

Absurd and Morality

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Abstract Absurd theater is an art which represents absurdity of life in the contemporary western countries as a fundamental objection against the absurd life the meaning and values of which are not the pre-given or natural affairs, but they are originated from human practice and the relation that he has given to the world. Meaninglessness of the life and world is the product of the action, practice and existential experience of the wise creatures who cannot give the meaning to the life and its world any more. This disability of the human being in giving meaning to the life is the climax of fall from all transcendental ascents which have shined as stars in the different periods of the mankind civilization. The morality is the most important ascent which has been experienced through catastrophes and disasters and gradually and step by step it has been threatened and become infirm. Seemingly, meaninglessness of life is product of weakening and probably destruction of morality basis. By domination of modernity, the ethic became independent and actually it lost the religion protection (lose of traditional basis of morality). In other words, the morality remained valid only by leaning on humanity and human reason. The statements by great thinkers as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud on the costly position of human as God's representative or kin as well as scientific advantages of the scientists as Copernicus, Coupler, Galileo, Darwin, Heisenberg and Einstein against the prevail understanding of human and his position in the existence, made the human's base and status unstable and eventually the world wars did the final stroke. Because of its disconnection from religion, the morality, which had only leaned on the human, became seriously unstable and weakening by these events and fall of human's base as a creative from the ancestry of animals (Darwin), slave of instincts (Freud), plaything of historical condition (Marx), restricted in his/her own perspective (Nietzsche)... (Lose of Modern morality basis). Absurdity of absurd theater in the structure and content, which is experienced from this structure, is represented. Absurdity is perceived not only from the totality of structure but the various parts of structure. The effete or outcast characters or both of them, the trivial subjects which are lack of great values of human, dialogues including the words with out communication and non-solidarity phrases, cyclic constructions which are without the current climax and fall of classic and neo-classic, absence of conflict between the opposite ideas and the characters who protect the ideas are the structural elements which generally express absurdity of human life as well as independently narration of this tragedy. Considering the great works including *Waiting for Godot* (Samuel Becket), *Rhino* (Eugene Ionesco), *Return to Home* (Harold Pinter) prove this condition.

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1. Introduction

In the end of middle centuries, the western human gradually refused the autonomy of church in order to become-as Kant had wished-mature, which is, he/she himself/herself seeks and find episteme. This maturity was venerating the reason in one side and disdaining any reference in the other side. Reason had reached to the divine dignity and it intent to establish a paradise, which has been promised by the religious books in "the next world", on the earth. Francis Bacon and Descartes promised this "wrought – reason" paradise in the beginning of modernity. Independent from its religious basis, even moral affair was seeking by help of reason. Kant assumed the moral independent from any intrest, praised and authentic and he had designed firm reasoning in expression the

pure moral affair. The moral goodness and badness, according to Kant, is perceived by every body through the reason and we ought to try to live according to this perception. In other words, he expressed the morality of liberal and senior, but he had taken an important protector from morality, that is, religion. Although the morality is free and sublimated from any promise, undoubtedly most part of society contains the common people who are not familiar to the liberal eth morality and their good and evil deeds are not resulted from the rational understanding but for paradise or fear from hell. Destruction of the religion protection seriously destroys the morality base or leastwise abstinence from non-moral affair in them.

Although Kant destroyed the religious protection of morality as well as the leaning on the

vulgar, the background for this destruction had been provided before him. Corruption, oppression and ignorance of the church authorities had blemished the religion validity; therefore, it (religion) had not the competence of authority and preferentiality. Reading of the Catholic Church from Christian had been spread to the area of policy and political incompetence of and inefficiencies were not detachable from the religion capabilities; consequently, every thing was ascribed to the religion. Also, illegitimacy of the believers or custodians of religion were not detachable from the religion itself; therefore, it was recorded for religion. The vain champion of the church with scientific advantages (Galileo, Ceppler, Jerdano Brono...), the huge wealth of the clergymen who were promoting the ascetic life of Christ inconsistently, incompatibility of the church training and human instinct tendencies (as bachelorhood, disdain wealth and comfort...), torture and murder of innocent people by excuse of ancisation, the criminal and at the same time unhappy crusade wars, disability of the church in explaining and justification of the new advantages of sciences were the issues that determined the end of the church paradigm.

