

A review on the Absurdity in the Plays of Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Satish Alekar

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we are bring the concept of Absurdity in the Plays of Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Satish Alekar ,which includes the Beckett's earliest works are generally considered to have been strongly influenced by the work of his friend James Joyce. They are erudite and seem to display the author's learning merely for its own sake, resulting in several obscure passages. The opening phrases of the short-story collection *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934) affords a representative sample of this style. It was morning and Belacqua was stuck in the first of the canti in the moon. He was so bogged that he could move neither backward nor forward. Blissful Beatrice was there, Dante also, and she explained the spots on the moon to him. In this paper we review the plays and explorer its knowledge. In this paper we want to show the little bit the life of the these author and the role in the play.

Keywords:- Portora Royal, French Beckett's, Mahesh Elunchwar's, Gunter Grass's.

Introduction

Samuel Barclay Beckett (13 April 1906 – 22 December 1989) was an Irish avant-garde novelist, playwright, theatre director, poet, and literary translator who lived in Paris for most of his adult life. He wrote in both English and French. Beckett's work offers a bleak, tragicomic outlook on human existence, often coupled with black comedy and gallows humor, and became increasingly minimalist in his later career. He is considered one of the last modernist writers, and one of the key figures in what Martin Esslin called the "Theatre of the Absurd". Beckett was awarded the 1969 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his writing, which—in new forms for the novel and drama—in the destitution of modern man acquires its elevation". He was elected Saoi of Aosdána in 1984. Samuel Beckett was born in Dublin on Good Friday, 13 April 1906, to William Frank Beckett, a quantity surveyor and descendant of the Huguenots, and Maria Jones Roe, a nurse, when both were 35. They had married in 1901. Beckett had one older brother, Frank Edward Beckett (1902–1954). At the age of five, Beckett attended a local playschool in Dublin, where he started to learn music, and then moved to Earlsfort House School in Dublin city centre near Harcourt Street. The Becketts were members of the Anglican Church of Ireland. The family home, Cooldrinagh in the Dublin suburb of Foxrock, was a large house and garden complete with tennis court built in 1903 by Samuel's father, William. The house and garden, together with the surrounding countryside where he often went walking with

his father, the nearby Leopardstown Racecourse, the Foxrock railway station and Harcourt Street station at the city terminus of the line, all feature in his prose and plays.

In 1919/1920, Beckett went to Portora Royal School in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh (which Oscar Wilde had also attended). He left 3 years later, in 1923. A natural athlete, Beckett excelled at cricket as a left-handed batsman and a left-arm medium-pace bowler. Later, he was to play for Dublin University and played two first-class games against Northamptonshire. As a result, he became the only Nobel literature laureate to have played first-class cricket. The works of absurdist writers most sensitively mirrors and reflects the preoccupation and anxieties, the emotions and thinking of many of their contemporaries in the western world. The Theatre of the Absurd is to a very considerable extent concerned with a critique of language, an attack above all on fossilized forms of language which have become devoid of meaning. The people talking of any matter had no intention whatever of really exchanging meaningful information on subject; they merely using language to fill the emptiness between them, to conceal the fact that they had no desire to tell each other anything at all. The Plays of the Theatre of the Absurd in general, present a disillusioned, harsh and stark picture of the world. The realism of these plays is a psychological and inner realism; they explore the human sub-conscious in depth rather than trying to describe the outward appearance of human existence. Nor is it quite correct that these play deeply pessimistic as they are nothing but an expression of utter despair. It is true that basically the Theatre of the Absurd attack the comfortable certainties of religious or political orthodoxy. The major dramatists of this tradition are Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Arthur Adamov, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter and Edward Albee. Elkunchwar reserves a special place for Yugant (Apocalypse) which was written in 1992 and is the last part of his famous Wada trilogy, it carries all his “preoccupation and positions” as clearly as they can be. It is a play about the inner landscape of four characters and about the devastation and badlands created by malicious deeds of human beings. The picture Elkunchwar draws is grim and frightening. Apocalypse is one act play and divided into four scenes that create a sense of wilderness all around. In short presents an absurd and chaotic situation where there is no value, no order, no stability, and lawfulness has remained except the environmental as well as moral, spiritual, social, cultural, ethical deterioration. The plot of Apocalypse unfolds the various constituent parts of the story like loss/ acquisition, search/discovery, recognition/non-recognition, and degradation/ degeneration/ decay in various spheres of the lives of its four main characters: Abhay, Parag, Nandani and Chandu. As play begins, Abhay enters into the mansion “covered in dust, knocked out by the heat, panting, licking his parched lips, wiping his perspiring neck and forehead” (258). His meeting and conversation with Nandini gives us the apocalyptic images of their deserted life and land. There was nothing but the anarchy and the chaos.

