



## FROM ABSURDITY TO CREATIVITY: THE CREATIVE WRITING FEATURES OF THE ABSURD PLAY WRITING

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### Abstract

Absurd play writing came to the fore by retreating conventional play writing with more strenuous efforts. Traditional playwrights were attempted to create photographic representation of the world. The process of writing was interconnected to the intended audience. These writers reciprocated what the spectators were interested about. On the contrary, Absurd playwrights unfolded the true nature of people in the existing world with added chaotic expressions. It attempted to restore the human existential values by shocking him with the hardest realities of the mechanical life after world wars. In opposition to the traditional plays, It was surreal and illogical to the extreme. By shattering the stereotyped and conventionalized writing, the fractured flow of Absurd play writing ought to be more artistry with untold virtuosity. This research paper, by scrutinizing all the optimal artistic features of Absurd play writing, aspired to unwrap its unprecedented form of Creative writing.

**Index terms** – Absurd plays, Creative writing, Artistic features, and Minimalistic approach.

### I INTRODUCTION

It's notorious that Great Writings were always born out of Chaos. Absurd writing, the genre grew out of the Modern Literature when the world was drowning in chaos of world wars, stream of bloods, mass killings of millions, aggravated and chronic negative perspectives. To delineate these obstreperous environs and to express the anxiety and despair of impenetrable darkness the writers of this age had drawn the internal conflicts of human and his inability to find the meaning of life in various books. It subdued 'the philosophical condition of being *nothing* desperately.

The theater of Absurd was taking its shape in the late nineteenth century as an Avant – grade platform originating with dramatists Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet. As Plot, Character, Setting, Point of View, Structure were the common elements of writing, Absurd writing was going away from the usual norm to create and craft its own way out of the box. It must be considered to be the highest form of creative writing. It incorporated many peculiar styles of writing like, repetitive language with lyrical tone, prolonged pauses, disconnected dialogues in cliché, precipitate monologues, sudden swift between scenes, interdependent coupled characters, minimalistic tableau, cyclical plot structure without dramatic conflict, archetypal setting and symbolic representation of the incomprehensible world. M.Y. Bennett in his book *Reassessing the Theater of the Absurd* stated,

Audiences who were used to Aristotelian, Shakespearean, melodramatic, and realistic drama, a play with a clear beginning, middle, and end—exposition, action, climax, and a dénouement – had a right to be bewildered by a play like Godot. (Bennett 1)

The true essence of Absurd writing was found in its illogical facts. The writers were not using the exact literary realism to render the implications out but binding surrealist elements in concert with the satirical elements were the accessorize for Absurd writing. It was more about dispatching the dry locales rather than describing the denouement; And more about focusing humanely impossible rather than logically impossible. Minimalistic ideas, dialogues, setting, plot and structure were comprised in an Absurd play, established verisimilitude despite its insanity. These Absurd plays replicated the poetic images spared to its musical composition. As It took the complete creativity, relatively

from Poetic and Dramatic elements to create something out from the void to show nothing, it set foot on canvas writing. Martin Esslin, the absurdist affirmed that,

The theater of the Absurd has opened up the new possibility for poetry on the stage. Having renounced the function of telling a story, of exploring characters, of discovering ideas, of solving problems, it has been able to concentrate on the presentation of what is essentially a *sense of being* an institution of the tragicomic absurdity and mystery of human existence. (Esslin 7)

## II ARTISTIC FEATURES OF THE ABSURD DRAMA WRITING CONTRAST TO THE TRADITIONAL DRAMA :

In *Poetics*, Aristotle broached the term '*Catharsis*', purification or purgation of the emotions which aroused from pity and fear that the tragedy instigated. This dramatic art in tragedy or comedy or in any other art form used for intellectual clarification to teach moral values. Traditional dramas had been following the mechanism of *Catharsis* for ages. Whereas cessation of *Catharsis* began to the light by Absurd dramas which had come out from the stereotypical play writing. Unlike Traditional play writing, Absurd writing hadn't made to *teach* but to *show* the flaw with its *Nothingness*. Thus sophisticated philosophy could have been acquainted more in Absurd writing than Traditional play writing. Furthermore, In *Poetics*, Aristotle had demonstrated the elements of drama that constructed how the drama could be.

