

## Tom Stoppard: The Amorality of the Artist

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**Abstract :** To maintain a healthy balanced loyalty between art and politics posits a debatable issue. The artist is always on the look out for the potential tension between those two realms. Therefore, one of the most painful dilemmas the artist finds is how to function in a society without sacrificing the aesthetic values of his/her work. In other words, the life-long awareness of failure which derives from the concept of the artist as caught between unflattering social realities and the need to invent genuine art forms becomes a fertilizing soil for the artists to dig deep into its origin. Thus, within the framework of this dilemma, the question of the responsibility of the artist and the relationship of the art to politics will be illuminating. The present paper tackles the idea of the amorality of the artist in selected plays by Tom Stoppard. However, Stoppard's awareness of his situation as a refugee has led him to keep at a distance from politics. He tried hard to avoid any intervention into the realms of political debate, especially in his earliest work. On the one hand, it is not meant that he did not interest in politics as such, but rather he preferred to question it than to create a fixed ideological position. On the other hand, Stoppard's refusal to intervene in politics is ascribed to his feeling of gratitude to Britain where he settled. As a result, Stoppard has frequently been criticized for a lack of political engagement and also for not leaning too much for the left when he does engage. His reaction to these public criticisms finds expression in his self-conscious statements which defensively stressed the artifice of his work. He, like Oscar Wilde thinks that the responsibility of the artist is devoted to the realm of his/her art. Consequently, his consciousness for the role of the artist is truly reflected in his two plays, *Artist Descending a Staircase*(1972) and *Travesties*(1974).

**Keywords :** amorality, dilemma, aesthetic, responsibility of the artist, political theatre

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