Objectives of the paper

Following are the main objectives of my research work:

1. The objective of this essay is to highlight the influence of Absurdism in Indian theatre with especial reference to Mahesh Elkunchwar’s play. This essay can be divided into three sections.
2. The first section highlights the origin and development of the theatre of absurd in literary world.

Review of Work already done on the subject

Beckett travelled in Europe. He spent some time in London, where in 1931 he published Proust, his critical study of French author Marcel Proust. Two years later, following his father's death, he began two years' treatment with Tavistock Clinic psychoanalyst Dr. Wilfred Bion. Aspects of it became evident in Beckett's later works, such as Watt and Waiting for Godot. In 1932, he wrote his first novel, Dream of Fair to Middling Women, but after many rejections from publishers decided to abandon it (it was eventually published in 1992). Despite his inability to get it published, however, the novel served as a source for many of Beckett's early poems, as well as for his first full-length book, the 1933 short-story collection More Pricks Than Kicks.

Beckett published essays and reviews, including "Recent Irish Poetry" (in The Bookman, August 1934) and "Humanistic Quietism", a review of his friend Thomas MacGreevy's Poems (in The Dublin Magazine, July–September 1934). They focused on the work of MacGreevy, Brian Coffey, Denis Devlin and Blanaid Salkeld, despite their slender achievements at the time, comparing them favourably with their Celtic Revival contemporaries and invoking Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and the French symbolists as their precursors. In describing these poets as forming "the nucleus of a living poetic in Ireland", Beckett was tracing the outlines of an Irish poetic modernist canon.

In 1935—the year that Beckett successfully published a book of his poetry, Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates—Beckett worked on his novel Murphy. In May, he wrote to MacGreevy that he had been reading about film and wished to go to Moscow to study with Sergei Eisenstein at the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. In mid-1936 he wrote to Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin to offer himself as their apprentice. Nothing came of this, however, as Beckett's letter was lost owing to Eisenstein's quarantine during the smallpox outbreak, as well as his focus on a script re-write of his postponed film production. In 1936, a friend had suggested him to look up the works of Arnold Geulinx, which Beckett did and he took many notes. The philosopher's name is mentioned in Murphy and the reading apparently left a strong impression. Murphy was finished in 1936 and Beckett departed for extensive travel around Germany, during which time he filled several notebooks with lists of noteworthy artwork that he had seen and noted his distaste for the Nazi savagery that was overtaking the country. Returning to Ireland briefly in 1937, he oversaw the publication of Murphy (1938), which he translated into French the following year. He fell out with his mother, which contributed to his decision to settle permanently in Paris. Beckett remained in Paris following the outbreak of World War II in 1939, preferring, in his own words, "France at war to Ireland at peace". His was soon a known face in and around Left Bank cafés, where he strengthened his allegiance with Joyce and forged new ones with artists Alberto Giacometti and Marcel Duchamp, with whom he regularly played chess. Sometime around December 1937, Beckett had a brief affair with Peggy Guggenheim, who nicknamed him "Oblomov" (after the character in Ivan Goncharov's novel).

In January 1938 in Paris, Beckett was stabbed in the chest and nearly killed when he refused the solicitations of a notorious pimp (who went by the name of Prudent). Joyce arranged a private room for Beckett at the hospital. The publicity surrounding the stabbing attracted the attention of Suzanne Dechevaux-Dumesnil, who previously knew Beckett slightly from his first stay in Paris. This time, however, the two would begin a lifelong companionship. At a

preliminary hearing, Beckett asked his attacker for the motive behind the stabbing. Prudent replied: "Je ne sais pas, Monsieur. Je m'excuse" ["I do not know, sir. I'm sorry". Beckett eventually dropped the charges against his attacker—partially to avoid further formalities, partly because he found Prudent likeable and well-mannered.

