmit 284). According to postmodern historiography, both literary texts and historiography have the capacity to “draw attention to a fictitious or historical reality behind the text” (Ankersmit 286). That is, the language of the writer or the historian can change the nature of the past by imposing their own points of view onto their works.

Thus, it is possible to posit that the postmodernist view of history does not aim to achieve a stable representation of the past. On the contrary, it tries to reach the “historical scraps” that have not been presented before (Ankersmit 291). Furthermore, it does not claim to lead people towards “truth” like the previous forms of historiography (Ankersmit 293). Its only aim is to make people think about the past since according to Ankersmit it has become nearly impossible to know what exactly happened in the past: “[h]istory is no longer the reconstruction of what has happened to us in the various phases of our lives, but a continuous playing with the memory of this” (Ankersmit 293). Thus, it is possible to suggest that postmodern historiography enables the construction of multiple histories as well as new interpretations of the past not only in writing history but also in literary texts such as historiographic metadrama.

Historiographic metadrama, as the dramatic counterpart to historiographic metafiction, is a term coined by Linda Hutcheon in the 1980s. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History,*

Theory, Fiction, Hutcheon defines it as a postmodernist type of fiction which is ‘intensely self-reflexive and yet also lays claim to historical events and personages (5). Since this postmodern literary genre brings history, literature, and theory together, it differs from other kinds of fiction such as historical novels, non-fictional or metafictional novels.

According to Hutcheon, the aim of historiographic metafiction by incorporating these different domains and dealing with past events in an ironic way is to teach that “both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past” (Hutcheon 1988: 89). Thus, this postmodern historical practice undermines dominant historiographical assumptions and practice in order to question past events by using historical codes and techniques. As Hutcheon says:

Historiographic metafiction [...] refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both by questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity. (Hutcheon 1988: 93)

Hutcheon goes on to explain that in order to draw attention to the constructedness of history and make the readers question about the objectivity or reliability of the past events, historiographic metafiction deliberately falsifies the records of the past by using historical techniques (Hutcheon 1988: 114).

Likewise, Wenche Ommundsen remarks in *Metafictions? Reflexivity in Contemporary Texts* that historiographic metafiction differs from other conventional writings of history with its suspicious attitude toward past events. That is, historiographic metafiction claims that both history and fiction are human constructs. For this reason, Ommundsen remarks that writers of historiographic metafiction aim to make the reader question about the constructedness of both history and fiction:

Contemporary historiographic metafiction [...] flaunts its violation of ontological boundaries and its anachronistic treatment of the past, calling attention to itself as an imaginary construct, but by so doing questioning the validity of the versions of history we are accustomed to regard as factual. (Ommundsen 52)

In accordance with the claim that both history and fiction are linguistic constructs, historiographic metafiction does not have a claim to present an objective truth. According to Hutcheon, although historiographic metafiction is the “rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past”, its suspicious attitude toward past events does not enable the representation of truth or reality (Hutcheon 1988: 5). Thus, it is possible to say that by drawing attention to the constructedness of reality and knowledge, historiographic metafiction does not aim to enlighten the past history. However, historical novels “not only identify in the past the causes of what came later, but also trace the process through which those causes began slowly to produce their effects” (Hutcheon 1988: 113).

This difference between historiographic metafiction from historical novels indicates the former’s link with the paradox of postmodernism. According to Hutcheon, “the postmodern reinstalls historical contexts as significant and even determining, but in so doing, it problematizes the entire notion of historical knowledge” (Hutcheon 1988: 89). For this reason, it is possible to say that postmodernism as well as postmodern works do not attach importance to the accuracy of the historical details.

It is in this way that postmodernists draw readers’ attention to the verifiability of history or knowledge in general. This paradoxical form of historiographic metafiction is linked with the fact that it makes use of historiographical expectations. In this way, it becomes possible to present the constructed nature of historiographical conventions. This indicates why postmodernist writers try to present the ideological and arbitrary nature of historiographic conventions and make the reader question the ideological force behind these past events.

By placing the postmodern historical sense “outside associations of Enlightenment progress or development, idealist/Hegelian world-historical process, or essentialized Marxist notions of history”, Hutcheon remarks that “postmodernism returns to confront the problematic nature of the past as an object of knowledge for us in the present” (Hutcheon 1988: 92). For this reason, historiographic metafiction, questions dominant discourses and undermines the claim of objective representation:

In the postmodern writing of history, there is a deliberate contamination of the historical with didactic and situational discursive elements, thereby challenging the implied assumptions of historical statements: objectivity, neutrality, impersonality, and transparency of representation. (Hutcheon 1988: 92)

This problematizing nature of postmodernism is what makes the reader struggle to reach the truth. According to this postmodern thought, it is impossible to have single, essentialized, transcendent concept of “genuine historicity” (Hutcheon 1988: 89). This characteristic of postmodernism places itself in the opposite direction of modernist thought. Hutcheon highlights this distinction between them by stating that while history is modernism’s “nightmare”, postmodernism faces history (Hutcheon 1988: 88). Thus, the presence of the past is an important concept in postmodernism and in historiographic metafiction since both have a critical approach toward past events.

¹ Linda Hutcheon’s *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* will be hereafter cited as *A Poetics*.

I. 2. Development of Postmodernism

Postmodernism has become a widely used term in the second half of the twentieth century, signifying a set of developments in architecture, critical theory, philosophy, art, literature and culture. In *A Primer of Postmodernism*, Stanley Grenz remarks that these developments have not only produced an anxiety but also an excitement among critics. While some of them regard postmodernism as a cultural chaos, others approve of its pluralistic style that brings different ideologies, beliefs, and personal identities together (21 Grenz). This contemporary thought is also regarded as radical since it questions every belief, ideology or concept in Western society that has been admitted as real, accurate and reliable since the Enlightenment Age (Grenz 13).

Thus, Grenz notes that in order to describe the new global age of Western culture, Arnold Toynbee coined the term postmodern in the early 1950s (Grenz 16). According to Toynbee, it is as a result of globalization that has enabled us to recognize the totalizing and rationalistic world view of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment tradition (Grenz 16). In trying to define this new situation called “postmodernity”, modernist attempts to explain everything in the world with the help of reason, logic, and science has come to an end together with the breakdown of the Enlightenment thought. Thus, Grenz observes that instead of this rationalistic world view, a skeptical attitude toward people and events has emerged with postmodernism (Grenz 14).

This historical transformation has led Jean Francois Lyotard to define the postmodern condition as “incredulity toward meta-narratives” in the introduction of *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (xxiv). According to Lyotard, all systems of knowledge as well as science have been supported by a meta-narrative since the Enlightenment age (xxiii). He states that these metanarratives or stories refer to a particular belief or practice of a culture (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). That is to say, every belief, system, or ideology has its own grand narrative. However, Lyotard thinks that these metanarratives

only serve for the dominant ideology in society, and what he aims to do is to challenge the reliability of these stories (Lyotard 1984: xxv). Lyotard observes that we live in an era in which master narratives are in crisis, and the availability of certain knowledge is impossible. This questioning of knowledge stems from the postmodern disbelief for the future (Lyotard 1984: 3). For this reason, it is possible to say that postmodernism faces history and deals with past events while modernism, its contemporary rival, has a completely hostile attitude toward history. Thus, it is possible to posit that with the belief that there can be no universal values to form a stable society, postmodernism questions the metanarratives such as Christianity and Marxism. According to Lyotard, all of these grandnarratives are totalising theories or ideologies that deny pluralism (Lyotard 1984:3). Thus, it is possible to say that the skeptical postmodern attitude toward these universal values or dominant ideologies has caused the downfall of these grand narratives.

In *The Truth about the Truth: De-confusing and Re-constructing the Postmodern World*, Walter Truett Anderson defines a grandnarrative as “a *story* of mythic proportions, a story big enough and meaningful enough to pull together philosophy and research and politics and art, relate them to one another, and—above all—give them a unifying sense of direction” (Anderson 4). According to Anderson, postmodernists have caused the collapse of these grand narratives by questioning “not so much *what* we believe” but rather “*how* we believe” (Anderson 2). Moreover, he observes that postmodernity has changed and will continue to change human history by “rebuilding all the foundations of civilization” (Anderson 7). He suggests that the effect of the postmodern era on people’s previous beliefs about life is significant:

[Postmodernity is] a time of rethinking and rebuilding in which beliefs about belief are shaken as never before, a time in which issues once left to the philosophers—such as the nature of truth—become matters of vital everyday importance to ordinary people. When you think about your personal beliefs and values, when you make decisions about your religious life, when you worry about whether or not to conform to the customs of your society or community—even when you consult your most fundamental sense of who and what you are—you are taking an active part in this transition. (Anderson 3)

I. 3. Tom Stoppard as a Postmodernist Playwright

Since the 1960s, Tom Stoppard has written plays for radio and for the stage that involved various subjects and styles. However, it is possible to suggest that after the 1970s, his plays reflect how the remembered past can be narrated in a problematic way. Thus, it is possible to see postmodern issues while dealing with past events reflected in the historical characters and settings in his plays *Travesties* (1974), *Invention of Love* (1997), *Invention of Love* (1997) and *Arcadia* (1993). Throughout these plays, Stoppard maintains self-reflexive or metadramatic elements in order to point out how historical events can be narrated by unreliable characters. He is like a creative historian who reconstructs past events in an entertaining way. In his plays, he offers a different conception of history and fiction by claiming that all knowledge of the past is derived from representations. For this reason, it is possible to see postmodern topics such as fictionality of history, blurring of past and present, and questioning of grand narratives like history and time. By means of these self-reflexive elements, Stoppard aims to involve the audience in intellectual activity.