By scientific struggles, philosophical optimism, and protection of the artistic movements, modernity determined a condition in which all religious and superstitious promises in the people's belief... the ideal world or utopia and promised paradise is possible in this earthly world by use of reason. But exactly in the moment in which all modernity ideals were in stage of certainty, namely beginning of 20th century, the time which the reason could achieve the domination of human on the world and open the gates of sky to him, the world wars, poverty, corruption..., gad between the classes, domination of bureaucratic system and injustice rules of market and the work area persuaded people to believe that the new God (reason) in constructing paradise not only was unable but instead it has constructed a horrible hell.

2. Research Method and Research Consideration

In this research, which focuses on representation of morality absurdity in the absurd theater, studies three major works in the area of absurd dramatic literature, that is, Samuel Bucket's *Waiting for Godo*, Eugene Ionesco's *Rhino* and Harold Pinter's *Return to Home*. Consequently, the central thought of the works which is representation of the morality absurdity become clear. Some books have been referred to as the references for explaining the absurd, but it has been preferred to avoid the effect of the other critics and analyst for analyzing the plays.

3. Consideration and Discussion

The pioneer philosopher of modernity in the 17th, Descartes had said "I think then I exist." This statement, which announced the modern humanist domination, was carrying a great truth in itself. "Human's existence is his/her thought." Without thought, human is not a human. Two centuries after Descartes, the professional reason of human had made an instrument which has destroyed human existence in the shortest possible time. People in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the product of the reason to which, in Descartes terms, human's existence was conditioned were destroyed as soon as possible. Therefore, human's thought had determined his/her living not his/her existence. The thinking human had thought this living burden. Therefore, it had to say "I think then I existed."

This is the time of absurd emergence, a theatrical movement which was pioneered by its greatest precursors including Samuel Bucket, Eugene Ionesco, Jan Jene and Arthur Adamov. The early plays of Edward Albee and Harold Pinter also fall in the scope of this category... [1]. Moreover, we can find the similarities between the works by Chekhov, Sartre, Camus, Eanil and those of this movement. The most works of this movement are in French language (Bucket, Ionesco and Jene); therefore, it is originally a French movement. Art mirrors human and reveals the existence and essence of human in a non-conceptual experience and this ability is incomparable to the manifestations of human life. Absurd theater represents the western contemporary human realistically. The western human, after the spree of rejection the religion and belief in the god of reason, wondering and unconscious was proud of reason. He had not any base to which fight or by which rises against that condition. Being alive and no living was the story of the contemporary human from the perspective of absurd theater. Regarding the condition of emergence of absurd theater Bracket said: "theater was exceedingly influenced by the war horrors and possibility of its repetition. The thinkers of the period have planed the fundamental questions about human's responsibility and even his survival. The very themes of the plays are anxiety and feeling of sinfulness." [2]

This horror and anxiety captured the scene of theater. Theater was no more an entertainment for instruction or purification. It was, like others, captured by anxiety and its representation was horrible. Millions people had been victimized by the world wars because of only two atomic bombs. In the end of War II, thousands atomic bombs were prepared by different countries to target one another. As a result, if this new war (nuclear war), the scope of which was all over the world, was occurring, it would had annihilated human for ever.

About the setting and atmosphere of absurd work, Hans Leh Man has said: “the atmosphere in which absurdity theater is living has the political, philosophical and literary causes: the experience of savagery in the twentieth century, possibility of the end of history (Hiroshima), bureaucracies without meaning, political submission, an existentialist return on the individual and nihilism are in close interconnection.” [3]

This theater has been dismantled from what has been called as art mission or its capability since Plato to Nietzsche. It neither reveals divine truth (Plato) nor instructs people (Aristotle) or appears infinite idea (Hegel), it neither inaugurates a new way for life (Nietzsche) nor uncovers the existence (Heidegger). Power of contemporary theater has been judged by Peter Brook as: “there is not a living theater which answers to the real contemporary needs... theater do not satisfy any contemporary need, the people who used to go to theater, cannot get something from the plays; they can not achieve the least element for their routine future life... “. [4]

