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Yazar: Kenan KOÇAK *

Tom Stoppard'ın *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound* (*The Real Inspector Hound*) ve *Akrobatlar* (*Jumpers*) Oyunlarında Parodi ve Gizem¹

Özet: Tom Stoppard, Çekoslovakya doğumlu ve İngilizce'yi sonradan öğrenmiş olması sebebiyle, anadili İngilizce olan yazarlara nazaran dile daha hâkim ve dilin imkanlarını daha iyi kullanabilen, kelimelerle oynamada mahir; komik diyaloglar, yanlış anlaşılmaya mahal vermeler ve beklenmedik cevaplar yaratabilen usta bir oyun yazarıdır. Kendisi öyle olduğunu reddetse de oyunlarında kimliğin ve hafızanın önemi, gerçek ve görünen arasındaki ilişki, hayatın sıkıntıları, kendinden ve kendinden önceki yazarlardan esinlenme ve ödünç alma gibi postmodern ve absürd tiyatronun tipik özelliklerini görmek mümkündür. İlk defa 1968 yılında sergilenen *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound* (*The Real Inspector Hound*) oyunu Agatha Christie'nin 1952 yapımı *Fare Kapamı* (*The Mousetrap*) oyununun bir parodisiyken *Akrobatlar* (*Jumpers*) akademik felsefenin satirik bir eleştirisidir. Stoppard, bu makalede incelenen *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound* ve *Akrobatlar* adlı oyunlarında kurgusunu oyunlarının başında yarattığı bir gizem üzerine inşa eder. Bu gizem *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound*'da sahneye diğer aktörlerce fark edilmeyen bir ceset koyarak gerçekleştirilirken *Akrobatlar*'ın en başında akrobatlardan birinin öldürülmesi ve kimin öldürdüğünün de oyun boyunca söylenmemesiyle sağlanır. Stoppard, *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound*'da yarattığı gizemi oyun boyunca korumak için radyodan geçen firar etmiş bir akıl hastasıyla ilgili polis duyurusunu ve sahnede çalan telefonu kullanırken *Akrobatlar*'da sahnede yer alan telefon dışarıya telefon açılması için kullanılır. Yine Stoppard izleyicilerini daha derin muammalara sokmak için açılış sahnelerinde *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound*'da büyük bir ayna, *Akrobatlar*'da ise televizyon ekranı kullanır. Her iki oyunun diyaloglarında da şüphe, şiddet, yanlış anlaşılma, iletişimsizlik oldukça yer tutar. Stoppard *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound*'da tiyatro eleştirmenlerini oyuna dahil ederek ve cinayet işlettirerek eleştirirken *Akrobatlar*'da akademik felsefecileri, cinayeti kimin işlediği sorusuna cevap aramak yerine, en büyük muamma olan 'neden yaratıldı?' sorusuna cevap vermeleri gerektiğini söyler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tom Stoppard, *Gerçek Müfettiş Hound*, (*The Real Inspector Hound*), *Akrobatlar*, (*Jumpers*), parodi, gizem

Parody and Mystery in Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers*

Abstract: Tom Stoppard, who was born in Czechoslovakia and learned English later, is a playwright who is more capable in English language and more able to use the possibilities of the language than most of native English writers. He is capable of playing with words, creating funny dialogues, misunderstandings and unexpected answers. In his plays, though he refuses to name himself as such, it is possible to see some typical features of postmodern and absurd theatre, such as the importance of identity and memory, the relationship between the real and the visible, the troubles of life, and inspiration and borrowing from even himself and other writers. *The Real Inspector Hound*, first exhibited in 1968, is a parody of Agatha Christie's 1952 play *The Mousetrap*, while *Jumpers* is a satirical critique of academic philosophy. Stoppard builds his fiction in both *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers* on a mystery he creates at the beginning of his plays. This mystery is created in *The Real Inspector Hound* by putting a corpse on the stage unnoticed by the other actors while one of the acrobats is killed at the beginning of the *Jumpers* and who the killer is is not told throughout the play. Stoppard uses the police message on radio about an escaped madman to preserve the mystery he creates, and a ringing telephone on the stage in *The Real*

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¹ Bu makale yazarın yüksek lisans tezinin bir parçasından hazırlanmıştır.

Inspector Hound while the telephone in *Jumpers* is only used for calling. Again, Stoppard uses a large mirror in *The Real Inspector Hound* and a television screen in *Jumpers* in the opening scenes to immerse his audience in deeper enigmas. Doubt, violence, misunderstanding and miscommunication are often seen in the dialogues of both plays. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, Stoppard criticises theatre critics by adding them in the play and having them commit a murder, while in *Jumpers*, he criticises academic philosophers for trying to answer the question of who committed the murder, rather than the biggest conundrum: 'Why Were we created?'.
Keywords: Tom Stoppard, *The Real Inspector Hound*, *Jumpers*, parody, mystery

Introduction

Although Tom Stoppard was born in Czechoslovakia, had a tough childhood, and learnt English later, he has become one of the greatest contemporary playwrights of English. He has written plays for television, radio and stage, and film scripts. He won an Oscar for the screenplay of *Shakespeare in Love*. The reason why he is so much appreciated should be sought in his use of language. He loves playing with words, makes a lot of puns, creates humorous conversations by using misunderstandings and unexpected answers or actions.