By indicating the gap between representation and reality, Stoppard aims to make the reader aware that we can only know reality through discourse. He seems to agree with the poststructuralist view that reality is a human construct. For this reason, he highlights the power of representation to determine our perceptions of reality. By delving into the past, Stoppard does not aim to fill in the gaps in the past. Instead, he asks for the reader to accomplish this task. Although he seems to stand against postmodernism, his narrative strategies share similarities with postmodern fiction. In all of his plays, it is possible to come across metadramatic techniques with strong doses of irony.

Rather than confirming truth in traditional history, Stoppard's plays question all truth construction by engaging the reader in the creation of the text. In the plays that I analyze, it is possible to see self-reflexive elements used in order to draw attention to the

constructedness of past events. Thus, throughout the plays, the reader is constantly made aware that the past is constructed by both the reader and the writer.

For instance, in *Travesties*, Stoppard presents an imaginary relationship between novelist James Joyce, Russian revolutionary Lenin, and Dadaist poet Tristan Tzara during the time of the First World War. By gathering these fictional and historical characters in a library in Zurich in 1917, Stoppard aims to violate boundaries between reality and fiction. In *Arcadia*, Stoppard chooses the Victorian age as his subject. The play takes place both in 1809 and in present time in Sidley Park where the narrators try to research the events that took place in the past. Stoppard relates the difficulty and inaccuracy of historical details by employing more than one narrator. These narrators who act as researchers also appear in *Indian Ink*, where they are presented together with their misleading opinions and statements. Likewise, in *Invention of Love*, Stoppard aims to display how subjective narration of past events can be. In dealing with historical events and past experiences, Stoppard generally depicts characters that have difficulty in narrating past events.

In Stoppard's plays, it is possible to see self-reflexive elements used in order to draw attention to the constructedness of past events. Rather than confirming truth in archive and story like traditional history, Stoppard's plays question all truth construction by engaging the reader in its creation. The reader is constantly aware that the past is constructed by both the reader and the writer. Thus, in Stoppard's historiographic metadrama, it is possible to say that there is no closure that aims to present a moral meaning to the audience.

II. THE SKEPTICISM OF POSTMODERNISM

In *A Primer on Postmodernism*, Stanley J. Grenz observes that the disbelief of postmodernists toward reaching a unified world is a distinctive feature that distinguishes them from modernists. He argues that postmodernists reject the construction of a single correct worldview since their aim is to give voice to several views (Grenz 39). Thus, postmodernists declare the end of the modernist view which assumes that it is possible to make order in this chaotic world with the help of reason. Contrary to the modernists who suggest that it is possible to grasp reality as a whole, postmodernists deny such a possibility (Grenz 41). They argue that we construct the world since it is not something out there. For this reason, they are against any objective view that points to the reality outside.

With the belief that there are many cultures in the world, postmodernists have aimed to relate the beliefs and worldviews of the silenced people as well. Grenz goes on to say that the pluralistic attitude of postmodernists has subverted the Enlightenment vision which gave priority to the dominant groups of people (Grenz 42). As a result of globalization, different ethnics have found the chance to present their own stories about the world.

In *Teaching the Postmodern: Fiction and Theory*, Brenda K. Marshall argues that we can no longer believe in the absolute and unquestionable facts of history. She explores the idea that it has become difficult to see the past as constituted by events that can be represented through language (Marshall 147). For this reason, Marshall emphasizes that rather than speaking of History, we can now speak of histories (147). In other words, it is possible to say that little or local narratives which do not claim to present universal concepts of the Enlightenment Period have come to the fore.

II. 1. Lyotard and Disbelief Toward the Past

In *Postmodern Literature*, Ian Gregson refers to Lyotard who declares that one of the significant historical events of the twentieth century is the Nazi murder of the Jews'. Gregson notes that according to Lyotard, the Holocaust is the symbol of the failure of the Enlightenment project (1). Auschwitz which witnessed the mass destruction of millions of people in the camps by the Nazis is the most dreadful event of the twentieth century according to Lyotard (Gregson 1). He highlights that this barbarian genocide has had a greater effect than the First and Second World Wars, since it has totally destroyed the beliefs in the universal rights of humanity (Gregson 1).

After this devastating event, it is possible to say that the humanistic view of the Enlightenment period has completely lost its validity. Since the modernist belief in rationality and progress in a civilization failed as a result of these awful historical events, postmodernists like Lyotard have formed a hostile attitude toward the social authority that was responsible for these troubles. The Holocaust has so much affected Lyotard that In *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, he likens this devastating event to a disastrous earthquake:

Suppose that an earthquake destroys not only lives, buildings, and objects but also the instruments used to measure earthquakes directly and indirectly. The impossibility of quantitatively measuring it does not prohibit, but rather inspires in the minds of the survivors the idea of a very great seismic force. The scholar claims to know nothing about it, but the common person has a complex feeling, the one aroused by the negative presentation of the indeterminate. (Lyotard 1988: 56)

The extermination camps have been significant for Lyotard because he has lost his belief in the reliability of history. According to him, the gas chambers are the only proof that can make him believe such a massacre (Lyotard 1988: 3). In order to have some knowledge about this past event and form an opinion about it, he thinks it is necessary to have the

report of a witness. However, there is no eye witness since they have all died in these extermination camps (Lyotard 1988: 4). This situation leads Lyotard and other postmodernists to a state of skepticism that makes them approach knowledge about the past with doubts in their minds. When faced with such a horror, it is impossible to assume that the world can keep on its progression toward a utopia.

To sum up, according to Lyotard Auschwitz signifies the end of modernity as well as the totalizing view of Western society. Together with the death of the Jews, the universalist thought that aimed to lead people toward a peaceful world has come to an end (Lyotard 1988: 88). Despite the increasing knowledge, the belief in rational human progress has been destroyed as a result of this Holocaust. For this reason, it is possible to posit that contemporary theorists do not have a nostalgic attitude toward the past. On the contrary, they aim to question what has been taught us as the true reality about the past.

II. 2. Michel Foucault and Subjectivity in History

When we talk about the postmodern questioning of historical knowledge, we see that Michel Foucault can be placed among postmodern thinkers who reject any totalizing view and criticize the Enlightenment notion that tried to explain everything in relation to the "master-narratives". According to Foucault, history is a master narrative that calls for suspicion of its interpretive nature. His view is in parallel with the postmodern thought that claims the past to be only available to us through various texts or discourses unlike the traditional form of history that privileges certain people or events.

In *Teaching the Postmodern: Fiction and Theory*, Brenda K. Marshall observes that according to Foucault history has been under the dominance of a Western white male perspective (148). According to his view, it is necessary to present the view of the marginalized people that have been previously silenced by the dominant white society (Marshall 149). Thinking that historical records have been narrated under the pressure of

religious or political authorities, Foucault highlights the fact that historians have privileged the male views, especially of the whites, while narrating past events (Marshall 149). According to him, the search for knowledge has created this situation because of the desire for power and dominance (Marshall 148).

In his essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, Foucault rejects traditional history for its claim to have a comprehensive view of history. His opposition stems also from its claim to the development and presentation of knowledge (Foucault 124). According to Foucault’s view, ‘knowledge, even under the banner of history, does not depend on “rediscovery”’ (124). He argues that history should bring discontinuity and refrain from stable views. Thus, he offers a new kind of history called “effective” history. Unlike the traditional history, his effective history involves "a differential knowledge of energies and failings, heights and degenerations, poisons and antidotes" (Foucault 126). By looking at the events from an alienated view, he thinks it would be possible to prevent identification with the dominant views of the society. His aim is to reveal the historical and political forces that have been masked under the disguise of objectivity and rationality:

Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal the grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy -- the unavoidable obstacles of their passion (Foucault 126).

In *The Politics of Historical Vision: Marx, Foucault, Habermas*, Steven Best notes that Foucault adopts an individualist vision of a person free from all social norms (88). Since Foucault denies progressive tendencies in history, he defends "the proliferation of unreconciled differences, the aesthetic transformation of the self, and a rupture with the trajectories of Western history" (Best 88). It is possible to say that Foucault is against all the conventional assumptions concerning the Enlightenment. For this reason, he breaks with the universalist, foundationalist, dialectical, and normative standpoints that are linked with Enlightenment thought (88). Instead of the universals such as Reason, History, Truth, or Right, he prefers a plurality of specific socio-historical forms. These forms do not claim

clarity, consistency, comprehensiveness, objectivity and truth like the traditional form of history (Best 88).

In *Archival Reflections*, Santiago Juan-Navarro states that the aim of Foucault is to disclose the mediation inherent in the textualization of the past (47). For this reason, he rejects the positivist search for universal laws of history, and prevents the forming of a global theory of history. Moreover, Foucault argues that these empiricist historians, who were traditionally represented as truth seekers, are, in fact, in search of knowledge, not truth (Navarro 48). According to Foucault, knowledge is a source of power that only serves the purposes of the people who hold authority in their hands:

Historical writing is a practice that has effects, and these effects tend, whatever one's political party, to erase the difference of the past and justify a certain version of the present (Foucault, qtd in Navarro 48).

Thus, according to Currie's *Metafiction*, Foucault's disbelief in an objective truth leads him to claim that traditional history is written by people who shape it according to their own thoughts. Moreover, he asserts that those historians have rearranged past events in order to produce a stable and centered narrative (Currie 1995: 13). However, these historians, in fact, have created a "structure of exclusion" that only consists of the narratives of the white males (Currie 1995: 12). Foucault is against this kind of narrative which tries to efface the "multiplicity of force relations" in order to preserve the sovereignty of the white (Currie 1995: 13). For this reason, he opposes the rules of traditional history, and privileges the local discourse in order to rediscover "the histories of the forgotten areas of thought [and] of the people excluded by traditional histories" (Currie 1995: 12).

