

David Roe

*Copenhagen*

1. The play opens with the revelation that all three characters are dead. After some of the plays this semester, this seems tame, but how does it affect your interpretation of the action? Is it hard to determine when the characters are living in memory and when they're in the present, "dead?" Do you think this would be hard on stage?
2. Perhaps the most obvious feature of *Copenhagen* is its inclusion of and focus on quantum mechanics. Were you convinced by the scientific dialog (eg..the discussions of nuclear physics on 33-34, uncertainty on 66)? Do you think it would be more convincing for a less scientifically educated audience? Similarly, there are a lot of metaphors and puns on quantum mechanics. Do they add to the play? Annoy?
3. The play presents three different interpretations of Heisenberg's visit to Bohr in 1941. What distinguishes them from each other? What effect does this repetition have? Which do you believe the most?
4. Heisenberg repeatedly admits to not remembering events exactly. Yet Bohr and Margrethe are also remembering things. Do you trust Heisenberg's versions of events less than theirs?
5. Do you see Heisenberg as being on trial during the play? How about Bohr? What conclusions does the play lead you toward about the morality of creating nuclear weapons?
6. What is Margrethe's role in the play? Clearly, she's there to serve the metaphor of an observer of two particles, but what else?
7. Bohr is compared to the Pope on page 39. What is the role of religion in the play? (see also 64, 71, 74, 92)
8. The decreasing lengths of questions comes to an end; Bohr expresses a desire to express himself in "plain language" (38). Does he succeed? Does the play succeed in making the science accessible?
9. How does Heisenberg's desire to remain "in control" affect the audience's perception of him? Does it undermine his attempt to defend his actions?
10. Heisenberg notes, about his meeting with Bohr, that "it has to seem natural. It has to be private" (7). In what other ways does the play contrast appearance and observation with reality? Does it provide any insights into what "reality" really is?
11. How does Bohr shooting Hendrik Casimir (or Gamow) (26-28) affect your impression of him?

Frayn, Michael. *Copenhagen*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.