...therefore, must have six parts which parts determine its quality – namely, Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, song. Two of the parts constitute the medium of imitation, one the manner and three the objects of imitation. (Butcher VI)

These conventional writing elements were overleaped by the artistry ability of Absurd play writing. It followed merely four elements, Anti Plot, Anti Character, Anti Language and Anti Drama to create unconventional dramas. Perhaps analysing the four elements of both the traditional play writing and Absurd play writing with the retrospection of *Macbeth* and *Waiting for Godot* would give us a vivid imagery of Absurd writing features.

**A) The Plot** was the underlying principle for traditional play writing. "The plot, then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy" (Butcher VI). Considering it as the soul of the traditional play writing, the plot was comprised the components of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and conclusion. In his terms, he arrayed the plot parts into *Peripetia*, the beginning of the plot indicating the prosperity of hero or his reversal state. The mid of the plot *Anagnorisis* availed to disclose *Hamartia* (the tragic flaw) and the end was *Catharsis*.

In *Macbeth*, *Peripetia* of the plot was,

"I am in blood / Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er" (3.4).

This was staging Macbeth's reluctant to kill Duncan and he murdered him at the verge of his Wife's trapping words and that changed everything. Then the instance of *Anagnorisis* experienced by Macbeth when he realized the game ended up that divulged through his ranting,

To-morrow, and to-morrow, And to-morrow, Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury  
Signifying nothing (5.5).

The audience extricated *Catharsis* at the end of the play when Macduff decapitated Macbeth.

The plot was **Anti Plot** in Absurd writing. It was extremely obscured and scattered. Traditional dramas were regular in pattern computing time, place and setting. It was easier to presume the plot and its end. As opposed to this writing, the plot of this Absurd writing was the hardest to guess as it hadn't have the beginning, the middle and the end. Anthon Hartley denoted "Beckett's notion of summary to suggest a static design, and he dismisses the possibility of dividing this play into Aristotle's beginning, middle and end" (Hartley 91).

Persistently it would bemuse the audience with its emptiness and that was all the essence of this writing. For instance, In *Waiting for Godot*, the distinctive structure of the plot was set in Circular. In Act I, the tramps were sitting by the roadside, waiting for the mysterious man named Godot and passing away their time. At the end, the messenger instructed them to come the next day. Act II began and ended with the same flow of firm repetition. The plot would haven't answered who the tramps were, where they did come from, whom they were waiting for and depart the audience in its puzzling phase.

Boy (in a rush). Mr. Godot told me to tell you he won't come this evening

but surely tomorrow.

Silence.

Vladimir. Is that all? ” ( 1.12)

Vladimir. You have a message from Mr. Godot.

Boy. Yes Sir.

Vladimir. He won't come this evening.

Boy. No Sir.

Vladimir. But he'll come tomorrow. (2.9)

Estragon. Let's go far away from here.

Vladimir. We can't.

Estragon. Why not?

Vladimir. We have to come back tomorrow.

Estragon. What for?

Vladimir. To wait for Godot. ( 2.10)

**B) The Character** “... is that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind things a man chooses and avoids” (Butcher VI).

Traditional play characters were predictable through their psychological and physical traits. And more conceivably the characters could carry the audience with its emotional volatility, besides the character representation of What did he want, how did he get it, how did the society and the culture shape him, what the audience could expect from this character. It either affected the plot or drove by the plot that inclined to teach social mores.