In most of his plays, he deals with the themes of postmodern ideas, such as man's loss of control of his life, his ability to alter his destiny, the discrepancy between life and art, appearance and reality, the dualism of life and death, the relativity of truth and history, the importance of identity, and problematization of memory. His plays abound with many sophisticated debates on art, philosophy, metaphysics, politics, revolution, scientific and mathematical theories, history, music, sports, and architecture designs that bring diversity in subject matter. However, it is essential to notice that the style attracts more than the content of the plays but at the same time designed in such a way that it serves to the core of his content.

According to Gabriel Scott Robinson, Tom Stoppard is a contemporary playwright because he shares the same anxieties of life:

The subjects of Tom Stoppard's theatre are familiar to much of contemporary literature. He writes of the anxiety and confusion of life, of the helplessness of the individual caught up in forces impervious to reason, of the loss of identity and faith. He discusses in philosophical terms the lack of absolute values, the problem of freedom, the uncertainty of all knowledge and perception. Stoppard's world is implausible and irrational and also full of cruelty and pain. His characters are the victims of accidental calamities which threaten and occasionally destroy them.²

Stoppard stresses that theatre can still show and teach audiences about what representation is and what reality is. He wants us to be aware of reality which can be known through discourse. For this reason, he highlights the power of representation to determine his audiences' perceptions of reality.

² Gabriele Scott Robinson, "Plays Without Plot: The Theatre of Tom Stoppard," *Educational Theatre Journal* 29. 1 (1977): 37.

“Although he sometimes seems to stand against postmodernism, his narrative strategies share similarities with postmodern fiction”.³

Stoppard’s theatre is rich in terms of intertextuality. His works compromise both inspiration from other writers and direct allusions from other works of literature. As postmodernism allows making adaptations from classics, he borrows some material from the classics within the plot structure of his plays like *Travesties*. Indebted to the masterpieces of British drama, namely Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* and Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*, he writes *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*. His readings on various sources enrich his writings. Stoppard wrote *After Magritte* after seeing a René Magritte exhibition. Besides, the traits of Ludwig Wittgenstein can also be observed in *After Magritte*.

Parody

In order to create parody, Tom Stoppard uses the ‘whodunit’ genre in two of his plays; *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers*. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, two theatre critics, Birdboot and Moon, sit among the audience and watch a ‘whodunit’ play. At the very beginning of the play, Stoppard clearly stresses that he would make ‘just’ a parody of this genre:

BIRDBOOT: Well, no – I mean it’s a sort of a thriller, isn’t it?

BIRDBOOT: Underneath?!? It’s a whodunit, man! - Look at it! (*They look at it. The room. The BODY. Silence.*) Has it started yet?⁴

Moon is very ambitious and he wants to kill Higgs in order to be the first-string critic. The other critic, Birdboot, “had a love affair with the actress playing Felicity Cunningham in a ‘whodunit’ thriller, the night before the performance”⁵ and when he sees another actress called Cynthia Muldoon, who is prettier than Felicity, he falls in love with her. First Birdboot takes a place in the thriller, and when he is shot, Moon makes his entrance. On the stage, Birdboot is Simon Gascoyne and Moon is the Inspector Hound. Both are killed on the stage.

There are two frames in the play. The first one is the outer frame, which is about two theatre critics, and the second one is the inner frame, which is a

³ Çiğdem Yardımcı, “Reflections of Historiographic Metadrama in Tom Stoppard’s *Travesties*, *Arcadia*, *Indian Ink* and *Invention of Love*” (master’s thesis, Doğuş University, 2008), 43.

⁴ Tom Stoppard, “The Real Inspector Hound,” in *Tom Stoppard: Plays One* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 7. All further references to this work will appear in the text.

⁵ Mohammad Reza Sadrian, “Parody in Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, And *Dog’s Hamlet*, *Cahoot’s Macbeth*” (PhD thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2009), 116.

'whodunit' thriller. At the end of the play, these two frames combine and form a complete play. Stoppard, by using two different frames, makes parody of 'whodunit' by the inner frame and the theatre critics by the outer frame. It could be said that by combining the frames at the end of the play, he also makes a 'parody' of 'parody'.

The other parody of 'whodunit' is in *Jumpers*. One of the acrobat philosophers, who combine to form a human pyramid, Duncan McFee, is shot and falls from the pyramid. Since Dotty cannot be seen on the stage while it happens, "it should be possible to believe that Dotty is responsible for what happens".⁶ Like in *The Real Inspector Hound*, death is just a death:

DOTTY: Archie...

ARCHIE: There is no need to get it out of proportion. Death is always a great pity of course but it's not as though the alternative were immortality. (13).

In order to create this 'whodunit' genre parody, Stoppard makes great use of stage directions. At the very beginning of *The Real Inspector Hound*, when Mrs. Drudge, the house cleaner, answers the ringing phone, it is clearly indicated that the place is the exact area for a 'whodunit' play:

MRS. DRUDGE: (*into phone*): Hello, the drawing-room of Lady Muldoon's country residence one morning in early spring? ... Hello! – the draw – who? Who did you wish to speak to? I am afraid there is no one of that name here, this is all very mysterious and I'm sure it's leading up to something, I hope nothing is amiss for we, that is Lady Muldoon and her houseguests, are here cut off from the world, including Magnus, the wheelchair-ridden half-brother of her lady-ship's husband Lord Albert Muldoon who ten years ago went out for a walk on the cliffs and was never seen again – and all alone, for they had no children. (11).

