

# A Fusion of Horizons in Absurd Theatre – An Insight into Production and Reception

Pratha R. Jaya

Department of English, V. V. Vanniaperumal College for Women (Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University), Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, India

**Abstract**—The conditioning of human lives in the modern era tends to be hazy as both advantages and adversities intertwine equitably. Comfort and calamities taking up their twists and turns, the age also penetrates the people's consciousness by encountering the euphoric emancipation in the midst of the absurd industrialized extremities. When the war and the bloodshed haunted and detained the human senses, the aftermath of destruction had unique bizarre effects on the survivors. Out of which emerged the Theatre of the absurd during the mid-twentieth century, reflecting not the surface level crisis but the deeper level darker reality. In accordance with their introspection and the interpretation of the revolutionary world, the playwrights of the absurd theatre shared a socio-cultural psychological climate with their spectators blended with circumlocutory hollow themes. This paper analyzes the reception stimuli in the audience of the absurd theatre in relation with the readerly 'gaps' and the hermeneutic codes patterned in the absurd drama context.

**Keywords**—Absurd theatre, hermeneutic code, dissimulation, aesthetic reception, anti-play.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Theatrical traditions undergo a wide range of divergences and variances over differing ages and shifting vogues. Intentions behind producing a theatrical play is not precise, neither the perceptions of the spectators are. They are multifaceted by numerous proximate speculations. The Theatre of the absurd explored the nothingness and absurd lifestyles prevailing over the entire Global Arena, leading the spectators to self introspect and self realise their own existences over the forlorn ultimate realities. Widely deviating from the former theatrical conventions that were conscious of heroism, valiance, hope and audacities, absurd dramas were featured by absurd language, inane conversations, grotesque personalities, barmy gestures and irrelevant actions, in such a way of questioning the traditional theatrical status quo.

## II. INITIATION AND INTENTION

Witnessing the nothingness of human tragic survival during the world war moments, the playwrights attempted to debrief what they were actually going through. The devastating destructions and the horrible slayer intentions of human community, under the name of wars and survival strategies, were critically recounted in the Theatre of the absurd. On the other hand, the industrialized modern

lives enhanced with science and technologies were also heavily attacked in the absurd drama along the inept human behaviourisms. It explores how the nothingness of the outer world creates a space of nothingness in human brains, allowing the Homo sapiens to celebrate the tragedy, misery, success, failure, weirdness and wickedness, in spite of the actual nothingness. The playwrights of the absurd theatre never attempted to provide a direct explanation of the theme, rather they made the spectators recognize oneself with the text to identify what they were really going through. The absurd language and senseless dialogues may sound nonsensical for the observers but they could create some 'gaps' in the spectators' reception tendencies. These 'gaps' permit the spectators to feel their absurd survival by enabling an omniscient assimilation of the text.

## III. TRAGIC GIST THROUGH COMIC TWISTS

Spectators, on their first read of absurd plays, could hardly hit any moral or absolute essence over the theme, dialogues or actions portrayed. They could drive only a mere sense of humor and senselessness in the characters of the absurd drama. The playwrights consciously abandoned the normal traditional elements of a theatrical drama by incorporating more irregularities and disorderliness, featuring anti-characters, anti-language and interrupted plot in disarray.

The characters have a tendency to be in a continuous chaotic confused state, busy with pointless deeds, blabbering irrelevant useless stuffs, whilst actually performing nothing worthwhile. But the indeterminacy that occurs as 'gaps' in the absurd plays can let the readers realize what Eugene Ionesco defined the human survival as 'senseless, absurd and useless..'. They convey a sense of incomprehensibility of the world – 'devoid of purpose', more baffling and less humanistic, intertwined with droll mockery and cryptic horror. It is an attempt made by playwrights to distinguish the individual consciousness from the collective unconsciousness of today's modern world. Just like the reality demanding mundane routine, the characters of absurd drama also keeps up an order like responding to the occurrences, nevertheless making it more meaningless, illogical and irrelevant. The psychological isolation and conscious absurdity of the characters in the absurd plays, replicates the playwrights 'personal perceptions of the harsh reality that they were by standing. The Theatre of the absurd does not invoke a pointed pessimism towards its readers rather provokes a conscious reckoning of their own lives exposing their antagonism and barbarism to be the survivors of the fittest.