Optimism in the beginning of modernity was replaced by exceeding despair and disappointment. The hopelessly conditions had directed the life horizon toward a thick darkness; consequently, people were expecting the collapse and destruction of existence by outbreak of the destructive nuclear war. Expect of the worst condition, while nobody could do any thing, caused an exceptional experience. “When the atomic dust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki massacre settled down, when the horrible pictures of human burner’s kiln of Germany and ideological massacres by Russian were presented to the world, darkness and sorrow captured the theater scenes beyond the conventional notions.” [5]

This difficult experience gave the life a different meaning from what is in the philosophical or religious literature. There is always a way to escape from the crisis and catastrophe in the most pessimistic religious ideas. At least, religion promises the next world justly. The pessimistic philosophers also suggest some alternatives but all the alternatives seemed foolishly, ridiculous and deadlock in the new horrible experience. The lesson which the war, occupation and, in particular, explosion of the atomic bomb taught was too cruel that anybody accept to deceive itself or participate in the lies by others... Human wanted to demonstrate his/her own meaninglessness and nihilism in a nihilist world, and to question the thought habit and the most traditional and sacred beliefs and clearly understand the nothingness and vacuum to which humanity and human were running.” [6]

Absurd drama represents the horrible experience of life and the life accompanied by

horrible, anxiety, imminent waiting for catastrophe and nothingness. It is a condition in which a hero will not rise to change the unjust condition because human has lost the belief in the power to change the condition. In the condition in which the future is too much darker and ambiguous than the past, possibility of the fall of the sky roof on the head of the earth inhabitants, rejection of religious and non-religious belief, and the great victim is the morality. In this condition, everybody can do every thing because everything is legitimized or there is not any forbidden affair. Legitimized or illegitimated are the rules to order the society and facilitate possibility of life. When the life is unstable and existence is going to fall, there is not any a tomorrow in “the World” or “Area of the world” in which human suffers the vengeance of this world; therefore, every thing is legitimized. In other words, it is possible to keep the parents in the ash-bin (*End Game*), or betray the wife or husband in front of him/her... (*Return to Home*) or employ human as an animal (*Waiting for Godot*) or he was curious, when the Men became into animals, whether they the animal is one-horn or two-horn (*Rhino*)

The absurd artist writes against these conditions. He does not deliver a political manifest against the dominant conditions but, by revolution of the conditions and uncovering it for use, it exposes us to the terrible experience of the world which has been dismantled by our affair and its endurance is difficult and even impossible. Some affairs including “devastation of natural environment, the dangers of chemical bombs, atomic rubbish, developing the mass media in a way that the private identity is lost, change in the morality and eradication of any moral taboo... . [7]

Absurd artist is not a social reformist or political activist; therefore, it does not say us what we should or should not do to better the world. He reveals the world to us by the artist instruments, that is, what he has and the language by which he/she speaks. In other words, he/she clarifies the world to which we have gotten and we are unable to perceive its abnormality, irrationality or unfairness. But, the art through defamiliarization attracts our attention. The artistic instrument of the absurd artists is exerted so: “in their works, they put some elements which are in the common atmosphere and, instead of the cause and

effect relations, they met the turbulent structures which are their current dramatic subject. In this way, the feeling of nihilism from the things which is by combination of developed incompatible accidents is produced and it is resulted in a serious- ridiculous and ironic atmosphere". [8]

Waiting for Godo is a brilliant example of lose of the basis particularly the basis of morality. "Estragon" and "Vladimir" are the wandering effete whose existences are summarized in vain delay and binds as carrot and turnip involving in a shoe and hat. Pertinence of the morality life is a purposeful and transcendental- based life and human's sublime has a relationship to his/her transcendental desires. The two features are not observed in the life of "Estragon" and "Vladimir". If we do not assume Godo as the product and creation of the melancholically imaginations, it is an unfaithful promised character who enjoys his own unfaithfulness and Estragon and Vladimir's waiting for him. Moreover, a child who sometimes brings lie promise of Godo's coming in the future is also his accomplice or the object of his action in this amoral practice. If we assume Godo as Estragon and Vladimir's imagination, it is another symbol of the childish life against which Kant had reacted and expressed improvement at human's maturity as "struggle to achieve episteme for its own self."