In *Jumpers*, in order not to show who the killer is, Stoppard hides Dotty behind the pyramid:

(*From her tone now it should be apparent that DOTTY, who may have appeared pleasantly drunk, is actually breaking up mentally. And from her position in the near-dark outside the JUMPERS' light, it should be possible to believe that DOTTY is responsible for what happens next – which is: A gun shot.*) (12).

The aim of this 'whodunit' genre is to reveal the truth beyond the mystery, but in Stoppard's plays it is not clear. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, the real inspector comes into existence at the end of the play; it is Magnus, who is actually Albert, Cynthia's lost husband, but according to Moon, Albert is

⁶ Tom Stoppard, *Jumpers*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 12. All further references to this work will appear in the text

Puckeridge, a third string critic, who has “waited a long time for this moment” (44):

MAGNUS: Yes! – it is me, Albert! - who lost his memory and joined the force, rising by merit to the rank of Inspector, his past blotted out – until fate cast him back into the home he left behind, back to the beautiful woman he had brought here as his girlish bride – in short, my darling, my memory has returned and your long wait is over!

CYNTHIA: Oh, Albert!

(*They embrace*)

MOON (*with a trace of admiration*): Puckeridge ... you cunning bastard.

(*MOON dies.*) (44).

In *Jumpers*, there is no answer to the question of who the murderer of Duncan McFee is:

ARCHIE: The truth to us philosophers, Mr Crouch, is always an interim judgement. We will never even know for certain who did shoot McFee. Unlike mystery novels, life does not guarantee a denouement; and if it came, how would one know whether to believe it? (72).

Stoppard loves using other writer’s works for the plots of his ‘parody’ plays. He makes the parody of Agatha Christie’s play *The Mousetrap* in *The Real Inspector Hound*.⁷ Weldon Durham also stresses this ‘specific’ target: “The specific target of Stoppard’s mockery is, of course, Agatha Christie’s *The Mousetrap*.”⁸

Stoppard’s plays generally depend on real events, and they bear the stamp of real memories. For *The Real Inspector Hound*, he uses his journalistic memories:

I was a second string critic. I started in journalism in Bristol and went around for years actually reviewing the kind of play I am parodying. [...] Reviewing Agatha Christie’s plays was merely the first step to lying on my stomach in some Oriental airport while plate glass was smashed by bazookas.⁹

When he talks about *Jumpers*, he confesses that the play stems from an ‘image’ in his mind:

A long time ago I had an image of a troupe of gymnasts making a pyramid and there being a gunshot and one gymnast being blown out of the pyramid,

⁷ Anthony Jenkins, *The Theatre of Tom Stoppard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 50.

⁸ Weldon B. Durham, “Ritual of Riddance in Tom Stoppard’s *The Real Inspector Hound*,” in *Tom Stoppard: A Casebook*, ed. John Harty (London: Garland Publishing, 1988), 89.

⁹ Mel Gussow, *Conversations with Stoppard* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 1-2.

the rest of the pyramid imploding on the hole that he left. I had this piece of paper with this dead acrobat on the floor, and I didn't know who he was, who shot him, or why?¹⁰

The parodying of 'philosophy' is seen in *Jumpers*. Unlike Jonathan Bennet, who thinks "there is nothing about philosophy in *Jumpers*"¹¹; Roy W. Perret argues strictly that it is a parody of philosophy:

Jumpers is a successful and highly structured piece of theatre which manages to combine a serious treatment of issues of philosophical significance with broadly farcical comedy. It is, in other words, a remarkable presentation of philosophy as farce and farce as philosophy.¹²

Nearly every character has a word to say about philosophy in *Jumpers* although George Moore is the only one who does it academically. Firstly, Dotty replies to George in a philosophical way:

DOTTY: [...] Things do not seem, on the one hand, they are; on the other hand, bad is not what they can be. They can be green, or square, or Japanese, loud, fatal, waterproof or vanilla-flavoured; and the same for actions, which can be disapproved of, or comical, unexpected, saddening or good television, variously, depending on who frowns, laughs, jumps, weeps or wouldn't have missed it for the world. (31).

Then, Inspector Bones objects to George about his usage of 'God', but he accepts that he is not familiar with this field:

BONES: Well, 'Are God?' is wrong for a start.

[...]

BONES: (*Putting down the script*) It's not a world I move in very much. (36).

At the end of the second act, Archie offers Crouch, the porter of the house, the caretaking of his little symposium even though he has no qualifications:

CROUCH: Yes, well, I'm only a caretaker, but all the same somebody shot him, and –

ARCHIE: A caretaker? I've been looking for a caretaker to take the chair at a little symposium I'm running. Are you busy this evening?

CROUCH: Me? I haven't got the qualifications.

ARCHIE: Oh, I'll give you those. Does Divinity interest you at all? (72).