#### **IV. ANTI-LANGUAGE SYMBOLISM**

Language, which is illogical, irrelevant and disorderly generated, forms the essentialities of the absurd theatre. The exchange of ideas in the absurd drama completely deviates from our normal common sense of logical thinking and reasonable conversing. They provide no spaces for the spectators to understand the flow of thoughts in the characters, neither the possibility for prediction of the oncoming actions. Just like the people who chatter without listening, perform without planning and accept without reasoning, the characters also tends to be the absurd personalities, never quitting, neither purposefully contributing. The hypo and hyper sensitivity, weary countenances, broken sentence structures found in the absurd dramas, add to the context of nothingness, explaining the modern unrealistic existence. The willing attitude of the characters while talking nonsensical, their absolute confidence while doing nil activities, reflects the murky realities endured by the modern man. Absurd language hints over the barbaric comportment destined out of nothingness and the void stand in the midst of futile deeds.

Though the readers of the absurd dramas tend to assume the conversations as illogical and meaningless, the language encoded by the playwright decodes the

expressions of the spectators' personal identities. Playwrights of the absurd theatre tend to produce an empty language with a chain of signifiers, signifying the disorderliness and derangements. Such a language context does not possess direct inherent meanings but demands the spectators to derive the meaning through the portrayed system of relations and differences. As the language could shape our thoughts, absurd theatre promotes an absurd language depicting our dismantled feelings. The hermeneutic codes in the absurd texts occur as an enigma for the readers, loaded with equivocations - a mixture of truth and snares of their perceived realities.

#### **V. RECEPTION AND DISSIMILATION**

The visible similarities that existed between the absurd theatre and the conventional theatre were that human beings play their character roles and human lives are represented through actions and dialogues. Contrasting with the traditional drama structure, there arise a vague plot, unexplainable story admire absence of event-cause sequences. Every hint of absurd theatre encounters the psychological context of modern man pointing to their then changes through the period - oscillations of man's faith in God, cultivated materialism, priority of capitalistic culture and more essentially their painful miserable industrialized isolated existence.

Absurd theatre alarmed the population about their dissimulation in regarding the abnormal revolutions as absolutely normal. When evil, corruption, bloodshed and violence were acknowledged as usual occurrences at war moments, human community made each other feel inhumane and unconcerned for the distresses and despairs. With the major revolutions caused by the world wars and aftermath, materialism became the hallmark of human survival and success. Evil and villainous attitude of people to one another did not bother them much like their inability to achieve their materialistic goals. The air of despondency, made them stingy and misanthropic, which is reflected in absurd plays through isolated, cruel, lost and floating character roles.

Absurd theatre knocked the population from their dissimulation, causing an aesthetic distance in the texts, veering off their 'familiar experiences'. According to Hans Robert Jauss' 'New Literary History', absurd theatre resulted in shifting horizons of expectations and reception among the spectators. With the elements of the traditional play incorporated in absurd theatre dramatics, they remain suspended of their actual purpose and defective in their competencies. The gibberish traces in absurd theatre interpret the bewildering social context of

'homo absurdum'. The spectators tend to undergo a horizon of change in the reception of the text as they go down through the frailties and uncharacteristic wave of blemishes encircling their modus operandi.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The edification of human community is an interwoven network of apathy and acceptance, confirmation and endurance. The unexplainable intrinsic traits of Homo sapiens are nothing but the result of unconscious conditioning of the conscious social revolutions. Absurd theatre does not demand any one to abscond the actuality, rather to survive the absurd reality by unclutching the diabolic man made clutches, that pops out of nothing for nothing. Absurd drama delves deeper into human psychology exploring the mentalities, breaking down the nullity of human interventions and finally letting them discover their infiniteness in emptiness. While other conventional theatres mirror the human existence, absurd theatre attests the perspectives on the roots of existence of what people do and why do they do. They attempt to restore mankind from their survival horrors, by unveiling them the ultimate ignored realities over homo insanity.

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