"Lucky", in this work, is a human-animal which carries load and shows the way, it beats and kicks if it is necessary, it recites lectures, and it is a strange mixture of dog, donkey and peacock and eats the reminder of the master's (Putsoo) food delightfully. "Putsoo", who seems the master, is a pathetic creature that is blind and lame and the autonomy of his masterhood is only and only a consequence of automatic slavery of lucky. Lucky's slavery represents the amoral life by "Lucky" who practice slavery and "Putsoo" who enslaves as the lie promise (by Godo and the child) with Estragon and Vladimir's is also amoral. If there is not any rule that protect such victimized men- it is the result of absurdity of morality- why is the morality and social protection the source and basis of rule in each society. Society does not show any reaction to this status. Does not it understand this condition? Estragon and Vladimir also represent society individuals, who are at the same time victims and indifferent in comparison to the Lucky slavery and they reveal indifferent society against injustice, fall of morality.

"Rhino" reveals another kind of absurdity of life. In a horrible condition in which the Men become into the harsh and dangerous animals, the dominant concern of society is to know whether the harsh and dangerous animals are one-horn or two-horn, Asian or African. Society has lost its sensitiveness for the norms and values and it does not react in opposition to

their violation. Eventually, "Branje" is the only human who has been not metamorphosed into an animal. His stability is not because of a particular ability or a firm belief in a transcendental value as a hero but because of his disability has remained a human. He has tried seriously to become a human. Even he has tried the voice of animals, but, he has remained, against his tendency, a human.

Absurdity of life is in a way in which to be a human is not a prominent accomplishment but an unwanted and unwittingly pathetic weakness! Interestingly Branje's behavior was blaming by others before the attack of Rhino and epidemic of becoming into Rhino, particularly by John. On those times Branje was going to work in a drunken condition. His cloth was not clean and tidy and his face was not shaved every day. In the position of a morality teacher-the role which was played by the priests- John continuously reminds Branje's duties in the position of a normal citizen and Branje also listens shamefully, but John, interestingly, is among the first people who become into Rhino! Branje, who is disabling to believe in the imposed social norms, is the only one who does not transform into a Rhino. Possibly, "*Return to Home*" is the most horrible experience among the work against absurdity of the life. The woman has been reduced into the tool for sexual passions and the sensual are regardless her husband's brothers and father and amazingly every thing happens in front of the husband. The woman decides to leave her children and stay among the group. Because of the costs, the group decides for prostitution of the women in the opportunities (e. g when the men are at work). Her husband is a designer of this alternative.

Traditionally the parents are remembered by their good deeds, but the family mother, against tradition, is remembered as the present bride of the family. The family uncle declares that they have experienced, like this condition, a successful competition to achieve their brother's wife! The children are in a serious competition, which is sometimes resulted in beating, to their father to attract the family bride. The children treat their father inferiorly and abusively.

The family uncle reveals his job capabilities proudly. He recognizes himself as the favorite driver of his rich passengers because he knows when he should or should not speak. He knows what he should or should not say so that satisfies the passengers! As if, Lucky of "*Witting for Godo*" has been repeated in a more tangible and believable way. Both are the tools dismantled from human emotions and they merely do what they have been wanted or it has originally been scheduled for them. Evaluation of the role and function and comparison to the morality principles is

impossible because morality is no more a transcendental value.

4. Conclusion

Absurd drama reveals the contemporary western human as it is or it is possible to be and revelation of total fall taken place by the morality litter. The prominent works of absurd theater represent the lost leaning of human morality. The morality, which was propagated by morality independently from religion, lost its validity when mortality ideals reached to deadlocks and became a subordinate from the needs of "body-diagnosis" which are common between human and animals. By disconnection of religion and morality, in the beginning of modernity particularly in Kant's works, morality merely leaned on human. Scientific and philosophical advantages and historical experiences have destroyed the basis of human validity that recognized from gods ancestry in the ancient Greece and God's child in the Middle Ages. Destruction of human validity actually recorded the only leaning of morality which was followed by meaningless and aimless life and absurd brilliant works show us this regretful condition.

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