CONCLUSION
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The present study "The British Absurd Theatre and the Kannada Absurd Theatre: A Comparative Study" is an interesting work as it helps us study the British and Kannada absurd theatres. The Theatre of the Absurd emerged as a modern literary genre in the 1950s Europe. Paris was its centre stage. Great continental writers like Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Arthur Adamov, Jean Genet and Harold Pinter worked out the new theatre activities. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Adamov's *The Bald Prima Donna* and Pinter's *The Birthday Party* created a kind of sensation. These great writers propounded their own theory of drama as an art projecting the absurd situations in the life of modern man. They also found their successors in Jean Tardieu, Boris Vian, Dino Buzzati, Ezio d'Errico, Manuel de Pedrolo, Fernando Arrabal, Max Frisch, Wolfgang Hildesheimer, Gunter Grass, Robert Pinget, N. F. Simpson, Edward Albee, Jack Gelber and Arthur Kopit. The absurd theatre also grew in East Europe. Writers like Slawomir Mrozek, Tadeusz Rozewicz and Vaclav Havel followed the suit there. All these writers worked hard for a school of drama, which was labelled as the Theatre of the Absurd later.

But it is felt that the absurd theatre did not grow in America. Martin Esslin thinks there are some reasons for the dearth of absurd plays in American literature. He observes, "The convention of the absurd springs from a feeling of deep disillusionment, the draining away of the sense of meaning and purpose in life, which has been characteristic of countries like France and Britain in the
years after the Second World War. In the United States there has been no corresponding loss of meaning and purpose. The American Dream of the good life is still very strong. In the United States the belief in progress that characterized Europe in the nineteenth century has been maintained into the middle of the twentieth. It is only since the events of the 1970's – Watergate and defeat in Vietnam – that this optimism has received some sharp shocks.¹ Yet some playwrights like Edward Albee, F. Scott Fitzgerald and E. E. Cummings attempted some absurd plays of interest. Equally, absurd drama attracted the attention of playwrights in Asian and African countries. In India too the impact of Beckett's plays was felt strongly. One such example is the Kannada absurd plays.

Interestingly the Theatre of the Absurd is as old as the play. Only it was not so explicit as it became in the 19th century, because the traits of it were not so prominent in ancient drama. Martin Esslin says, "Its novelty lies in its somewhat unusual combination of such antecedents, and a survey of these will show that what may strike the unprepared spectator as iconoclastic and incomprehensible innovation is, in fact, merely an expression, revaluation, and development of procedures that are familiar and completely acceptable in only slightly different contexts." According to Martin Esslin the Theatre of the Absurd combines some peculiar traits of drama. He thinks the age old Theatre of the Absurd has the following types:

"'Pure' theatre; i.e. abstract scenic effects as they are familiar in the circus or revue, in the work of jugglers, acrobats, bullfighters, or mimes
Clowning, following and mad-scene

Verbal nonsense

The literature of dream and fantasy, which often has a strong allegorical component. What Martin Esslin says is true. In view of this a study of the British absurd theatre is carried out here. Samuel Beckett’s plays Waiting for Godot and Endgame are considered as seminal works. An analysis of Beckett’s concerns, his thematic concepts, characterization, the use of dialogue and language are viewed seriously. As we know Beckett is more concerned with man’s failures. He writes about man’s despair. In fact, this is the concern of absurd theatre. Harold Pinter’s plays The Birthday Party and The Caretaker and the works of Simpson and Stoppard are studied from the same point of view.

Just the same, the Kannada absurd theatre demands our serious critical attention. As Ionesco’s play The Bald Prima Donna fascinated the Kannada playwrights, they took an interest in the British absurd theatre. Some of the 1960s Kannada playwrights Chandrashekhar Patil, Chandrashekhar Kambar, Chandrakanth Kusnur and P. Lankesh wrote absurd plays in earnest. Some of their plays particularly Patil’s Kodegalu, Gurtinavaru and Appa, Kambar’s Chalesh and Jokumaraswami and Kusnur’s Vidushaka and Idake Samsayavilla are splendid absurd plays. Even P. Lankesh’s Teregalu is interesting.