As Navarro observes, Foucault proposes the writing of "fragmentary narratives (microhistories) that focus on differences rather than on continuities" (Navarro 48). Since

subjectivity cannot be prevented when narrating the past events, Marshall remarks that contemporary histories as well as postmodern literature aim to "decenter the present subject from the position of knowledge and meaning", replacing this subject who is confident of him/herself, with the ex-centric or previously silenced people such as women, gays and people of color (Marshall 148).

In his essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", Foucault also remarks that his effective history differs from the traditional history in content. While the latter is concerned with "the noblest periods, the highest forms, the most abstract ideas, the purest individualities", Foucault's effective history does not include this discriminating attitude toward people and events (Foucault 125). On the contrary, this new vision of history involves "periods of decadence" in order to find "a barbarous and shameful confusion" in history (Foucault 125). Since Foucault's effective history aims to present various perspectives so as to disclose the differences that have been hidden until now, it is possible to posit that it does not pretend to be objective.

According to Navarro, rather than looking at events from a distance, effective history studies what is closest, differing in the way they approach causality between the past and the present (Navarro 48). Navarro maintains that while traditional history claims that there is causality between the past and the present; in Foucault's effective history such causality is impossible (Navarro 48). For this reason, according to Marshall, Foucault offers to look at events in the past from the perspective of that particular past, that is, "within its own particular discursive formation" (Marshall 149). In addition, Best declares that Foucault's effective history does not try to lead to the present; on the contrary, it examines only the particular event. Its aim is to "recover the importance of the 'event', of points of historical specificity and rupture" (Best 87). Thus, Foucault rejects idealist theories that see history as the development of thought or the expression of universal essences, as Best notes unlike the traditional history, Foucault's effective history does not seek authority or laws, in parallel to postmodernists in every discipline (Best 87).

II. 3. Jacques Derrida and Deconstruction

According to Ian Gregson, in forming a strategy to deal with language, Jacques Derrida has initially been a follower of structuralism. Gregson notes that structuralism is a movement that started about 1958 and reached its highest point in the late 1960's and early 1970's with its analysis of language, culture and society (Gregson 2). As it can be inferred from its name, Gregson observes that structuralism deals with language in a scientific way and approaches a literary text regarding the structure of it rather than the development of characters or the way of expression in the text (Gregson 3). According to this movement, language depends on a system of differences, and it is indebted in its innovation and popularity to Ferdinand de Saussure and his works on linguistics (Gregson 3).

In *Metafictions? Reflexivity in Contemporary Texts*, Ommundsen remarks that Saussure has "divided the linguistic sign into *signifier* (its written or spoken form) and *signified* (concept represented by the signifier), insisting that the relationship between the two is a purely arbitrary, conventional one" (23). According to structuralism, Ommundsen indicates that it is impossible to relate reality using these literary signs individually (Ommundsen 23). According to Saussure's analysis, these signs can only constitute meaning if they are together in a larger structure; then, it might be possible to understand the world within this structure (Ommundsen 24).

In his book *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, Christopher Butler observes that influenced by Saussure's theory, Derrida has developed his own linguistic strategy called deconstruction. However, to define deconstruction is, above everything, contrary to its nature according to Butler (16). Butler observes that like the postmodernists, deconstructionists are reluctant to make final or true definitions. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that according to deconstructionists, "all language systems are inherently unreliable constructs" (Butler 17). Taking this view into consideration, it is possible to posit that

Derrida and his followers present their disbelief in the accurate description of the world. For this reason, they approach language with suspicion.

In *Postmodern Literature*, Ian Gregson indicates this similarity between Saussure's ideas and the postmodernists since they both emphasize the distance between language and the real world. Gregson argues that, according to Saussure, 'language is an artificial construct' (3), and he thinks language is unable to narrate reality. Similarly, Gregson remarks that the postmodernists deliberately problematize the access to reality by using literary signs or codes in their texts (Gregson 4). According to Gregson, they claim that whatever is presented as real is, in fact, unreal. Moreover, he claims that it is impossible to know or approach reality through language. Thus, they become suspicious of everything that seems true. Their focus is, especially, on issues of representation in order to prove "how the real is constructed through language, how it is everywhere transformed into textuality, and how what appears literal is in fact metaphorical" (Gregson 7). Thus, taking Gregson's view into consideration, it can be said that the postmodern disbelief about the representation of reality starts with language, and this skepticism forms the basis of postmodern theory.

Ommundsen also notes that according to deconstructionists language systems are unreliable, and they assume that it is impossible to have the whole truth (24). For this reason, Ommundsen says that deconstructionists attack the text and its supposed reality, and then construct it again using the same elements (Ommundsen 24). Since truth differs because of diverse views of subjects, Ommundsen remarks that deconstructionists avoid making generalizations. Ommundsen relates this idea by explaining that the deconstructionists do not try to reach a stable meaning in the text:

Deconstructionist criticism, which is based on Derrida's theorising, *does* concern itself with the nature of textual meaning, but meaning as plural and unstable, always escaping any attempt to pin it down or to locate a stable referent outside the text. Deconstructing the text generally means showing how the text deconstructs itself, how it undermines its own claims to coherence and intelligibility. (Ommundsen 24)

Mark Currie, in *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, also remarks that deconstructionists refuse to reach a final truth because their aim is to find out the contradictions that are present in the narratives, not the single truth (40). He also points to the fact that deconstructionists bring historical facts also under suspicion and question their reliability. Currie says they try to understand how cultural concepts have changed over time, and try to find out the contradictions that the author includes in his work (Currie 1998: 42).

III. METADRAMA AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Metadrama is used as a dramatic counterpart to metafiction which has dominated the world of fiction for about twenty years. The term, metafiction, was coined by William H. Gass who is a critic and a novelist. In her book called *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, Patricia Waugh defines it as "a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Waugh 2).

Thus, it is possible to suggest that metafiction not only criticizes its own way of construction as a literary text but also the uncertainty that occurs when fiction and reality come together in the same text. In addition to her remark that the practice of metafiction is "inherent in *all* novels" (Waugh 5), Waugh claims that not only fiction but also other forms of writings, like memoirs or journals, are also self-reflexive, in other words, self-conscious. The most important thing about metafiction Waugh says is that it aims to make the readers realize how they "play" in real life (Waugh 35). Thus, they become aware of the constructedness of the meanings and the values that have been unchallenged up to now.

In *A Poetics*, Hutcheon states that self-reflexivity plays an important role in postmodern writing of the past because historiographic metafiction self-reflexively write about the process of historical construction. Thus, these texts aim to present the motivations that lead to this construction:

This self-reflexivity does not weaken, but on the contrary, strengthens and points to the direct level of historical engagement and reference of the text. [...] [T]his provisionality and uncertainty (and the wilful and overt construction of meaning too) ... define the new postmodern seriousness that acknowledges the limits and powers of reporting or writing the past, recent or remote. (Hutcheon 1988: 117)

Similarly, Wenche Ommundsen remarks in *Metafictions? Reflexivity in Contemporary Texts* that by presenting its own artificiality, metafiction indicates that it is not 'a reflection of real things' (3). She furthers her statement by noting that the aim of metafiction is to make the reader become aware that they are not in the illusionary world of the realist text. On the contrary, according to Ommundsen, metafiction tries to break the mimetic illusion with the claim that mimesis is used in realist texts:

All fiction employs linguistic and literary conventions in order to produce particular effects and illusions. In the realist text, mimetic faith has become *bad* faith: The text pretends to be what it is not and the reader is all too willing to go along with the deceit. According to Boyd, 'the motive for mimesis is to conceal from us the mediated, secondhand quality of our experience and to provide us with the easiest means of reassuring ourselves that we know the world'. (Ommundsen 48-9)

Ommundsen maintains that while self-reflexive texts aim to make the readers criticize the conventional traditions and ideologies, the realist text assures the reader of the reliability of the world he lives in and the ideologies he believes in (86). Thus, in Ommundsen's view, it is possible to suggest reflexive texts question the nature of all truths while the realist text tries to give the truth to the readers (Ommundsen 100). Moreover, she asserts that a self-reflexive text differs from the realist text since it is considered 'as an analytical tool in our quest to understand human realities' not 'as symptomatic of literary paralysis' (Ommundsen 105).

In a similar vein, Waugh remarks that realist fiction has no "conflict of languages or voices", on the contrary, there is a "dominant voice of the omniscient, godlike author" (6). Thus, in realist texts, Waugh notes that the readers can forget about the artificiality of the text and lose themselves in a world of illusion. However, within self-reflexive texts, the readers are made aware that they are in a fictional world (Waugh 18).

In order to make the readers aware of the fictionality of the text, Waugh remarks that novelists have begun to question and reject the forms that were used in realist fiction like “the well-made plot, chronological sequence, the authoritative omniscient author, the rational connection between what characters ‘do’ and what they ‘are’, the causal connection between ‘surface’ details and the ‘deep’, ‘scientific laws’ of existence” (Waugh 7). According to Waugh, metafiction uses these features of realist fiction in order to display their constructedness:

Metafiction explicitly lays bare the conventions of realism; it does not ignore or abandon them. Very often realistic conventions supply the ‘control’ in metafictional texts, the norm or background against which the experimental strategies can foreground themselves. More obviously, of course, this allows for a stable level of readerly familiarity, without which the ensuing dislocations might be either totally meaningless or so outside the normal modes of literary or non-literary communication that they cannot be committed to memory. (Waugh 18)

Beside the realist texts, metafictional texts make use of modernist texts according to Waugh. Especially, Waugh says that the tendency toward uncertainty in fictional works start with modernist fiction (21). Moreover, Waugh indicates that both modernist and postmodernist texts portray the unbelievability of the fictional in order to show their reaction toward the political and social events of the twentieth century, especially the historical ones (Waugh 22). According to Waugh, the aim is to enlighten the contemporary readers so that they can face reality rather than lose themselves in an imaginary world (22).