In *Macbeth*, Macbeth was a complex character. He was brave enough at the beginning, inconsistent in the middle and guilt ridden to the end. His internal conflict was drawn by the external sources that agitated him extremely. Superior to Macbeth, Lady Macbeth was even more ambitious over there for the royal seat. She added fuel to the fire and persuaded Macbeth constantly. But her guilty conscience deranged her to be a psychotic person. Her inability to cope with the crime was devilishly dreadful and she committed suicide. These two striking characters were the archetypes demonstrating the thought of Shakespearean age that murdering the King was the worst misdeed. The King was deemed as ‘the divine right’ as he chosen by god to rule. However staging the play *Macbeth* for the first time happened right after when the Gun powder plot to explode the King James I failed in accordance with historical context. Thus these Characters were born out of circumstances to counsel the audience. Their internal conflicts could be seen which was more concrete than being abstract. It was not just dramatizing but catastrophizing. These conventional characters were extracted from certain social issues and sketched its trait to exhibit to the whole world. *It was written for all, as a matter of fact it was not for all.*

**Anti-Characters** of the Absurd drama were speculated to be traumatized and starkly juxtaposed to the characters of traditional drama. The characters of the Absurd drama had the peerless personality trait and utmost preeminent than Traditional drama. The intensity of the character defined the Absurd playwrights in a peculiar way. *It was exceptionally for all.* These characters were attempted to retain the lost humans by shocking them with surrealistic writings that hid realistic values. They disguised logical reasons and appeared illogical.

The absurd characters of *Waiting for Godot* were the asset for writing for eras. The contrasting characters Vladimir and Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky, Godot and Messenger were the masterpieces. They epitomized the injurious world. Vladimir and Estragon awaited for Godot. The character Godot, here, was implicitly pointing the vagueness of the world. The personification of the characters Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot implied the people of phobic world who believed their life might change at some point of time and waited for the change which never arrived. Their desperation could be perceived through Vladimir and Estragon. They were interdependent out of nervousness and loneliness. Vladimir mirrored the strongest man who questioned each aspect of life and mankind, the one who had profound thinking. His religious and philosophical implications were penned to restore the lost hope since the people of the distressed world no longer had faith in God. Unlike other characters in the play, he had progressive thinking towards anything. But he had not been progressive in actions. He was conscious about the happenings but inactive to headed up. A set of people were being Vladimir and directed their life with nothing though they had sustained the spirit.

Beckett backed up the character Estragon of the weakest ones that they dint have any sign to exist. They were existed for the sake of existence. He was heavily dependent on Vladimir. He performed what Vladimir instructed to him but the next day he forgot what had happened in the previous day. He could even beg food to eat and sleepy almost in all the scenes. He was not concerned about anything including Godot. Unlike heedless Estragons the people coated under Vladimir had the possibility to move forward in the vexatious life and they were seeking for the change without consenting it.

Pozzo and Lucky the proportion of the hegemonised society. Pozzo, the master trained his slave Lucky to act accordingly his wish. And Lucky was the most ironic character in absurd writing. When Vladimir and Estragon tried helping to free him from his master he resisted then countered “The old dogs have more dignity”, that had more sense. At first Pozzo accounted him to be the superior. Later, the complete fall of



a man to be changed as a blind man and directed by Lucky made him to bear the distressing existence of a man in the world. Vehemently, these absurd characters had inexhaustible numbers of essence in it. That way, the writers of the Absurd drama sculpted them with all the scattered pieces to give the absolute picture of the reality with much insanity.

**C) Anti Language** "... Diction; by which I mean, as has been already said, the expression of the meaning in words; and its essence is the same both in verse and prose" (Butcher VI)

Language, the most anticipated predominant component and the instrument of communication to any literary writing characterized the writing style and the ability of writers. Traditional playwrights idolized the logical order. It was written in the way how it supposed to be written. The characters typically conversed their thoughts in appropriation to the scene. The literary devices like monologues and soliloquies were orchestrated where it had to be entailed. In contradictory to the Language of traditional dramas, the Language of Absurd drama drew disorderly. It was blank. There were no logical sequence. By eliminating the necessity flow of the Language, Absurd writing flipped off the audience into the darkness of reality of the predicament to show the communicational breakdown. Though the Language screened to be simple and repetitive, it had the deepest conceptualizations of the writers that their expressions were beyond Language. It was strongly built by the multidimensional poetry images added to the multi artistic techniques. Incongruous with the conventional dramatic artists, Absurd writing artists were as proficient as the language needed more specifications to describe the characters and the scenes.