Stoppard also parodies Zeno's paradoxes. When George talks about arrow paradox, Stoppard makes him fire his own arrow by using his witty stage directions:

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹ Jonathan Bennett, "Philosophy and Mr Stoppard," *Philosophy* 50.191 (1975): 8.

¹² Roy W. Perrett, "Philosophy as Farce, or Farce as Philosophy," *Philosophy* 59.229 (1984): 381.

GEORGE: [...] (*With a certain relish he notches his arrow into the bowstring.*) But it was precisely this notion of infinite series which in the sixth century BC led the Greek philosopher Zeno to conclude that since an arrow shot towards a target first had to cover half the distance, and then half the remainder, and then half the remainder after that, and so on ad infinitum, the result was, as I will now demonstrate, that though an arrow is always approaching its target, it never quite gets there, and Saint Sebastian died of fright.

(*He is about to fire the arrow, but changes his mind.*)

DOTTY: (*Off*) Fire!

(*George fires, startled before he was ready, and the arrow disappears into the top of the wardrobe.*) (19).

As for Achilles and the Tortoise paradox, the clever usage of his stage directions is seen:

GEORGE: [...] Zeno overlooked the fallacy which is exemplified at its most picturesque in his famous paradoxes, which showed in every way but experience that an arrow could never reach its target, and that a tortoise given a head start in a race with, say, a hare, could never be overtaken – and by way of regaining your attention I will now demonstrate the nature of that fallacy; to which end I have brought with me a specially trained tortoise – (*which he takes from the smaller wooden box*) – and a similarly trained, damn and blast! – (*He has opened the larger box and found it empty. He looks round.*) Thumper! Thumper, where are you, boy? (21).

In *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers*, Tom Stoppard makes parody of detectives. These two detectives all have ridiculous names: Hound in *The Real Inspector Hound* and Bones in *Jumpers*. Stoppard makes his characters mock at the names of detectives in the plays. First in *The Real Inspector Hound*, Cynthia wonders if Hound is a dog, which is obviously a reference to Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of Baskervilles*:

FELICITY (*tensely*): It sounded like the cry of a gigantic hound!

[...]

(MRS. DRUDGE *enters.*)

MRS. DRUDGE: Inspector Hound!

CYNTHIA: A police dog? (26).

In *Jumpers*, detective Bones mocks at his own name:

BONES: Ah! – Bones!

GEORGE: What?

BONES: As in rags-and.

GEORGE: Rags and bones???

BONES: Yes – no. Bones' the name, as in dem bones, dem bones ... (Pause.)
... dem dry bones. That's a tortoise, is it? (34).

Stoppard's detectives, physically, do not seem like real detectives. When they are seen for the first time, it is difficult to believe that they are 'real' detectives. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, when Hound is seen for the first time, although he is not the 'real inspector', he wears 'inflatable – and inflated – pontoons with flat bottoms about two feet across swamp boots' and carries a foghorn (26). Bones in *Jumpers* carries 'a bunch of flower' for Mrs Moore (34). The detectives of these plays are all awkward and do not carry out their investigations properly. According to Stephen Hu, they generally investigate mysteries only to "confront situations that test their empirical strategies for gaining knowledge."¹³ Their investigations are absurd because in these plays detection is impossible. This makes them nothing but fools.¹⁴

In *The Real Inspector Hound*, at the beginning of his investigation, Hound confidently assures everyone that they are in safe hands. A few minutes later, he starts to lose his confidence and he forgets that he is a police officer and wants to call the police to get rid of the corpse:

HOUND (*snatching the phone*): I'll phone the police!

CYNTHIA: But you are the police!

HOUND: Thank God I'm here – the lines have been cut! (30).

Although Inspector Bones of *Jumpers* is very kind, his memory is not good enough to remember clearly. He even forgets the name of the man that he spoke to a minute ago. He calls George Moore – Charlie, Jack – Clarence, George does not care about it. But when he utters Archie's name wrongly, he is corrected:

BONES: (*A new intimacy*) Sir Jim –

ARCHIE: Archie -

[...]

BONES: Sir Archibald Bouncer –

ARCHIE: Jumper. (53-55).

When he makes a confession to George, it is understood that Bones is originally a 'showman':

BONES: Show business is my main interest, closely followed by crime detection. ... (37).

¹³ Stephen Hu, *Tom Stoppard's Stagecraft* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 59.

¹⁴ Jeffrey D. Mason, "Foot-prints to the Moon: Detectives as Suspects in Hound and Magritte," in *Tom Stoppard: A Casebook*, ed. John Harty (London: Garland Publishing, 1988), 112.

In *Jumpers*, Tom Stoppard again shows his skill in self-plagiarism, stealing from his previous plays. By making a reference to *After Magritte's* Inspector Foot, he says that Foot is the brother-in-law of Bones' brother:

ARCHIE: Bones...? I had a patient named Bones. I wonder if he was any relation? – an osteopath.

BONES: My brother!

ARCHIE: Remember the case well. Cognomen Syndrome. My advice to him was to take his wife's maiden name of Foot and carry on from there. (52).