Thus, it is possible to suggest that metafiction deals with the traditional conventions of fiction in order to show the constructedness of the text. Waugh also observes that by using traditional or old forms the readers feel encouraged to construct their own meanings of the text (Waugh 28). Obviously, without using the traditional and the conventional forms together, it would be more difficult for the reader to get the message.

Despite this similar approach toward past events, Waugh argues that modernist and postmodernist writers have a different way of depicting these events. While modernists emphasize the "aesthetic construction of the text", postmodernists try to display the constructedness of the text (Waugh 21). Thus, she believes that their aim is to make the readers aware that they are in a fictional world. For this reason, they do not worry about aesthetic structure in their works.

In addition to this, Waugh argues that these two contemporary literary modes work with different techniques (Waugh 24). For instance, the modernists reflect the inner thoughts of the characters with the help of stream-of-consciousness technique, and present them in a unity while depicting different states of mind simultaneously. For this reason, in Waugh's view it becomes possible for the reader to create a meaning out of the text. However, postmodernists aim to confuse the readers' mind since they present "reality" as something impossible to find, which is unlikely to come up with a meaning (Waugh 24). According to the postmodernist writers, it is difficult to describe what is inside the mind because they think there is a problematic relationship between language and "reality".

However, Waugh adds that these two different literary genres also have a similarity. That is, both modernist and postmodernist texts regard the historical world and the work of art as having no "frames" while presenting the events (Waugh 28). Thus, unlike the realist texts which narrate the events in a chronological order, within these contemporary literary works, she says it becomes impossible to know either the beginning or the ending:

Modernist texts begin with by plunging in *in medias res* and end with the sense that nothing is finished, that life flows on. Metafictional novels often begin with an explicit discussion of the arbitrary nature of beginnings, of boundaries... They often end with a choice of endings. Or they may end with a sign of the impossibility of endings. (Waugh 29)

According to Waugh, the ambiguity in such literary texts aims to present the difficulty of narrating both historical events and past experiences, observing that "neither historical experiences nor literary fictions are unmediated or unprocessed" (30). Thus, language is regarded as an obstacle that prevents the narration of reality in postmodern fiction. For this reason, it is "metalanguage", not language that comes to the fore in metafiction. Since metalanguage "takes another language as its object", it presents its own artificiality (Waugh 4). Thus, metalanguage is significant in order to examine the problematic relation between fiction and reality language is shown as a human construct.

While indicating to the constructedness of the text, Hutcheon notes in *A Poetics* that intertextuality has a significant role in metafictional texts. As a term coined in the 1960s by Julia Kristeva, intertextuality is used in order to indicate the text's relation with other texts (Hutcheon 1988: 126). Hutcheon says that intertextuality has previously been used in order to intensify the reliability of the ideas in the text. However, metafictional writers use the intertextual allusions as a means of indicating the constructedness of fiction (Hutcheon 1988: 125). The reason, according to Hutcheon, is that texts are no longer original:

[I]ntertextuality replaces the challenged author-text relationship with one between reader and text, one that situates the locus of textual meaning within the history of discourse itself. A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. (Hutcheon 1988: 126)

Hutcheon argues that metafictional writers borrow allusions from the original texts of other writers, and present them with a different structure. She adds that their aim in deconstructing these texts is to form a pluralist structure (Hutcheon 1988: 127). Thus, they prevent a single interpretation of the text. In order to accomplish this task, Hutcheon notes that metafictional writers use parody to make fun of the alluded text by either using a part of it or sometimes the whole text (Hutcheon 1988: 126). Hutcheon argues that parody is used in historiographic metafiction not to destroy the past. On the contrary, it is used "both to enshrine the past and to question it" (Hutcheon 1988: 126). Since the aim of

historiographic metafiction is to question the authority of history writing, parody is applied in every text. As Foucault suggests, it is impossible to have a completely original work:

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full-stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network. (Foucault qtd in Hutcheon 1988: 127)

According to Hutcheon, the intertextual allusions are taken not only from other literary works, but also from other literary, social or political theories (Hutcheon 1988: 127). She says they are sometimes presented clearly so that the reader can immediately recognize them. In Hutcheon's view, this recognition of the reader is necessary since the allusions can also be given in an ambiguous way (Hutcheon 1988: 127). For this reason, Hutcheon argues that the reader should be aware of his/her role in following the clues that the narrator presents (Hutcheon 1988: 128). Instead of having a passive role, Hutcheon says, the reader should take a creative part while reading the text which produces different meanings instead of just one. Hutcheon says, according to Barthes, every reader is also a writer and s/he brings to the reading her/his knowledge and views, thus he remarks that the relationship between the author and the text is challenged (Hutcheon 1988: 128).

IV. REFLECTIONS OF HISTORIOGRAPHIC METADRAMA IN TOM STOPPARD'S PLAYS

IV. 1. The Meeting of Historical Figures in *Travesties*

While constructing a fictional world, Stoppard borrows historical figures from past historical periods. In the introduction of *Travesties*, Stoppard remarks that the library in Zurich is a historical setting since James Joyce, Tristan Tzara and Lenin have all been in Switzerland around the year 1917 (13). Among these significant historical figures, Henry Carr has only a minor role in history. Stoppard mentions that Carr met Joyce during the production of Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and acted as Algernon in the play (12). Despite this minor role in history, Carr becomes the main character in *Travesties*. At the beginning of the play Stoppard remarks that most of the action occurs in Henry Carr's memory (17). Thus, the reliability of these past events is open to suspicion.

Throughout the play, we see Carr continuously in a struggle between remembering and forgetting the past. Stoppard presents Carr's memory problem by drawing attention to the constructedness of his memoirs. Within the long monologues that he makes, he often indicates that he is writing his memoirs. However, from the beginning of the play it is clear that Carr is an unreliable narrator. Although he claims that everything he says depends on historical and literary documents that he has gathered, his memory fails in presenting them in a correct way. In order to create a sense of authority, he even imagines himself as the consul general although he is only a minor official in the Consulate. Despite his pretension to narrate the past events in an objective way, his views on Joyce are inconsistent:

CARR. Memories of James Joyce. James Joyce As I Knew Him. The James Joyce I Knew. Through The Courts With James Joyce ... What was he like, James Joyce, I am often asked. It is true that I knew him at the height of his powers, his genius in full flood in the making of *Ulysses* ... A prudish, prudent man, Joyce, in no way profligate or vulgar, and yet convivial, without being spend-thrift ... exhibiting a monkish concern for worldly and bodily comforts, without at the same time shutting himself off from the richness of human society. (22-3)

He is so much influenced by his personal opinions about Joyce that no matter how hard he tries, his negative feelings for Joyce come to the fore. Several times in the play, Carr addresses to Joyce with a different name. Despite ending up with such mistakes, he cannot refrain from boasting of himself, claiming that he is being mentioned in several books. Besides Carr, Nadya also acts as an unreliable narrator at times when she narrates what her husband Lenin has done throughout his life. Although most of her narrative depends upon historical documents that include every historical detail, her memory also fails in the course of her narration of Lenin's memoirs:

NADYA. Once Vladimir was in prison—in St. Petersburg—he wrote to me and asked that at certain times of day I should go and stand on a particular square of pavement on the Shpalernaya. When the prisoners were taken out for exercise it was possible through one of the windows in the corridor to catch a monumetary glimpse of this spot. I went for several days and stood a long while on the pavement there. But he never saw me. Something went wrong. I forget what. (89)

Since he cannot manage to gather his thoughts, he even confuses the role he has played in Joyce's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. With this self-reflexive attitude, Stoppard highlights the fact that the play is a reflection of Carr's failing memory. Despite the mistakes he makes while narrating the events, he addresses the readers in order to make them listen to what he says:

CARR. Incidentally, you may or may not have noticed that I got my wires crossed a bit here and there, you know how it is when the old think-box gets stuck in a groove and before you know where you are you've jumped the points and suddenly you think, No, steady on old chap, that was Algernon—*Algernon!* (64)

Since Carr has a dislike for Joyce, his memoirs are shaped in parallel with his personal feelings for Joyce. For this reason, when he narrates the day when Joyce comes to ask him to act as Algernon, we see that it is the costumes that attract Carr's attention rather than the role. Moreover, these costumes were also the reason for Joyce and Carr to be in court in real life.

Stoppard also refers to the problematic memory of Carr in the stage directions. In this way, the reader becomes aware that it is not a real world but only a fictional narration of past events by an old man:

A note on the above: the scene (and most of the play) is under the erratic control of Old Carr's memory, which is not notably reliable, and also of his various prejudices and delusions. One result is that the story (like a toy train perhaps) occasionally jumps the rails and has to be restarted at the point where it goes wild. (Stoppard *Travesties*: 27)

Carr has also attempted to write a biography of Lenin. However, we learn in the final scene from Cecily that Carr has in fact not been close to Lenin. Moreover, he has never been the Consul, and that the real Consul was Bennett. The only truth is that there was a court case between Joyce and Carr about the expenses Carr incurred in order to act in Joyce's production of Wilde's play. Nevertheless, Carr insists on his claim that he has witnessed a lot of things while he was in Zurich in 1917:

CARR. Great days ... Zurich during the war. Refugees, spies, exiles, painters, poets, writers, radicals of all kinds. I knew them all. Used to argue far into the night ... at the Odeon, the Terrasse ... I learned three things in Zurich during the war. I wrote them down. Firstly, you're either a revolutionary or you're not, and if you're not you might as well be an artist as anything else. Secondly, if you can't be an artist, you might as well be a revolutionary ... I forget the third thing. (98-9)

In order to indicate Carr's failing memory Stoppard makes use of repetitions as well. Thus, sections of dialogue between Bennett and Carr are repeated several times in the play. However, after each dialogue, another discussion follows. It is clear that although Carr claims to be the consul general, Bennett is more involved in what is going on in the world. After all of these repeated dialogues, Bennett narrates the social and political developments such as the First World War in Europe and the social revolution in Russia:

BENNETT. Yes, sir. I have put the newspapers and telegrams on the sideboard, sir.
 CARR. Is there anything of interest?
 BENNETT. The war continues to dominate the newspapers, sir.
 CARR. Ah yes ... the war, always the war ... (27)

In order to represent the past in an ironic way, Stoppard uses characters and plot elements from *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde. These parodic elements enable the play to have a metadramatic quality. Stoppard even makes it clear for the reader to understand what is going on by mentioning even the name of the play. Analogously to the

scene in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, when Jack declares his wish to marry Gwen, Tzara is the one who wants to marry Carr's sister. However, as in Wilde's play, Carr rejects Tzara's wish and asks him to acknowledge his real identity:

CARR. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my sister and before I allow you to marry her you will have to clear up the whole question of Jack.

TZARA. Jack! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean Henry, by Jack? I don't know anyone of the name Jack.

CARR. You left this here the last time you dined.

TZARA. Do you mean to say you have had my library ticket all this time? I had to pay a small fine in replacing it.

CARR. that was extravagant of you, since the ticket does not belong to you. It is made out in the name of Mr. Jack Tzara, and your name isn't Jack, it's Tristan.

TZARA. No, it isn't, it's Jack. (44)

Similarly, in the second act, Carr hides his identity in order to gain Cecily's love. Cecily thinks he is Tristan Tzara, the Dadaist artist. When Carr deceives her by acting as a socialist, Cecily returns his love for her. However, when Gwen acknowledges that Carr is in fact her brother and also the British Consul, Cecily is disappointed, just like Cecily who has been deceived by Jack in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In order to gain Cecily's love love, Jack has presented himself as Earnest. However, later on in the play, he has to admit his real name.

Moreover, Joyce's poems in limerick form are also parodied in the play, in a way that they become a means of mockery. In order to strengthen the sense of irony, Stoppard keeps on with the dialogues in the same form Joyce used in *Ulysess*. Besides Joyce, Stoppard also parodies Gwen and Cecily who act as if they are in a Wildean play:

GWEN. Miss Carruthers, oh Miss Carruthers ...

I hope that you will call me Gwendolen.

I feel I've known you long

And I'm never ever wrong—

Something tells me that we're going to be great friends.

CECILY. Oh, Gwendolen! Oh, Gwendolen!
It sounds ez pretty ez a mendolen!
I hope that you'll feel free
to call me Cecily. (90)

Unlike the Cecily in Wilde's play, Cecily is also seen delivering a boring lecture on Marxism taken from *Das Kapital* at the beginning of Act 2. In order to defeat the reader's expectation, Stoppard makes use of Lenin's political texts as well as literary texts such as Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Thus, Stoppard manages to create some shock-effect by presenting such a humorless subject after entertaining them with Wilde's comedy. The extract taken from *Das Kapital* obviously demands some framework of knowledge from the readers. It is possible to conclude that together with these intertextual allusions, *Travesties* has become a complex structured play that makes it possible for the readers to gain some intellectual knowledge as well.

IV. 2. In Search of the Past in *Invention of Love*

In *Invention of Love*, Stoppard depicts Alfred Edward Housman, a late-Victorian period poet and scholar, as the protagonist of the play. As Stoppard indicates in his play, Housman is known for his collection of poems called *A Shropshire Lad* besides being a brilliant textual analyst. However, it is possible to say that the interesting thing about Housman for Stoppard is his unrequited love for his friend Moses Jackson. This suppressed homosexual love comes to the fore repeatedly in Housman's dreams. With this dream-form narrative, the blurring of the distinction between fiction and reality is intensified. Moreover, fantastic elements have also been used in order to make the readers aware of the fictionality of the text throughout the play.

The fantastic atmosphere created at the beginning of the play is striking. Housman declares that he is dead and that he is in the underworld together with the ferryman, Charon. He is at first relieved to have died because his life has been unendurable for him without his love Jackson. However, his meeting with Jackson in the after life makes him realize later that he is only dreaming (5). In order to prevent the reader from delving into an illusionary state of mind, Stoppard frequently indicates that Housman is asleep:

AEH. Elysium! Where else?! I was eighteen when I first saw Oxford, and Oxford was charming then, not the trippery emporium it has become. There were horse-buses at the station to meet the Birmingham train; and not a brick to be seen, before the Kinema and Kardomah. The Oxford of my dreams, re-dreamt. The desire to urinate, combined with a sense that it would not be a good idea, usually means we are asleep. (26-7)

Throughout the play, Housman does not want to wake up and face the reality that everything he sees is a dream. He always questions whether he is awake or asleep since he cannot be sure of his state of mind. Even when he comes across his younger self, he does not recognize him. Everyone except his love, Jackson, is foreign to him. His repressed

feelings for Jackson cause him to see the day they had a picnic together repeatedly throughout the play:

HOUSMAN. ... yea, we have been forsaken in the wilderness to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles!

POLLARD. Pull on your right, Jackson.

JACKSON. Do you want to take the oars?

POLLARD. No, you're doing splendidly. (4)

With this circular narrative technique, Stoppard presents this scene as if it has occurred more than once. Moreover, Housman's severe personality is also replaced with a sense of mockery. He feels as if trapped in his dream and he is afraid that this situation will go on when he says "I think we're in danger of going round again" (45). Coming across the same picnic scene several times in the play, not only Housman but also the readers realize that it has only occurred once until Housman's friend Pollard mentions it towards the end of the play.

HOUSMAN. ... Here, look. There. We've got a picnic.

POLLARD. Ah, locusts and honey.

HOUSMAN. The three of us used to take a boat down to Hades, with a picnic – where's Mo?

POLLARD. It was only once. (66)

Despite being in such a ridiculed position, the reality that Housman has suffered from illnesses in the Evelyn Nursing Home until his death creates pity for him in the reader's mind. No matter how despotic he has been to his students at university, the difficulties he has due to his age indicate his pitiful life. It is also possible to suggest that he has suffered illnesses that affect his mentality:

AEH. [...] From which all that followed, followed. Which goes to show, I know what I'm doing even when I don't know I'm doing it, in the busy hours between the tucking up and the wakey-wakey thermometer faintly antiseptic under the tongue from its dainty gauze-stoppered vase on the bedside cabinet. (101)

Having studied classics all his life, his dream-form narrative is full of classical allusions as well as historical and academic references. Since Charon accompanies him during his voyage in the after life, he attempts to hear from him parts of classics that have failed to

come to our day. When Charon tells him that he has acted in *The Frogs* by Aristophanes, Housman is filled with joy. However, since it is only a dream, he cannot fulfill his wish:

CHARON. I had that Dionysus in the back of my boat.

AEH. You were very good.

CHARON. No, I was just in it. I was caught short. Good stuff, *The Frogs*, don't you think?

AEH. Not particularly. But it quotes from Aeschylus.

CHARON. Ah, now that was a play.

AEH. What was?

CHARON. Aeschylus, *Myrmidones*. Do you know it?

AEH. It didn't survive; only the title and some fragments. I would join Sisyphus in Hades and gladly push my boulder up the slope if only, each time it rolled back down, I were given a line of Aeschylus

CHARON. I think I can remember some of it.

AEH. Oh my goodness.

CHARON. Give me a minute.

AEH. Oh my Lord.

CHARON. Achilles is in his tent.

AEH. Oh please don't let it be a dream! (27)

These allusions to the classics remind the reader that what they have in their hands is only another fiction that is a human construct. However, the quotations made in Latin or Greek makes it difficult for the readers to understand besides the translated ones. For instance, the story of Theseus and Pirithous is significant for Housman because the love between them reminds him of his love for Jackson. Since he knows that Jackson will not respond to his love, Housman tries to explain his feelings as if they were close to comradeship rather than sodomy. By including such texts in the play, Stoppard draws attention to the constructedness of the text:

HOUSMAN. Theseus and Pirithous. They were kings. They met on the field of battle to fight to the death, but when they saw each other, each was struck in admiration for his adversary, so they became comrades instead and had many adventures together. Theseus was never so happy as when he was with his friend. They weren't sweet on each other. They loved each other, as men loved each other in the heroic age, in virtue, paired together in legend and poetry as the pattern of comradeship, the chivalric ideal of virtue in the ancient world. Virtue! What happened to it? It had a good run – centuries! – it was still virtue in Socrates to admire a beautiful youth, virtue to be beautiful and to be admired. It was still there, grubbier and a shadow of itself but still there, for my Roman poets who competed for women and boys as fancy took them; virtue in Horace to shed tears of love over Ligurinus on the athletic field. Well, not any more, eh, Mo? Virtue is

what women have to lose, the rest is vice. Pollard thinks I'm sweet on you, too, though he hardly knows he thinks it. (76)

Housman's obsession with classics is so immense that when he comes across his younger self, he does not recognize who he is. Although he has studied the same classics when he was young, Housman listens eagerly to what his younger self tells him. He is so delighted to have found someone who also loves finding out mistakes in classical editions. Stoppard presents their dialogue as if it is a classics lecture, thus the reader has to struggle to follow them. Housman is so enthusiastic about classics and their editions that he resists the nurse that wants to wake him up from his dream so that they can go on with their lecture:

AEH. To be a scholar is to strike your finger on the page and say, 'Thou ailest here, and here.'

HOUSMAN. The comma has got itself in the wrong place, hasn't it?, because there aren't any commas in the *Oxoniensis*, any more than there are capital letters – which is the other thing-

AEH. Not now, nurse, let him finish.

HOUSMAN. So *opis* isn't *power* with a small 'o', it's the genitive of Ops who was the mother of Jupiter. Everything comes clear when you put the comma back one place. (37)

Although both of them criticize the editors thinking that their editions are full of mistakes, their claim to have reached the truth about these classics is unbelievable. No matter how many proofs Housman gives to undermine the editions, the reader cannot totally believe in what he says. As a result of the many indications that Stoppard makes in order to relate his subjective views, it becomes impossible to consider him as a reliable narrator:

AEH. Yes, who knows? Before you publish, by the way, the first of the Roman love elegists was not Propertius, strictly speaking. It was Cornelius Gallus.

HOUSMAN. Gallus?

AEH. Really and truly.

HOUSMAN. But I've not read him.

AEH. Nor I. Only one line of Gallus survived. The rest perished.

HOUSMAN. Oh!

AEH. But strictly speaking – which I do in my sleep – he was first.

HOUSMAN. One line for his monument! (98)

Since the readers are aware of his unreliability, when he comes across his younger self and does not recognize him, it is not much surprise for them. Like Carr in *Travesties*, Housman shows symptoms of schizophrenia and even refers to young Housman in the third person since he cannot remember him: “I’ve seen *him* before, too” (26). Although they talk about the classics that he has studied when he was at Oxford, Housman is still unaware of his identity, which Charon makes fun of:

HOUSMAN. I say, can I give you a hand?

AEH. (to Charon) Who’s that?

CHARON. Who’s that, he says.

AEH. (to Housman) Thank you!

CHARON. Dead on time.

AEH. Don’t mind him. What are you doing here, may one ask?

HOUSMAN. Classics, sir. I’m studying for Greats.

AEH. Are you? I did Greats, too. Of course, that was more than fifty years ago, when Oxford was still the sweet city of dreaming spires. (29-30)

Contrary to a healthy person who has a linear sense of time, Housman has difficulties in both remembering the past and forming a consistent dialogue. Being in a hypnotic state, he gives a lecture on famous scholars. However, towards the end of his long monologue, he loses his sense of logic and feels the need to take his tablets. While presenting his difficulty, Stoppard keeps on with his ironic tone:

AEH. ...Except for Wilamowitz who is the greatest European scholar since Richard Bentley. There are people who say that I am but they would not know it if I were. Wilamowitz, I should add, is dead. Or will be. Or will have been dead. I think it must be time for my tablet, it orders my tenses. (39)

Another example that displays Housman’s unreliability as a result of his failing memory is that he has problems in remembering even his own nephews. He cannot clear up his mind until his sister Kate reminds him of the presence of her sons. Initially, Housman gets startled, and tries hard not to display his difficulty in recognizing them. However, it is obvious that he cannot overcome his memory problem:

KATE. The Clent fire is a good one. The boys are here.
 AEH. Do I know them?
 KATE. Your nephews, Alfred!
 AEH. Oh, your boys, of course I know *them*. (89)

Throughout the play, we see the young Housman in search of the original editions of classics. His aim is to publish a correct edition that would be a good source to depend on. However, his scholars are not as optimistic as he is. Being narrated by different people until now makes it difficult to have the original text. Thus, Jowett remarks the impossibility of gaining access to the classics due to several problems:

HOUSMAN. But isn't it of use to establish what the ancient authors really wrote?
 JOWETT. It would be on the whole desirable rather than undesirable and the job was pretty well done, by good scholars dead these hundred years and more. For the rest, certainty could only come from recovering the autograph [...] In other words, anyone with a secretary knows that what Catullus really wrote was already corrupt by the time it was copied twice [...] Think of all those secretaries! – corruption breeding corruption from papyrus to papyrus, and from the last disintegrating scrolls to the first new-fangled parchment books, with a thousand years of copying-out still to come, running the gauntlet of changing forms of script and spelling, and absence of punctuation – not to mention mildew and rats and fire and flood and Christian disapproval to the brink of extinction as what Catullus really wrote passed from scribe to scribe, this one drunk, that one sleepy, another without scruple, and of those sober, wide-awake and scrupulous, some ignorant of Latin and some, even worse, fancying themselves better Latinists than Catullus. (24)

While narrating Housman's past, Stoppard creates suspicion by not only using historiographic conventions but also giving them an ironic tone. Thus, when Housman is haunted by everything he has seen in his dream, he cannot do anything but tries to make sense of his dream. He even refers to Virgil, likening his voyage to the underworld to his own, but with the claim that his adaptation is better. Nevertheless, Stoppard draws attention to the unreliability of Housman's narration when he confesses that at the age of seventy-seven, it is difficult to remember everything as it happened. Housman's dream is so confusing that even he cannot make sense of it later on:

AEH. 'And they stretched out their hands in desire of the further shore.'

Cleverboots was usually good for a tag. Thus Virgil, Aeneas in the Underworld, the souls of the dead reaching out across the water *ripae ulterioris amore*, you couldn't do better with a Kodak, and those who were unburied were made to wait a hundred years. I could wait a hundred if I had to. Seventy-seven go quick enough. Which is not to say I have remembered it right, messing about in a boat with Moses, and dear old young Pollard on a summer's day in '79 or '80 or '81; but not impossible, not so out of court as to count as an untruth in the dreamwarp of the ultimate room, though the dog is still in question. And yet not dreaming either, wide awake to all the risks – archaism, anachronism, the wayward inconsequence that only hindsight can acquit of *non sequitur, quietus interruptus* by monologue incontinent in the hind leg of a donkey class. (100)

Dealing with the past in a dream-like structure, Stoppard manages to combine simple events in a complicated way. By making references to classical texts and other historical figures, the play has become a fragmented text that makes it impossible for the readers to forget that they are reading a text since they are repeatedly disturbed by the excess usage of metadramatic elements. Nevertheless, Stoppard's plays obviously owe their success to this feature and it is also possible to say that Stoppard has made use of several metadramatic devices in this play and managed to draw attention to the constructedness of the text.

IV. 3. Shifting Perspectives in *Arcadia*

In *Arcadia*, Stoppard presents both the early nineteenth century and the present time in a room in Sidley Park which belongs to the Coverlys. Since the play does not follow a chronological order, the first scene begins in the Victorian period, but shifts to the present time in the second one. This circular development goes on until the seventh scene when it becomes possible to see the present day characters together with the previous residents of Sidley Park. In order to intensify the constructedness of the play and blur the distinction between the real and fiction, Stoppard uses the same objects as well as the same setting throughout the play.

In order to establish the events that took place in the 1800s, three present day characters are busy with their researches about that period. These characters all desire to gain knowledge about the assumed hidden reality in Sidley Park because they believe that the historical records are incomplete. One of these researchers is Hannah Jarvis who does her research on the history of Sidley Park's garden and the supposed hermit who lived and died there. In her research, she pursues an objective method and is not in favor of drawing a conclusion until she has gathered all the necessary information about her subject. During her research, she makes use of the sketch book of Noakes who was the landscape architect of Sidley Park in the 1800s.

However, Bernard Nightingale, a don whose researches have been without result up to now, is unreliable because he is so much influenced by his feelings. Thus, his current theory about Lord Byron is also doomed to failure. According to his theory, Lord Byron had escaped from England after killing Ezra Chater in a duel during his visit to Sidley Park in the 1800s. For this reason, he comes to Sidley Park in search of clues that would lead him to literary success, and fame. For this reason, he is ready to do everything to verify his theory throughout the play.

The third contemporary researcher is Valentine Coverly who is interested in the gamebook that he has inherited from his father. Being a resident of Sidley Park, he is supposed to have more knowledge about the previous residents than Hannah and Bernard. However, he also becomes helpless at times despite his claim to have considerable scientific knowledge. For instance, when he comes across the scientific researches of Thomasina Coverly who lived in the 1800s, he cannot comprehend her scientific theories, and he thinks it is impossible for a girl at her age to have comments on chaos theory.

Thus, with the help of these narrators, Stoppard manages to create a multi-layered structure and make the researchers doubt the evidence they present to the readers. For instance, Bernard's starting point for his theory is a copy of Ezra Chater's *The Couch of Eros* which he claims to belong to Lord Byron. According to the evidence he has gathered, this book was previously in Byron's library. Thus, in order to prove his theory as a historian who is tied strictly to the past documents and historical detail, Bernard prepares the necessary background information about it. He tries to do his best in order to make Hannah believe him, and thus give him extra knowledge about the subject at hand:

BERNARD. This copy of 'The Couch of Eros' belonged to Lord Byron.

HANNAH. It belonged to Septimus Hodge.