In *Waiting for Godot*,

Ten different modes of the breakdown of language have been noted in play. They range from simple misunderstanding and double entendres to monologues, (as signs of inability to communicate) cliché's repetitions of synonyms, inability to find the right words and telegraphic style of language (loss to grammatical structure), to luckys' farrago of chaotic nonsense and dropping of punctuation marks, such as question marks, as an indication that language as lost its function as a mean of communication (Picesgirl).

#### **D) Anti Drama**

Dramas usually had its own structure and form. Traditional dramatists went with that canon of writing whereas Absurd dramatists unfollowed that in different ways. (to be discussed briefly in the next chapter). Traditional dramas had been persisting for eras than Absurd dramas irrespective to its worthiness, upshot of its complexity. Since the Traditional dramatists created the content and the theme, the characters, as the audience could easily grab whereas Abused dramatists banged them with perplexity, as Jiang Zhu stated,

...the audience is confronted with characters whose motivations and actions remain largely incomprehensible. The more mysterious their actions and nature are, the less humanistic the characters become. Thus it is more difficult for us to understand the world from a normal point of view (Zhu 1464)

### **III LESS IS MORE - THE MINIMAL ANTI DRAMATIC DEVICE OF THE ABSURD WRITING**

The core essence of absurd writing was its minimalistic opaque idea, "*less is more*". It presented the maximum with the "most minimum" that would *show more* rather than *tell more*. "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful". These minimal words subsumed the whole theory of *Existentialism*. The dramatists carved the chopped up elements like Anti Plot, Anti Setting, Anti Structure, Anti Characters and Anti Language to compose the impenetrable minimalistic work of art.

John Barth said

There are minimalisms of style: a stripped-down vocabulary; a stripped-down syntax that avoids periodic sentences, serial predications and complex subordinating constructions; a stripped-down rhetoric that may eschew figurative language altogether; a stripped-down, non-emotive tone. And there are minimalisms of material: minimal characters, minimal exposition, . . . , minimal action, minimal plot (Barth 1).

In *Waiting for Godot*, the concrete objects were just the '*very few*', the tree and the road in setting, the five persons in characters, the hat and the boot, the rope and the stool in props. In 1983, Beckett remarked,

When I was working on Watt, I felt the need to create for a smaller space, one in which I had some control of where people stood or moved, above all of a certain light. I wrote *Waiting for Godot* (Knowlson).

The another most absorbing attribute in *Waiting for Godot*, the monumental writing comprised the phenomenal postulation of minimalism into "*dualism*". For instance, the plot, the structure, the setting, the characters, the language, the theme developed to be dual polarities for several reasons. We could clearly get the picture of life and death, past and present, silence and wordy, master and slave, waiting and going and so on. The play constructed in the way that duality could be seen everywhere like it had two acts, it had two paired characters. Vladimir, the strongest had Estragon, the weakest. Pozzo, the oppressor had Lucky the oppressed one. The messenger had his brother and cryptically Godot had Uncertainty. The duality of the dialogue also added crispness to the writing. "Estragon: Perhaps it would be best if we parted" but they remained together. "Let's go" but they dint move. Of all these dual polarities, it unpacked more theories about Life and Death, Good and evil to comment on stupefied society and inhumane humanity that consumed more creativity of thoughts and words.

#### IV CONCLUSION

By examining another extremity of Absurd Writing, we could get a comprehensive conceptions of Absurd play writing that charged more effort from the playwrights. To retain its core creativity and unorthodox writing form, Absurd Writing should be read, written acknowledged in the contemporary digital world where dissimulation and isolation were graced to be the ruling authority with no wars but technology gaps. Humans became more inhumane than ever. Absurd play writing should further emerge to shock the audience with its surrealistic form of reality to awake the people from the materialized modern world. Furthermore, the research on the footprints of Absurd play writing would help more to the forthcoming generations.

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