In the end of these two plays, Stoppard's detectives become victims and corrupted. While they are questioners at the beginning, they turn into be questioned ones in the end. They change from hunters to prey. They do not solve any mysteries, indeed, they create more. Stephen Hu underlines this fact in his book:

Investigators reveal a common inability to bring order and understanding to situations through systematic inquiry. Puckeridge, the real Inspector Hound, becomes a murderous schemer. Inspector Foot discovers that he himself was the bizarre figure under investigation in *After Magritte*. Without great protest, Inspector Bones, a foolish celebrity-worshipper, submits to blackmail and agrees to conceal a homicide. Lacking the talents of the archetypal detective, Stoppard's sleuth acts with such incompetency that the audience of *Jumpers* never clearly learns identity of Duncan McFee's murderer.¹⁵

In *The Real Inspector Hound*, When Magnus reveals that he is the real inspector and murders Moon without 'stopping in the name of law', he confesses that he is Albert, but for Moon, he is Puckeridge, the murderer of Higgs and Birdboot – together with him. As for *Jumpers*, it is seen that Inspector Bones, who confesses that he really works in show business, is inclined to accept the belief in Duncan McFee committing suicide in a plastic garbage bag, as he cannot stand idly by Archie's offering The Chair of Divinity in a way inappropriate way to being a detective:

ARCHIE: Inspector, my patronage is not extensive, but it is select. I can offer prestige, the respect of your peers and almost unlimited credit among the local shopkeepers – in short, the Chair of Divinity is yours for the asking.

BONES: The Chair of Divinity?

ARCHIE: Not perhaps, the Chair which is in the eye of the hurricane nowadays, but a professorship will still be regarded as a distinction come the day – early next week, in all probability – when the Police Force will be thinned out to a ceremonial front for the peace-keeping activities of the Army.

¹⁵ Hu, 60.

BONES: I see. Well, until that happens, I should still like to know – if McFee shot himself inside a plastic bag, where is the gun? (55-56).

Both *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers* are parodies of unskilful detectives.

Mystery

For Stoppard, life is full of mysteries. He loves trying to create and solve mysteries, but sometimes he leaves them unanswered as well. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, he begins his play with a corpse unnoticed by the other actors. Murders are committed on stage and the truth is revealed at the end for the actors, but not for the audience, because who the murderer is is not certain, Puckeridge or Albert? At the very beginning of *Jumpers*, one of the acrobats is killed but the killer is not told in the play.

He believes that perception is deceitful. There is nothing like absolute reality. For this reason, he shows the thin boundary between reality and illusion in his plays. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, he creates two theatre critics (reality), and injects them into the play (illusion). In *Jumpers*, he depicts a couple and their illusory lives.

He presents bizarre scenes in his plays and wants the audience to believe them, because according to Stoppard, "there is obviously a perfectly logical reason for everything".¹⁶ He builds a counterweight tied to the central ceiling's flex with a basket of fruit in *After Magritte*. Whenever there is chaos or disagreement in the play, the equilibrium is distorted and it can be counterweighted again by biting something from a fruit. When Mel Gussow asks: "What does a nude lady have to do with a play about moral philosophy?" He answers as an absurd playwright: "Does it have to?"¹⁷

'Mystery' is something that we find difficult or impossible to understand or explain. Mystery creates suspicion. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, everybody is suspicious. Nothing is unknown in this play. Murders create suspicion, and suspects create murder. Moon is suspicious about Birdboot and he asks whom the lady was he saw last night, and Birdboot, in order to get rid of this suspicion, defends himself. Another suspicion in this play is about who the real inspector is. When Moon is about to die, he suspects that he is killed by Puckeridge.

¹⁶ Tom Stoppard, "After Magritte," in *Tom Stoppard: Plays One* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 63.

¹⁷ Gussow, 17.

Stoppard uses the 'whodunit' genre in order to create mystery. In *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers*, there are murders and these murders serve for mystery creation. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, it is seen in the first stage direction that Stoppard deliberately places a huge mirror to show audience reflections and there is a phone on the stage, and also a corpse. These would create mystery throughout the play. Everybody is a suspect in this play. Birdboot cannot see Higgs, and gets suspicious about his absence, he constantly asks Moon about him, and Moon is not sure but he wants him die, and Moon supposes that Birdboot cheated on his wife, Myrtle, with Felicity, who takes a role in the play, but he strictly denies it.

For Stoppard in *The Real Inspector Hound*, radio is used in order to create mystery. At the beginning of the play, while Mrs. Drudge dusts, she turns on the radio and an announcement is heard, right after this, a man appears answering the description:

RADIO: (*without preamble, having been switched on by MRS. DRUDGE*):

We interrupt our programme for a special police message.

(*MRS. DRUDGE stops to listen.*)

The search still goes on for the escaped madman who is on the run in Essex.

MRS. DRUDGE: (*fear and dismay*): Essex!

RADIO: County police led by Inspector Hound have received a report that the man has been seen in the desolate marshes around Muldoon Manor. The man is wearing a darkish suit with a lightish shirt. He is of medium height and build and youngish. Anyone seeing a man answering to this description and acting suspiciously, is advised to phone the nearest police station.

(*A man answering this description has appeared behind MRS. DRUDGE. He is acting suspiciously. He creeps in. He creeps out. MRS. DRUDGE does not see him. He does not see the body.*)

That is the end of the police message (9).

Telephone rings on the stage. For the first time, Mrs. Drudge answers it and she describes the plot of the play, for the second time, Simon answers it and says it is the wrong number. When Moon is on the stage alone, the phone starts to ring again, he hesitates but, in the end, he answers it; it is now Birdboot's wife, Myrtle, and Birdboot goes onto the stage and talks with her. This telephone conversation adds mystery to mysteries. How can Myrtle know this telephone number? Like Moon, she is suspicious of being cheated on by Birdboot. She is aware of Felicity and this may give her an idea that she can find the number by tracing Felicity, and also this conversation justifies Moon's suspicion.

When everyone is sent to search the house by Inspector Hound, Simon is shot dead by a mysterious bullet. The stage is empty in order not to leave a witness. Nobody knows why and by whom he is killed. Before Simon is killed, there are some conversations that enable the audience to become suspicious about the murderer. Interestingly, at the end of each conversation, Mrs. Drudge enters the scene and overhears what they talk about. First of all, Felicity threatens Simon:

FELICITY: I'll kill you for this, Simon Gascoyne!

(She leaves in tears, passing MRS. DRUDGE who has entered in time to overhear her last remark.) (17).

Then, Simon declares that he would kill anyone who is against his relationship with Cynthia:

SIMON: I'll kill anyone who comes between us!

CYNTHIA: Yes what is it, Mrs. Drudge?

MRS. DRUDGE: Should I close the windows, my lady? The fog is beginning to roll of the sea like a deadly – (19).

Magnus is also one of them, and threatens Simon, he says he 'will kill him' while they play cards:

MAGNUS: It's Gascoyne, isn't it? I will kill him if he comes between us! (20).

Magnus threatens Simon again and he goes to 'oil his gun':

MAGNUS: There's an old Canadian proverb handed down from the Bladfoot Indians, which says: He who laughs last laughs longest.

SIMON: Yes, I've heard it said.

(Simon turns away to CYNTHIA)

MAGNUS: Well, I think I'll go and oil my gun. *(He exits.)* (21-22).

Upon this conversation, Cynthia suspects Simon and she says she would kill him:

CYNTHIA: If I find that you have been untrue to me – if I find that you have falsely seduced me from my dear husband Albert – I will kill you, Simon Gascoyne!

(MRS. DRUDGE has entered silently to witness this. [...]) (22).

After these incidents, Stoppard uses the radio again in order to create mystery. Now Felicity turns the radio on and Simon is not seen on the stage:

RADIO: We interrupt our programme for a special police message. The search for the dangerous madman who is on the loose in Essex has now narrowed to the immediate vicinity of Muldoon Manor. Police are hampered by the deadly swamps and the fog, but believe that the madman spent last night in a deserted cottage on the cliffs. The public is advised to stick together

and make sure none of their number is missing. That is the end of the police message.

(FELICITY turns off the radio nervously. Pause.)

CYNTHIA: Where's Simon?

FELICITY: Who?

CYNTHIA: Simon. Have you seen him?

FELICITY: No.

CYNTHIA: Have you, Magnus?

MAGNUS: No. (25).

When Inspector Hound comes onto stage, he discovers the dead body for the first time. He thinks it was Cynthia's husband, but it is not. When Birdboot, the critic, enters the stage after a telephone call from his wife, he is mistaken as Simon by the others, and the conversations are repeated again as if he is Simon, and he sees that the corpse is Higgs, the man whom he is asking Moon about from the beginning of the play. He thinks he is right to get suspicious about Moon killing Higgs. Right after this incident, Birdboot is still alone on the stage and he is shot. Moon jumps onto the stage, and everybody thinks he is the Inspector:

(There is a shot and BIRDBOOT falls dead.)

MOON: Birdboot! (He runs on, to BIRDBOOT's body.)

(CYNTHIA appears at the French windows. She stops and stares. All as before.)

CYNTHIA: Oh my God – what happened, Inspector?

MOON (almost to himself): He's dead... (He rises.) That's a bit rough, isn't it? – A bit extreme! – He may have had his faults – I admit he was a fickle old... Who did this, and why? (40).

Accepting his role as an Inspector, Moon begins his investigation. First, he blames Magnus for the murder, but then he becomes a suspect because he denies that he knows the corpse – maybe this is because he is in another dimension, he is an actor not a critic anymore - :

MOON: All right! I'm going to find out who did this! I want everyone to go to the positions they occupied when the shot was fired – (they move; hysterically): No one will leave the house! (They move back.) (41).

Stoppard makes Mrs. Drudge witness some conversations that lead to suspicion, and now, toward the end of the play, he uses her to clarify the mystery behind the murder of Simon Gascoyne. She, firstly, points to Cynthia:

MRS. DRUDGE: Happening to enter this room earlier in the day to close the windows, I chanced to overhear a remark made by the deceased Simon Gascoyne to her ladyship, viz. – "I will kill anyone who comes between us." (41).

After being denied by Cynthia, Mrs. Drudge now blames her again by saying:

MRS. DRUDGE: Subsequent to that reported remark, I also happened to be in earshot of a remark made by Lady Muldoon to the deceased, to the effect "I will kill you, Simon Gascoyne!" I hope you don't mind my mentioning it. (42).