BERNARD. Originally, yes. But it was in Byron's library which was sold to pay his debts when he left England for good in 1816. The sales catalogue is in the British library. 'Eros' was lot 74A and was bought by the bookseller and publisher John Nightingale of Opera Court, Pall Mall ... whose name survives in the firm of Nightingale and Matlock, the present Nightingale being my cousin.
(46)

Since Bernard thinks that *The Couch of Eros* was in Byron's library, he deduces that the notes he has found inside the book belong to Byron as well. These documents are a treasure for him that would help him enlighten the mystery over Byron's escape from England. Although he behaves as an archivist who has knowledge enough to make claims, the readers are aware that the document he has found belongs to Septimus Hodge, not Lord Byron. From the beginning of the play, like the readers, Hannah is suspicious of the truth claim of Bernard's theory, and also when he claims to have found Lord Byron's poem:

BERNARD. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. A penciled superscription.
 Listen and kiss my cycle-clips! (*He is carrying the book. He reads from it.*)
 ‘O harbinger of Sleep, who missed the press
 And hoped his drone might thus escape redress!
 The wretched Chater, bard of Eros’ Couch,
 For his narcotic let my pencil vouch!’
 You see, you *have to turn over every page*.
 HANNAH. Is it his handwriting?
 BERNARD. Oh, come *on*.
 HANNAH. Obviously not.
 BERNARD. Christ, what do you want?
 HANNAH. Proof.
 VALENTINE. Quite right. Who are you talking about?
 BERNARD. Proof? *Proof?* You’d have to be there, you silly bitch! (70-1)

Although Hannah has been dubious about Bernard’s theory, she also thinks that Bernard might be right about it. Thus, when she finds the letter which Lady Croom has written to her husband, Hannah gives it to Bernard. Learning that Mrs Chater has married Captain Brice after her husband’s death, Bernard is filled with joy, thinking that he is right about his theory. Thus, in order to find out the hidden reality about Byron, he is excited to pursue his research rapidly:

HANNAH. [...] I have a present for you. Guess what I found. (*producing the present for Bernard*) Lady Croom writing from London to her husband. Her brother, Captain Brice, married a Mrs Chater. In other words, one might assume, a widow.
Bernard looks at the letter.
 BERNARD. I *said* he was dead. What year? 1810! Oh my God, 1810! Well *done*, Hannah! Are you going to tell me it’s a different Mrs Chater?
 HANNAH. Oh no. It’s her all right. Note her Christian name.
 BERNARD. Charity. Charity... ‘Deny what cannot be proven for Charity’s sake!’
 (71)

Until toward the end of the play, everything goes on as Bernard has predicted. Thus, his happiness increases every time he finds evidence to support his theory. He learns from Valentine that Lord Byron’s name is mentioned in the game book that included everyone who was hunting in that period. However, Hannah still has some doubts about his theory since she finds it silly of Lord Byron to have written a review of Chater’s book after killing

him in a duel. However, Bernard acts as if he knows everything about Lord Byron, and he is proud of himself and his speech that he has prepared about Byron:

BERNARD. ‘Did it happen? Could it happen? ‘Undoubtedly it could. Only three years earlier the Irish poet Tom Moore appeared on the field of combat to avenge a review by Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh*. These affairs were seldom fatal and sometimes farcical but, potentially, the duelist stood in respect to the law no differently from a murderer. As for the murdered, a minor poet like Ezra Chater could go to his death in a Derbyshire glade as unmissed and unremembered as his contemporary and namesake, the minor botanist who died in the forests of the West Indies, lost to history like the monkey that bit him. On April 16th 1809, a few days after he left Sidley Park, Byron wrote his solicitor John Hanson: “If the consequences of my leaving England were ten times as ruinous as you describe, I have no alternative; there are circumstances which render it absolutely indispensable, and quit the country I must immediately.” To which, the editor’s note in the *Collected Letters* reads as follows: “What Byron’s urgent reasons for leaving England were at this time has never been revealed.” The letter was written from the family seat, Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire. A long day’s ride to the north-west lay Sidley Park., the estate of the Coverlys – a far grander family, raised by Charles II to the Earldom of Croom ...’ (76-7)

Bernard is so confident in himself and his proofs that he does not let anyone overlook his research. Although he can criticize anyone he wants in a belittling way, his reaction to negative views about his theory is defensive. He is no longer the kind man who has come to see Hannah to ask for her help at the beginning of the play. Now that he has finished with his job and with her, his attitude toward Hannah is too severe:

BERNARD. ‘Is it *likely* that Hodge would have lent Byron the book without first removing the three private letters?’

VALENTINE. Look, sorry – I only meant, Byron could have borrowed the book without asking.

HANNAH. That’s true.

BERNARD. Then why wouldn’t Hodge get them back?

HANNAH. I don’t know, I wasn’t there.

BERNARD. That’s right, you bloody weren’t. (80-1)

...

VALENTINE. How did Chater find out the reviewer was Byron?

BERNARD. (*irritated*) I don’t know, I wasn’t there, was I? (82)

By repeating that the presence of a witness is necessary in order to validate a comment about the past, Stoppard, in fact, points out the difficulty of narrating the past without having valid evidence about it. Having created a scientific atmosphere by using historical documents as evidence for a hidden reality in the past, Stoppard destroys it again with the same kind of historical evidence. Thus, he successfully abuses what he has used in order to confuse the readers' mind. When the residents of Sidley Park acknowledge the truth about Lord Byron and Mr Chater toward the end of the play, the readers' expectations totally fail. Although Bernard's claims have been supported by past documents, it turns out that these documents contradict Augustus and Lady Croom's statements:

AUGUSTUS. Lord Byron?! – he claimed my hare, although my shot was the earlier! He said I missed by a hair's breadth. (112)

...

LADY CROOM. [...] For the widow's dowry of dahlias I can almost forgive my brother's marriage. We must be thankful the monkey bit the husband. If it had bit the wife the monkey would be dead and we would not be first in the kingdom to show a dahlia. (117)

The presence of these contradictory statements is also an indication of how ideas about history, whether personal or social, can be different from each other. By depicting two different historical periods and presenting them simultaneously, it is possible to say that Stoppard has successfully brought together these characters with different world views on the same stage. For the ones who lived in the past like Septimus, there is still a chance to recover what has been lost up to now, even the masterpieces of ancient times. However, as a present day character, Valentine is more pessimistic about the future of the world, doubting everything that has been taught as true:

SEPTIMUS. [...] You should no more grieve for the rest than a buckle lost from your first shoe, or for your lesson book which will be lost when you are old. We shed as we pick up, like travelers who must carry everything in their arms, and what we let fall will be picked up by those behind. The procession is very long and life is very short. We die on the march. But there is nothing outside the march so nothing can be lost to it. The missing plays of Sophocles will turn up piece by piece, or be written again in another language. Ancient cures for diseases will reveal themselves once more. Mathematical discoveries glimpsed and lost to view will have their time again. (56-7)

...

VALENTINE. [...] The future is disorder. A door like this has cracked open five or six times since we got up on our hind legs. It's the best possible time to be alive, when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong. (69)

In the final scene, Stoppard gathers couples that have lived in two different periods within a dancing scene. By bringing couples from both periods to the stage at the same time, Stoppard blurs the distinction between the real and the fictional. Thomasina who has wanted to learn to waltz from Septimus realizes her wish at the end of the play. While they start dancing, Hannah and young Gus Coverly are seen on the stage dancing together. Beside them, Bernard and Chloë are also seen dancing. It is possible to conclude that this image of perfect harmony is significant for bringing characters from two different periods together in order to highlight the metadramatic quality of the play.

IV. 4. Chaotic Relations in *Indian Ink*

Like *Arcadia*, *Indian Ink* takes place in both the past and the present. It is possible to see the characters that belong to the 1930s and 1980s on the same stage. While the protagonist of the play, Flora Crewe, writes letters to her sister Mrs Swan from India, we see her sister and editor Eldon Pike reading them at the same time. Thus, throughout the play, the narrative is disrupted. Interrupted by the present day characters, the play consists of fragmented dialogues that make it difficult for the reader to follow what is going on. Reminded that they are reading a text, readers cannot lose themselves in a world of illusion. On the contrary, they struggle to understand the plot.

As an editor who has published Flora Crewe's poems, Eldon Pike is in search of her letters. Although Flora is a slightly known figure in England, he attaches too much importance to her life. According to Pike, her biography should be written as well. However, Mrs Swan is not in favor of Pike's writing a biography of Flora. She thinks it is impossible to prevent subjective views being included in a biography:

MRS SWAN. Far too much of a good thing, in my opinion, the footnotes; to be constantly interrupted by someone telling you things you already know or don't need to know at that moment. There are pages where Flora can hardly get a word in sideways. Mr Pike teaches Flora Crewe. It makes her sound like a subject, doesn't it, like biology. Or in her case, botany. Flora is widely taught in America. I have been written to, even visited, and on one occasion telephoned, by young women doing Flora Crewe. (402)

Nevertheless, Pike is so eager about finding out more information about Flora's personal life that nothing can stop him from doing it. As an editor who places too many details in his narratives, his biography of Flora becomes a text full of unnecessary footnotes. Although his aim is to enlighten the readers about this poet, they are distracted rather than pleased by his narration. He exaggerates his work so much that, throughout the play, it is possible to see unnecessary information about every person that Flora mentions in her letters. Like a historian, he tries to form a link between events and people in Flora's life:

PIKE. Augustus de Boucheron enjoyed brief celebrity as a millionaire philanthropist and patron of the arts. FC met him – and received his proposal of marriage – on December 3rd 1917. The occasion was Modigliani's first show, in Paris. FC sat for the artist soon afterwards. At the exhibition of Modern French Art at Heal and Sons in the Tottenham Court Road, London, in August 1919, Modigliani was one of several newer artists shown with the better known Matisse, Picasso and Derain. FC arrived at Heals with de Boucheron, expecting to see her portrait, but before they got out of the Bentley she discovered that her fiancé had bought the painting from the artist and, as he triumphantly confessed, taken it back to the Ritz Hotel and burned it in a bathtub. In the ensuing row, FC returned de Boucheron's engagement ring, and made plans to sit for Modigliani again in the autumn of the year. But she delayed, arriving in Paris only on the morning of January 23rd, unaware that Modigliani had been taken to hospital. He died on the following evening, without regaining consciousness, of tuberculosis, aged thirty-five. De Boucheron, under his real name Perkins Butcher, went to prison in 1925 for issuing a false prospectus. His end is unknown. (459)

Pike believes in himself and his evidence so much that he even finds himself the right to correct what Flora has written. In order to make himself more convincing, Pike makes use of historiographic conventions such as indicating a literary source by him together with its details. However, this kind of information, like footnotes, is distracting for the reader:

FLORA. 'My suitor – I suppose I must call him that, though I swear I've done nothing to encourage him – came to fetch me in an open Daimler which drew such a crowd, and off we went with people practically falling off the mud-guards, rather like leaving Bow Street – my God, how strange, that was ten years ago almost to the day.'

PIKE. In fact, nine. See 'The Woman Who Wrote What She Knew', E.C. Pike, *Modern Language Review*, Spring 1979. (436)

Throughout the play, Pike is in search of some hidden information that would make him feel better. For this reason, when Mrs Swan mentions the paintings of Flora, especially the nude one, his joy is profound. In order to get more information, he tries to be kind toward Mrs Swan since she is the only relative of Flora, and the only way to reach the paintings. Although Mrs Swan tells him that the nude portrait of Flora by Modigliani has been burnt, he is determined to find out more about it. He insists that there is a nude portrait of Flora that has been not presented to the world despite Mrs Swan's denials:

PIKE. And 'undressed'. She says 'undressed'. Like a nude. On *paper*. That would be a watercolour, wouldn't it?
 MRS SWAN. What would? There isn't any 'it'.
 PIKE. Well, if it doesn't mean a portrait of Flora undressed, what do you think it means? (378)

In order to prove his claim, Pike even goes to India to find the nude portrait of Flora. He thinks it to be an important achievement as an editor. Moreover, he also wants to find out whether Flora has had a relation with her Indian painter, Nirad Das, besides H. G. Wells. According to Pike's claim, Flora has also had an affair with Das:

FLORE. [...] 'Not that I had the least idea – Herbert showed small inclination to write his famous books while I was around.'
 PIKE. FC had met Wells no earlier than December and the affair was therefore brief, possibly the weekend of January 7th and 8th; which she spent in Paris (374).

During his visit to India, Pike finds the chance to meet the Rajah's grandson as well. Since his grandfather was together with Flora while she was in India, Pike is exhilarated that he has found such an important person. He learns from the Rajah that Flora had sent a thank-you note for the present that she got from his grandfather. The present was a miniature from an unknown artist who lived in the 1790s. However, there he learns one thing that spoils Pike's biography of Flora Crewe:

RAJAH. [...] But by that time the collection had suffered the attrition of my grandfather's generosity. He gave several away, sometimes as farewell presents to his lady friends. Which brings me to your letter. To begin with, there was a disappointment. There is no Flora Crewe in the visitors book in April 1930. However, my archivist has excelled himself. (*He takes a letter from his pocket.*) The *Collected Letters* are not complete! (460)

Despite having gone through many researches and found out a lot of information about Flora Crewe, there are still things that he has to solve. After receiving such unexpected news from the Rajah, Pike's reliability becomes questionable by the reader. Both Pike's and the reader's belief in narrating the past have been shattered. Finally, the statements of Nirad's son Anish and Mrs Swan about supplying evidence for Pike create much more confusion for the reader:

MRS SWAN. [...] If you decide to tell Mr Pike about the watercolour, I'm sure Flora wouldn't mind.

ANISH. No. Thank you, but it's my father I'm thinking of. He really wouldn't want it, not even in a footnote. So we'll say nothing to Mr Pike.

MRS SWAN. Good for you. I don't tell Mr Pike everything either. (476)

Having come across several forms of historiographic evidence and their subversion throughout the book, Stoppard has managed to bewilder the reader. Given the interlocking dialogues that belong to past and present, it has become difficult for the reader to follow such a complex narration. In addition to the unnecessary information that Pike gives throughout the play, the unreliability of Flora's narration also confuses the readers.

While Flora writes about her days in India, she refrains from narrating events that would spoil the effect of her visit. Thus, in her letters, she writes as if everything had been perfect there. Having prepared for her, the Indians had welcomed her heartily. However, since she tries to present herself like a goddess, she excludes the things that she in fact found belittling for her in the bungalow that she stayed in:

FLORA. 'And in no time at all I was installed in a little house, two good-sized rooms under a tin roof with electric light ... (*She tries the electric light switch without result.*) ... and an oil lamp just in case ... a verandah looking out at a rather hopeless garden ... but with a good table and chair which does very well for working ... and a wicker sofa of sorts for not working ... and round the back ... a kitchen bit with a refrigerator! But Nazrul, my cook and bottle-washer, disdains the electric stove and makes his own arrangements on a little verandah of his own.' (*She goes into the interior, into the bedroom, where she tries the switch for the ceiling fan, again without result.*) 'My bedroom, apart from the ceiling fan, also has a punkah which is like a pelmet worked by a punkah-wallah who sits outside and flaps the thing by a system of ropes and pulleys, or would if he were here, which he isn't. And then off the bedroom...' (369)

Moreover, Pike's claim that Flora is an important figure in literary life turns out to be false as well. When Flora writes about the lecture that she supposedly gave to the Indians, it becomes clear that it is not Flora that they are interested in. Rather, they want to learn more about the famous writers of the time in England. Flora tries hard not to display her irritation about the situation. Meanwhile, Pike cannot resist giving extra information again:

QUESTIONER. What is your opinion of Gertrude Stein, Miss Crewe?

FLORA. Oh...

‘– and I can’t bring myself to say she’s a poisonous old baggage who’s travelling on a platform ticket ...’

PIKE. FC’s aversion to Gertrude Stein was reciprocated at their first and only meeting when Stein and her companion Alice B. Toklas invited Flora to tea at 27 Rue de Fleurus in 1922. Even so, the legend that FC enthused over Miss Toklas’s chocolate cake and that Stein threatened to gouge out FC’s eyes, or possibly Miss Toklas’s eyes, cannot be trusted. FC did not like chocolate in any form. (375)

Besides these underminings of historiographic conventions that draw attention to the unreliability of the text, Stoppard includes Anglo-Indian words in the dialogue between Flora and Nirad in order to intensify its effect. These unknown words are nothing more than black dots on the paper since they are beyond their understanding. With this word game, we also see that the relation between Flora and Nirad has become warmer:

FLORA. While having tiffin on the verandah of my bungalow I spilled kedgerree on my dungarees and had to go to the gymkhana in my pyjamas looking like a coolie.

DAS. I was buying chutney in the bazaar when a thug escaped from the choky and killed a box-wallah for his loot, creating a hullabaloo and landing himself in the mulligatawny.

FLORA. I went doolally at the durbar and was sent back to Blighty in a dooley feeling rather dikki with a cup of char and a chit for a chotapeg.

DAS. Yes, and the burra sahib who looked so pukka in his topee sent a coolie to the memsahib –

FLORA. No, no. You can’t have memsahib *and* sahib, that’s cheating – and anyway I’ve already said coolie.

DAS. I concede, Miss Crewe. You are the Hobson-Jobson champion! (392)

It is possible to say that Stoppard has benefited from historiographic codes in order to subvert them with metadramatic devices throughout the play. As in the other plays, the readers are led through a labyrinth so that they have to struggle to get out of it by themselves. Thus, they have to be careful to follow the right path out of this entangled text.

V. CONCLUSION

In four of the plays that I have analyzed, Stoppard manages to problematize our link to the world by using particular self-reflexive strategies. Thus, he makes the readers question the created versions of the past. Moreover, by questioning the empiricist construction of human truth, he presents a totally different writing of history in his plays. It is also possible to posit that Stoppard repeatedly indicates the intersection of history and fiction in order to make the readers suspect the representation of truth in history writing. This is similar to the aim of postmodernism that prefers to deal with the past rather than leave it aside as if it is perfect in essence. Its doubts about the historical are what postmodernism focuses on as Hutcheon points out in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*:

How can we come to know the past real? Postmodernism does not deny that it existed; it merely questions how we can know real past events today, except through their traces, their texts, the facts we construct and to which we grant meaning (Hutcheon 1998: 225).

This postmodern attitude toward historical events is what Tom Stoppard applies in his plays. He both works for and against historiographical expectations. In this way, he aims to present the constructed nature of historiographic conventions. Rather than giving objective knowledge about the past, he undermines the claim of objective representation. He asks the readers to struggle to reach the truth by getting help from their background knowledge. If they fail to accomplish this task, they face the danger of getting lost in the world that Stoppard has created for them.

Thus, it is possible to posit that Tom Stoppard makes us realize in his plays that our previous reading habits have lost their function. For this reason, he aims to force the readers to question their former methods. His plays not only have dubious narrators but also lack the presence of an authoritative writer. For instance, the historical figures that are depicted in the plays are used only to parody the historians that have been after the truth. Moreover, the problematic characters in the plays provoke the readers who are made to question the accuracy of these characters' narrations. Their fragmented views are left to be interpreted by the reader.

Everything becomes mixed up when multiple narrators come to the fore. The fact that there is no longer an authoritative writer prevents the readers from acting freely. There is always a pressure on the readers that forces them to struggle with the text. Faced with unreliable narrators who have difficulty in remembering the past, readers do not have any other choice but to follow their own route. Rather than keeping the readers away from the text and creating an impression that what they are reading is “real”, Stoppard drags them into the play.

The readers, who try to stick the pieces together in order to form a coherent text, have to start over again each time these pieces separate. For this reason, it is possible to say that neither are contradictions resolved nor is a total vision of events achieved in Stoppard’s plays. In addition to this, the fantastical elements used in the plays make it more difficult for the readers to distinguish between reality and fiction. Although these qualities make Stoppard’s plays difficult to get through, his plays would obviously lack their essence without them.

Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that Stoppard’s strategy of investigating the past illuminates how we have read and interpreted the past events until now. This strategy distinguishes his plays from the ones that readily present the readers what they are looking for. Without involving such strategies, the plays would fail to make the readers question how they have read and interpreted past events until now.

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BIOGRAPHY

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