By the bye the British absurd plays and Kannada absurd plays are compared with each other. The comparative criticism of drama is a useful one here. It helps us know the relative worth of two literatures namely the British
absurd theatre and the Kannada absurd theatre. That way it is known that both the theatres made a name. Of course, the British absurd theatre, unlike the Kannada absurd theatre, has an old history and a permanent position in European drama. Yet the Kannada absurd theatre has made a dint of its own name. After an in-depth study of the two what we notice is that both the theatres make use of situations in modern man’s life. They depict man’s anguish, dread, angst, trauma, faith and failings. They speak of man’s metaphysical anguish. Both theaters make use of a similar kind of methodology. That is to say they use the language in a shoddy manner. Often the language is broken or it is distorted or abused. Often the language is spare or bare. Then the absurd theatre does not make use of the traditional kind of characterization. In fact, it does have proper characters. A look at the names of the characters of these plays is interesting. The characters are called just man, woman, stranger, one, another, wife, husband, or guest. Both the British and Kannada absurd playwrights make use of letters instead of names. For example, Beckett as well as Kusnur use alphabets like A, B, C for names. This is funny. Then the plays make use of gestures, simple dance, shoddy music, little costumes and off stage dialogues or asides. All this shows modern man’s nausea about life or his bad faith.

THE FINDINGS:

As we can understand the Theatre of the Absurd arose as a byproduct of the philosophy of existentialism in the West. Some of the main reasons for it were industrialization, urbanization, the two World Wars, the growth of science and technology, loss of man’s faith in religion and moral anarchy.
Dr Jan Culik thinks, "The origins of the Theatre of the Absurd are rooted in the avant-garde experiments in art of the 1920s and 1930s. At the same time, it was undoubtedly strongly influenced by the traumatic experience of the horrors of the Second World War, which showed the total impermanence of any values, shook the validity of any conventions and highlighted the precariousness of human life and its fundamental meaninglessness and arbitrariness. The trauma of living from 1945 under threat of nuclear annihilation also seems to have been an important factor in the rise of the new theatre.

At the same time, the Theatre of the Absurd also seems to have been a reaction to the disappearance of the religious dimension from contemporary life. The Absurd Theatre can be seen as an attempt to restore the importance of myth and ritual to our age, by making man aware of the ultimate realities of his condition, by instilling in him again the lost sense of cosmic wonder and primeval anguish. The Absurd Theatre hopes to achieve this by shocking man out of an existence that has become trite, mechanical and complacent. It is felt that there is mystical experience in confronting the limits of human condition."

So modern man felt the kind of life he is living is not good for him. This is so particular to the western man. The people in the West with a lot of material progress found their life purposeless. As we know, they do not have any problems as for their living. They have built a fine civilization that way. In such a context they have much leisure and free will to meditate upon man’s evils. So they thought about life’s maladies. In such a context some of the intellectuals began writing such plays which expressed man’s fundamental bewilderment and
confusion, stemming from the fact that man has no answers to the basic existential questions: why he is alive, why he has to die and why he has to suffer. The role of fate, transmigration theory, Christian Gospel, the concept of hell and heaven, the fact of salvation, the viability of science for man and the end of the world boggled man's mind. So some of the writers began writing plays, which just explored certain situations. As a result, western absurd plays assumed a highly innovative form, directly aiming to startle the viewer, shaking him out of this comfortable, conventional life of everyday concerns. In the meaningless and Godless world they did not use any traditional standards like plot, characterization, and valued language. The new theatre was against the old. It was anti-theatre. As Jan Culik says it was surreal, illogical, conflictless and plotless. The dialogue seemed total 'gobbledygook.' Not unexpectedly, the absurd theatre met with incomprehension and rejection first. The new theatre made use of lyrical statements very much like music. The new plays communicate an atmosphere, an experience of archetypal human situations. It presents a pattern of images. It is lyrical theatre which uses abstract scenic effects, many of which have been taken over and modified from the popular theatre arts: mine, ballet, acrobatics, conjuring, music-hall talk and clowning. It used nonsense, allegory, myth and dream.

In view of all this, the preceding chapters made a critical survey of the western, particularly British and Kannada absurd playwrights. The life and works of Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter, Tardieu, Boris Vian, Dino Buzzati, d' Errico, de Pedrolo, Arrabal, Frisch,
Hildesheimer, Grass, Pinget, Simpson, Albee, Gelber, Kopit and Tom Stoppard are studied and appreciated. Similarly a study of Kannada absurd playwrights such as Bendre, Na. Ratna, Girish Karnad, Chandrashekhar Patil, Chandrashekhar Kambar, Chandrakanth Kusnur, P. Lankesh, Chaduranga and others are studied and analyzed. Even the tradition of the absurd, the significance of the absurd and the future of the absurd are taken into consideration.