Current Work and Conclusion

Satish Alekar is one of the renowned Marathi playwrights and theatre directors. He is one of the founding members of the Theatre Academy, Pune. For the first time, he performed in a college play. Impressed by his performance Bhalbha Kelker, one theatre personality invited him to join the Progressive Dramatic Association. He joined the group and continued theatre. *Jhulta Phool* was Alekar's first one act play which he wrote and directed. Later he started writing plays. Alekar is the author of many prominent plays written in Marathi. His notable plays are *Memory* (1969), *Bhajan* (1969), *Ek Julta Pool* (1971), *Micky and the Memsahib* (1973), *Mahanirvan* (The Dread Departure, 1974), *Mahapur* (Deluge, 1975), *Dar Koni Ughadat Naahi* (1979), *Begum Berve* (1979), *Bus Stop* (1980), *Shaniwar-Raviwar* (1982), *Dusara Samna* (1985), *Atirekee* (The Terrorist, 1989), *Pidhijat* (Dynasty, 2003), *Ek Divas 3 Mathakade* (2012). Some of these are one-act plays and many are full length theatre plays which were critically acclaimed by many. Satish Alekar's plays are staged by many theatre groups all over Maharashtra. Apart from these theatre plays he also wrote many short plays. He has also written some scripts for Marathi films like *Jait re Jait* (1977). He has also directed a Hindi television serial named *Dekho Magar Pyaar Se* for Doordarshan in 1985. He wrote dialogues for *Katha Don Ganpatraonchi* for NFDC during 1995-96. Alekar was also a part of many international translation projects and translated and directed short plays of authors like German playwright Gunter Grass's *The Flood* in 1980, Tankred Dorst's plays and two short plays by Egyptian playwright Dr. Alfred Farag. Alekar is the recipient of several state and national awards for his contribution to the field of theatre and literature. He has received fellowships from the Council of Asian Culture, New York in 1983 to study theatre in the United States and from the Ford Foundation to study Theatre of South Asia in 1988. He received Nandikar Sanman Award at Kolkata in 1992. He was honored with Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1994 by Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi. He has honored with Padamshree in 2012. Literary Style of Satish Alekar: Satish Alekar is known for experimenting in theatre, usage of absurd situations in his plays and for the uses of folk forms and songs. He is considered as a modern Marathi playwright who has also tried to depict man's alienation from society, religion, God and even from own self. Many of his plays show the tensions that exist in modern society which are due to conflict with traditional and cultural values. Generally his plays ridicule the middle class values and emphasize on the absurdity of human existence.

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Samuel Barclay Beckett (/bɛːkɛt/; 13 April 1906 – 22 December 1989) was an Irish novelist, playwright, short story writer, theatre director, poet, and literary translator. A resident of Paris for most of his adult life, he wrote in both French and English. Beckett's idiosyncratic work offers a bleak tragi-comic outlook on existence and experience, often coupled with black comedy, nonsense and gallows humour. It became increasingly minimalist in his later career, involving more aesthetical and with the name of Samuel Beckett. His contribution to this particular genre allows us to refer to him as the grand master, or father, of the genre. This theater, as Esslin has pointed out, "has renounced arguing about the absurdity of the human condition; it merely presents it in being" that is, in terms of concrete stage images of the absurdity of existence." And whereas Beckett's plays take place on strange and alien landscapes (some of the settings of his plays remind one of a world transformed by some holocaust or created by some surrealist), Ionesco's plays are set against the most traditional elements in our society – the standard English drawing room in *The Bald Soprano*, a typical street scene in *Rhinoceros*. The absurd play is not concerned with the representation of events, the narration of the fate, or the adventures of characters, but instead with the presentation of one's basic situation. In *Waiting for Godot*, nothing happens. remained the common literacy measure to understand the play of Beckett. Huge Kenner in *A Reader's Guide to Waiting for Godot* as "the play about waiting for the man who does not come, and it is curious how little difference this knowledge makes" (p.29). Similarly, in *Play* (1963), Beckett depicts a remote, otherworldly realm that is "all dark, all still, all over, wiped out" (P, 307). In the increasingly desolate world he creates, Beckett's characters struggle to maintain a meaningful existence in the face of inescapable suffering and diminishing hope. Above all else, characters like Vladimir, Estragon, Hamm and Clov wish for an ending that is never forthcoming. The absurdity of the human condition as presented by Beckett and Kermode, therefore, is that we constantly desire finitude, but are nonetheless faced with the inevitable, obligatory nature of continuation. Samuel Beckett is without a doubt the father of the absurd. Not only did his prolific career as a playwright and novelist cement his reputation as the most prominent voice of the genre, but he also helped popularize the movement's oft-challenging vision. *Waiting for Godot* centers around two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, as they wait for a mysterious figure named Godot (pronounced God-oh) and pass the time by desperately breaking the silence with shrewd, quick-witted dialogue.

5. Max Frisch – *The Firebugs* (1953). Albee's uniquely American take on the Absurd is not quite as mind-bending or irrational as some of the other selections on this list, but it uses the dialogic techniques of Beckett and Tardieu to capture a professor's troubled relationship with his wife.