Cynthia clearly states that she "hated Simon Gascoyne, but she did not kill him", Mrs. Drudge plays her last card by pointing out Felicity's words that she uttered to Simon:

MRS. DRUDGE: Prior to that, Inspector, I also chanced to overhear a remark made by Miss Cunningham, no doubt in the heat of the moment, but it stuck in my mind as these things do, viz., "I will kill you for this, Simon Gascoyne!" (42).

Mrs. Drudge's witnesses cannot solve the mystery. Magnus tries to undertake the investigation. According to him, Moon, who imagines himself as the inspector, is the suspect and he blames him for killing Simon Gascoyne, but Moon denies it by saying that he just 'dreamed':

MAGNUS: [...] masquerading as – Police Inspector Hound! [...] only to discover that in the house was a man, Simon Gascoyne, who recognized the corpse as a man against whom you had held a deep-seated grudge -!

MOON: But I didn't kill – I'm almost sure I –

MAGNUS: I put it to you! – are you the real Inspector Hound?!

MOON: You know damn well I'm not! What's it all about?

MAGNUS: I thought as much.

MOON: I only dreamed... sometimes I dreamed –

CYNTHIA: So it was you!

MRS.DRUDGE: The madman!

FELICITY: The killer! (43).

At the end of the play, Magnus unmask himself as the real Inspector Hound and kills Moon. According to Moon, Magnus is Puckeridge, a third string critic:

MAGNUS: Yes! – I am the real Inspector Hound!

MOON (*pause*): Puckeridge!

MAGNUS (*with pistol*): Stand where you are, or I shoot!

MOON (*backing*): Puckeridge! You killed Higgs – and Birdboot tried to tell me –

MAGNUS: Stop in the name of law!

(MOON *turns to run*. MAGNUS *fires*. MOON *drops to his knees*.)

I have waited a long time for this moment. (44).

In this two-framed play, in the first frame, Simon is killed before he tells who the corpse is. In the second frame, Birdboot understands who the corpse is and he says it is Higgs. This makes Moon suspected of murdering Higgs, but at the end of the play, according to Moon, the suspect is Puckeridge, who is a third-string critic. Mystery is not revealed clearly, and the ending creates another mystery about the real killer or killers. Richard Corballis clearly stresses these mysteries:

There is some doubt as to whether Moon really did kill Higgs, of course. The faltering manner in which he protests his innocence to Birdboot suggests guilt but, since Magnus eventually turns out to be the third-string critic, Puckeridge (Macafferty in the first edition), it is possible that Moon was framed, in which case we have the prospect of a circular argument: Moon, posing as Inspector Hound, is accused of Higg's murder by Puckeridge, who claims to be the real Inspector Hound, along with a number of other things; but Puckeridge himself may be the murderer rather than the real Inspector Hound, in which case presumably Moon was the real Inspector Hound... Or perhaps neither of them is the real Inspector.¹⁸

Whereas Stoppard uses a huge mirror in *The Real Inspector Hound*, he uses a television screen, "ideally forming a backdrop to the whole stage" (7) in *Jumpers*. These two elements open the gates of mystery for the audience before they start to see the plays. Contrary to *The Real Inspector Hound*, in *Jumpers* the telephone is used to 'telephone', not to receive a call. George, who is a philosopher, uses it to "make a complaint about a disturbance of the peace" (10) at his home, and dictates his name as 'Wittengstein' to the constable. Then, he goes to his wife and by keeping his telephone call a secret; he says "What if someone phones the police?" (11).

During the party night, an unknown bullet shoots one of the acrobats, who build a human pyramid; it is Duncan McFee, who dies. As one of the prominent features of the 'whodunit' genre, a murderer cannot be known throughout the play, but Dorothy seems to be the potential killer since Stoppard uses her to keep the corpse on stage throughout the play, as he does in *The Real Inspector Hound*. Dorothy is lonely during the play, and she keeps the corpse as if it accompanies her loneliness, but she wants to get rid of him as soon as possible. C. B. Crump suggests that her struggle to dispose of McFee is similar to modern man's plight:

Dorothy's plight, symbolized by her need to dispose of McFee's body, corresponds to that of modern man, caught with life and death on his hands

¹⁸ Richard Corballis, *Stoppard: The Mystery and The Clockwork* (Oxford: Amber Lane Press, 1984), 53.

and in need of a reason for continuing to function in a grim and chaotic world from which the spiritual consolations of the past have been withdrawn.¹⁹

Although it seems that the main mystery in *Jumpers* is the death of Duncan McFee, in fact, the essential mystery is the existence of God. George is responsible for the creation of this mystery, he is a philosopher, and asks this question to himself a lot of the time while he dictates his speech to his secretary:

GEORGE: [...] Is God? (*Pause.*) I prefer to put the question in this form because to ask, 'Does God exist?' appears to presuppose the existence of a God who may not, [...]. To ask, 'Is God' appears to presuppose a Being who perhaps isn't... and thus is open to the same objection as the question, 'Does God exist?' (15-16).

Crump supports the idea that "McFee's murder is a metaphor":

This congruence signals that the mystery of McFee's murder is a metaphor for the essential mysteries of creation. In a murder mystery, the chief questions are "Who done it?" and "Why?" Some of our fundamental questions about life are the same: Who done it? Who created the universe and to what purpose? The ways that Archie, Bones, and George set about solving the murder represent various philosophical approaches to answering these larger questions.²⁰

There are real murders in the play. First Dorothy kills the goldfish, George blames her for the murder, and Dorothy replies that it is 'just a fish' as Archie says about Duncan McFee:

GEORGE: [...]

You murderous *bitch!* ... You might have put some water in the bath!
(*He is holding a dead goldfish.*)

[...] Murdered for a charade!

DOTTY: (*Angrily*) Murdered? Don't you dare splash *me* with your sentimental rhetoric! It's a bloody goldfish! Do you think every *sole meunière* comes to you untouched by suffering? (65).

Then George kills his hare, Thumper and his tortoise, Pat. Like Dorothy, he cries for help: "Dotty, Help, Murder!" (72). Bones, the detective, comes to investigate, and asks George to explain the mystery of these acrobats, and this conversation also reveals why Stoppard uses this acrobatic pyramid:

BONES: [...] Tell me something – Who *are* these acrobats?

¹⁹ G. B. Crump, "The Universe as Murder Mystery: Tom Stoppard's *Jumpers*," in *Tom Stoppard: A Casebook*, ed. John Harty (London: Garland Publishing, 1988), 159.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 158.

GEORGE: [...] a mixture of the more philosophical members of the university gymnastic team and the more gymnastic members of the Philosophy School. The close association between gymnastics and philosophy is I believe unique to this university and owes itself to the Vice-Chancellor, who is of course a first-rate gymnast, though an indifferent philosopher. (41).

The mystery of the jumpers continues during the play. They come, under the leadership of the first-rate gymnast Archie, like dancers but they place the dead body of Duncan McFee like compradors of the murderer. Archie, except for Dotty, seems to be responsible for the murder, because he takes the body and disposes of it and, during the inspection, he lies to Bones:

ARCHIE: What I had in mind is that McFee, suffering from nervous strain brought on by the appalling pressure of overwork – for which I blame myself entirely – left here last night in a mood of deep depression, and wandered into the park, where he crawled into a large plastic bag and shot himself ... leaving this note ... which was found in the bag together with his body by some gymnasts on an early morning keep-fit run. (55).

Later, he tells George about this death, by making up the same story:

ARCHIE: [...] Ah! – I knew there was something! – McFee’s dead.

GEORGE: What?!!

ARCHIE: Shot himself this morning, in the park, in a plastic bag. (59).

Stoppard uses helpers, Mrs. Drudge and Crouch, to create mystery in both *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers*. According to Crouch, the porter, the suspect is Miss Moore, because he sees her with the dead body. He confesses that he called the police on the party night, too, and now, how Inspector Bones knows the murderer before he comes home, is revealed now:

CROUCH: [...] You were wondering, sir, who brought them round.

GEORGE: No. I telephoned them myself.

CROUCH: You’re an honest man, sir. In the circumstances I don’t mind telling you I also phoned them myself, anonymous. (68)

Crouch continues to try to help in solving mysteries. He has an affair with the secretary, and he adds that the secretary also had a relationship with the murdered Duncan McFee. Upon this confess, the secretary takes her coat on and ‘a bright splash of blood on its back’ is seen, she seems to be a suspect for the murder, but when George looks at the top of the cupboard, he sees that blood is coming from his hare, Thumper. Obviously, it is true that Stoppard takes this illustration from English philosopher Alfred Jules Ayer:

[...] the statement that I have blood on my coat may, in certain circumstances, confirm the hypothesis that I have committed a murder, but it is not part of the meaning of the statement that I have committed a murder

that I should have blood upon my coat, nor, as I understand it, does the principle of verification imply that it is.²¹

Both in *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers*, mystery is created not only with stage directions and objects used in the stage but also through language of the text.

²¹ Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Penguin Books, 1971), 183.

Conclusion

The British playwright Tom Stoppard plays with the language, creates funny dialogues, misunderstandings and unexpected answers in his plays in which it is very possible to find some features of postmodern fiction like borrowing from classics. *The Real Inspector Hound*, is a parody of Agatha Christie's 1952 play *The Mousetrap*, while *Jumpers* is a critique of academic philosophy. Stoppard uses mystery and suspicion that he creates at the very beginning of both *The Real Inspector Hound* and *Jumpers*. While in *The Real Inspector Hound* a corpse is put on the stage unnoticed by the other players, in *Jumpers* one of the acrobats is killed at the beginning and the killer is not known throughout the play. A police message is read on the radio about an escaped madman to keep the mystery alive, and a ringing telephone on the stage in *The Real Inspector Hound*, but the telephone in *Jumpers* is only for telephoning. Likewise, Tom Stoppard uses a large mirror in *The Real Inspector Hound* and a television screen in *Jumpers* in order to deepen the mystery. The dialogues of the two plays is full with words connoting doubt, violence, misunderstanding and miscommunication. In *The Real Inspector Hound*, theatre critics are criticized by making them characters in the play and having them commit a murder, in *Jumpers* it is academic philosophers who gets criticism for not being able to answer our biggest existential questions.

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