

## Elective 1

Q1: The point of view that contexts of the texts have shaped their form and meaning ~~has~~ is greatly exemplified in the study of transformations. The transformation of Shakespeare's canonical play 'Hamlet' to Stoppard's 1967 play 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead' ~~sh~~ illustrates that changing<sup>ed</sup> contexts result in the reflection of changed values. By comparing the values of each text, the changed context from a stratified to chaotic world has clearly influenced form and meaning, providing value for the ~~r~~ responder.

The known reflects upon the new;



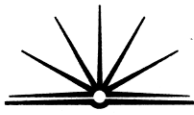
altered contexts have influenced form and meaning, <sup>exemplified</sup> through protagonist Hamlet. In 'Hamlet', he represents the dichotomy of Christian values and Renaissance need for order in the Elizabethan era. Composed in the 1600s, 'Hamlet' embodies the historical context of ~~their~~ shifting religions, political uncertainty and illness. In such conditions, theatre provided cathartic release. Appropriating Senecan tragedy, Hamlet is a 'noble heart' — this gives meaning for the Elizabethan response. A tragic hero, he endures conflict arising from his tragic flaw, procrastination. In the age of enlightenment, soliloquies symbolise his humanitarian self. ~~to a~~ bitter tone, he debates the



medieval doctrines that demand for a son to absolve his father's 'murder' with conflicting Christianity. In a bitter tone, his despair is denoted through self-laceration, 'lecherous, kindless villain', Accrual of negatives manifests his frustration at 'thought' prevailing over any 'resolution'.

Reflecting Elizabethan beliefs, the ghost portends some 'strange eruption'. Resolutely, Hamlet commits himself to revenge through the emphatic statement 'I have sworn't' - Transcending vengeance, it is a moral commitment to his 'Hyperion' father. Yet restoring the rightful king involves an

act of guilt- Hamlet must adopt an 'antidote disposition'. Espousing a moral stance, Hamlet condemns the incongruity of Gertrude and Claudius' union: 'Funereal banquet meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables'. The context has shaped meaning with his ex disruption of order seen as an extended metaphor of garden imagery - A pathetic fallacy it presages disaster: 'unweeded garden - in two months dead'. Juxtaposed with his anguish, a metaphorical sea change entails Hamlet realising the 'divinity that shapes our



ends - while he is noble in thought, the denouement implies restoration of a strong monarchy, only with profound loss:  
"Fortinbras - He has my dying voice!"

Contexts shape the form and meaning of 'R' and 'A'; a postmodern transformation of 'Hamlet'. Comparing the texts' values, the transformed text has converted aspects of the original, creating a comic drama relevant to the 1960s. Social upheaval resulted in the popularity of Absurdist theatre, with deconstruction of the canon, modern



literary theory regarded 'Hamlet'  
as a polysemic text open  
to interpretation -

Altering the <sup>original</sup> form, the

'R and U', removal of  
Hamlet's soliloquies eliminates  
the rational reasoning for  
his behaviour - His sarcasm  
witticisms are recontextualised.

Juxtaposed with 20th  
century idiom, Elizabethan  
language sounds pretentious  
Intellect in 'Hamlet'

transforms into an insane  
feature: 'Half of what  
he said meant something  
else'. It provides

raillery / The responder  
sees Hamlet as the

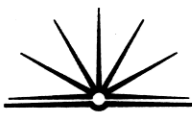
zenith of hysteria - In

a simple comic inversion,



of what Shakespeare only reports, a dumb show is created, 'Hamlet... stockings fouled'. A tragic hero is relegated to marginal status. He becomes an ostentatiously composed edifice, typical of intensely theatrical principles. An irreverent mood is established, endemic to the 60s satire boom ~~the~~ which deflated authority figures. ~~The~~ The medium of a revenge tragedy is recreated into farce.

Using characters of 'Hamlet', Stoppard ~~changes~~ invests them meaning for a 1960s context. In 'Hamlet', the role of

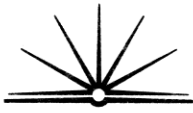


Ros and Guilt ~~of~~ reflect Elizabethan order and hierarchy ~~of~~ of the historical context -  
Representing <sup>a time</sup> ~~a time~~ where the ~~pride~~ joy of common man was determined by the powerful, their concerns parallel that of an Elizabethan responder - wheel imagery elucidates their desire for stability, represented by the king, a wheel 'whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things are mortis'd'. As mere functionaries, they divulge the relative unimportance of common man - two humorous, tri-syllable names represent their interchangeable qualities - ~~As political~~





Their purpose in life is to be a sycophant that 'soaks up the king's countenance' in obsequious cadence: 'lay our service freely at your feet'. As political pawns subject to the corrupt rule of those above, they are exploited to 'glean' what afflicts Hamlet. Shakespeare imagery implies betrayal, as Hamlet deprecates them as 'adders fang'd'. As subordinate characters, they are insignificant casualties of political intrigue. Their deaths evoke little sympathy.



Representing different values of the cultural-historical context, 'R and a' is a creative pastiche of 'Hamlet'. Resounding with the original, yet ~~in~~ yet maintaining integrity as ~~at~~ a separate text, the play illustrates how contexts have shaped form and meaning. After WWII, the transient nature of life created an ambience for existentialism - with the threat of nuclear war, came new ways of questioning our existence, exposing man's fundamental confusion in a volatile world - set on the



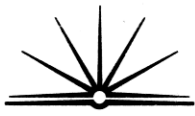
periphery of 'Hamlet', minor characters are foregrounded and with them our uncertainties.

Alluding to Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot', <sup>recontextualised</sup> AK as and Aunt head pointless lives in a place lacking 'visible character'. This image evokes an arid landscape - Through badinage, Stepparel satirizes their interchangeable qualities in 'Hamlet'.

They confuse their own identity - 'Koser - ? Aunt - ?' Both are engaged in a futile search for order in a disordered milieu. Bound with fragments of knowledge, they use

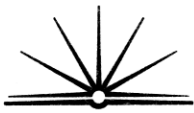


anachronisms to find answers but paradoxically raise more questions & A prelude to decision making, in abeyance. The law of probability is ironic; no decision occurs - the 'eighty-five heads' in a row symbolise their doom to eternal recurrences. As paralysed protagonists, the script is a metaphor for preordained fate, 'wheels -- set in motion -- we are -- condemned!' In dramatic irony, they embrace Shakespeare's moral code that will write them out of existence -



Representing a time when moral behaviour was challenged, they fail to ~~me~~ intervene decisively, and are 'denied an explanation' - terms Jargon represents the evasions of reality via word games = 'RAS: Hok.'  
Quit: Foul - No grunts -  
Love one: ~~the~~ they cannot control our universe; Stepper creates value for the responder as the context shapes the form and meaning.

Transformation of 'Harlet' to 'K and A' & reveals that contexts shape form and meaning - By



comparing the values, we  
can see that the new  
resonates with the known.