Now an attempt is made to find out the probings emerging out of the present comparative study of the British and Kannada absurd theatres.

1. The British absurd theatre depicted the western man’s anxiety, dread, and confusion in the light of industrialization, urbanization, world wars, the growth of science and technology and the loss of faith in traditional religion. The western man was materialistically well off already. The Absurd Theatre depicts his intellectual concerns rather than existentialistic.

Whereas the eastern absurd theatre, particularly Kannada absurd theatre has different concerns and perspectives. Like the western man the eastern man is not well off materialistically. Even he has not achieved any of the western life standards. He has, in fact, not faced the problems arising out of industrialization, world wars and science and technology. Not to speak of his religious concerns are still the old kind.

This means Kannada absurd theatre does not depict the kind of situations, which the British absurd theatre depicted. Therefore, Dr Basavaraj Naikar, a bilingual scholar-writer feels that “Kannada absurd plays were written by the intellectuals for the intellectuals. Even Kannada absurd plays
do not depict the absurdity of life. They just depict life, making use of absurd theatre techniques. One reason for this is that Indians do not experience metaphysical absurdity. As we know Indians still believe in God and religion. They believe in transmigration of soul (Karma theory). So Kannada playwrights depict the absurdity of life in regard to Indian social problems like caste, corruption, sex, poverty and callousness. They make use of myth for the exposure.\textsuperscript{4}

2. The practitioners of the Absurd Theatre in the East did not lose their complete faith in God and religion on which is based the new theatre. The kind of loss of faith found in Nietzsche’s \textit{Thus Spake Zaratustra} cannot be found in any of the eastern countries. Zaratustra says God is dead. He says we have killed the god and we are the gods now. So man is the God. Such a radical idea swept the minds of Europe and changed them into semi-atheists. If God is dead and man can be his own God, man can live as he wishes. The western atheism is well presented in the works of absurd playwrights. For example, Beckett’s plays \textit{Waiting for Godot} and \textit{Endgame} and Pinter’s \textit{The Birthday Party} and \textit{Tha Caretaker}, Simpson’s \textit{The Resounding Tinkle} and Stoppard’s \textit{Rosencrantz}, along with those produced by others in the other European countries, project a godless world where man is his own master. But the same is not so clearly found in the eastern (particularly Kannada) theatre.

When we study Kannada plays it becomes clear. Bendre’s play \textit{Sayo Aata} does not speak of God’s death. Na. Ratna’s play \textit{Gode Beke Gode}
depicts a scene in which one of the tramps collects a glass wall at a temple. Girish Karnad’s play *Tughlaq* has prayers as one of the situations; while *Hayavadana* delineates a temple and Devadatta and Kapila’s worshipping there. In fact, a deity blesses them. Likewise Chandrashekhar Kambar’s play *Jokumaraswami* has a religious theme. Of course, the plays of Chandrashekhar Patil, Chandrakanth Kusnur and P. Lankesh are free from any religious rites and rituals.

3. Even from the point of language some of the Kannada absurd plays use traditional language. Girish Karnad, P. Lankesh and Chandrashekhar Kambar use the language, which is full of figures of speech, imageries and descriptions. As for methodology, they do not make any great progress. As critics feel, the Kannada absurd theatre did not create a great play like that of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*. So in view of this, Kannada audience did not like the new theatre. It is only the intellectuals who liked it. Basavaraj Naikar says some intellectuals wrote the Kannada absurd plays for themselves.

In fact, one of the prominent Kannada absurd playwrights Chandrakanth Kusnur observes, “The Kannada absurd theatre is different from the British in terms of its language, theatricality, dramaturgy, presentation and experience. The Europeans’ reasons for the absurd theatre are not there for us. Our absurd theatre is an outcome of an indirect British influence. But it is not an outcome of a direct influence or our own experience.” The fun is that all of Chandrakanth Kusnur’s plays are absurd
plays. In fact, his plays, along with Chandrashekhar Patil’s, are, technically, the best absurd plays.
REFERENCES: