

How far is play key in rosencrantz and guildenstern are dead

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the play "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead", the writer Tom Stoppard reveals to the reader the importance of "play" in his play and how it helps develop the plot and the characters of his literary work. Stoppard uses witty language, and satirical humour to help highlight the importance of numerous types play to the reader. Stoppard uses play as a main theme throughout his play as commentary on how play has many different interpretations, thus he uses his play as an impetus to explore this theme and allow the reader and the audience to gain a better understanding.

Read this" The Secrets of Haiti's Living Dead"

One of the most prominent forms of play that is evident in the exposition of the play is how Stoppard plays around with the expectations of the audience as well as having both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern both tease the audience as part of their act. Stoppard begins the play with both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern already in action as if we as the audience have come "late to the action" by beginning the play with what seems to the audience as a non-sequitur conversation "...Heads... There is an art to the building up of suspense. Through this we as the reader are able to see how Stoppard is deliberately beginning his play in an unorthodox manner which would surprise the audience who would be hoping to follow the plot of the play from the beginning. By doing this, Stoppard is able to create an effect on both the reader as we are able to infer the audience's expectation which have probably been diminished but nevertheless intrigued. As a reader we are also curious to know how long Stoppard will uphold this dramatic tension and leave both the reader and audience uneasy.

Once we as the reader become aware of the fact that Stoppard's play is not a conventional play that meets our expectations or the audience, we become subject to Stoppard's world of plays awaiting anything that may come our way. In the exposition of the play, we see how the play begins with Rosencrantz flipping a coin continuously as Guildenstern tries to figure out how the coin only seems to be flipping "heads", "....

Heads... The law of probability, it has been oddly asserted, is something to do with the proposition that if six monkeys..." Here Stoppard is able to highlight the important motif of coins and to a certain extent gambling through Rosencrantz playing with the coin. One could infer that through this coin play; Stoppard is simply trying to assert the attention of the audience by having them wait in suspense for something to happen. On the other hand, Stoppard also uses Rosencrantz's game to highlight the fact that even from the very beginning of the play; his characters have no direction or purpose as to what they are meant to be doing on stage.

This leaves us as the reader and the audience included feeling bemused by Stoppard's play and wondering whether there are any conventional elements to Stoppard's play. Furthermore, Stoppard is able to continue to build on the theme of play, by exposing the reader and the audience; through his manipulation of language and word play, to other characters in the play and how they help develop the plot of the play. During Act One, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet a band of Tragedians whose leader is the mysterious and crafty Player.

Once the two parties begin to engage in conversation it becomes obvious that the play begins to make sexual references and similarities to the world of acting and prostitution. Naturally, both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are intrigued by his offer and try to delve deeper into what the Player is offering “ You’re not - ah - exclusively players, then? ”, “ We’re inclusively players, sir. ” Through Stoppard’s use of double entendres in the language, we are able to see how he plays at the sexual innuendos of the Player through the implications of the meaning “ inclusively” to show how the word intimates intimacy and an element of risque endeavors.

By doing this Stoppard is able make a satirical comment about the similarities in the nature of acting and prostitution and how they both perform formoney, though they differ on the nature of their performances. Through this we as the audience are able to see how Stoppard is able to add humour to the play through his word play and sexual innuendos, allowing the reader and the audience to enjoy the play despite the fact it may appear to be quite absurd.

Lending weight to the above notion, Stoppard is able to show the importance of play through the character of the Player, who is able to toil around with both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and helps them come to the realization that they are actors and that they have a purpose. The player is able to do this by playing around with the minds of both the protagonists, firstly through his sexual innuendos as explored above and through the fact that he helps Rosencrantz and Guildenstern realise that they are actors on stage and that they are performers to an audience.

Stoppard is able to use the Player as a foil to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who begin to question the Player asking him "...aren't you going to change into your costume? ", " I never change out of it, sir" and " aren't you going to - come on? ", " I am on. " Here we see the irony Stoppard is trying to convey as both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern did not walk onto stage appear to put on a costume in order to come on and act.

Here Stoppard explores the theme of " seeming and being" as he shows how throughout the play the two protagonists interchangeably play around with their characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in " Hamlet" and in Stoppard's play. This leaves us the reader to question whether Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are acting or whether they are being themselves, leaving us intrigued as we ponder this peculiar phenomenon. Another character who helps elucidate on Stoppard's theme of playing is the character of Hamlet who appears to be mad plays mind games with his two friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Nobody in the play of " Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" and in " Hamlet" knows why Hamlet is acting crazy and thus, they try to find reason for his madness. What they are not aware of is the fact that Hamlet has chosen to act mad and " play" the fool in order to prove the guilt of the new king and to find out if his mother was in on the plot to murder his father. Thus in Stoppard's play it is obvious that Hamlet is simply playing around as he tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he is " but mad north north-west; when the wind is southerly [he] knows a hawk from a handsaw".

Through Hamlet's complex metaphor it is clear to see that he is actually lucid and is able to know that he is being tricked and deceived by his childhood friends with orders from Claudius. Here we are able to see how because of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's lack of wit and inability to comprehend Hamlet's message they are inevitably the ones played by Hamlet and thus their ignorance leads them to their death. We as the reader are left to see how Stoppard is able to use the character of Hamlet to show how disguise and deception both coincide with the theme of play as well as seeming and being.

Lastly, Stoppard also conveys the importance of playing, through his use of allusion to other texts by various writers to help show past and present literature works influence almost all writers. Stoppard's play is based on the plot of "Hamlet", but it greatly echoes Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot". In Beckett's play the main protagonists of the play also lack direction and purpose and are waiting for the appearance of Godot who never comes. Thus similar to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, they too engage in games to pass the time "...well, what to do now?", "Don't, let's do anything. It's safer. By adopting the same ideals from Beckett's play about the nature of the play and the characters, it is possible to see how Stoppard is commenting on the importance of literary influences on writers and their works. Overall, Stoppard is able to convey the importance of the theme play in his play through his use of careful and witty choice of language and through the satire of his characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Stoppard is able to allow the reader and the audiences to experience the importance of the

theme play through his exploration of the different interpretations of the word in numerous unconventional forms.