



### The Unsung Tradition of the Absurd in Sub-Continent Literature

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**Abstract:** Genre of the Absurdism depicts the inexplicability and unpredictability of life. The world is portrayed as it has been abandoned by some higher authority or it is a place, wherein people are dissociated from society leading to utter isolation, rendering them more vulnerable to control and manipulation. The above discussed social ecology led to the development of the genre of the Absurd. The genre of the Absurd is not insignificant blend of the thoughts of a nonconformist mind experimenting with traditional literary rites rather it is unpleasant yet honest reproductions of the purposelessness, and utter incomprehensibility of modern existence. The works of the absurdist writers, like existential thinkers, are not imbalanced rather they are imbued with something substantial through which they replicate the sense of meaninglessness of human existence and insufficiency of coherent method in this regard. It afforded the readers and viewers an empty and muddled environment wherein people are found expressing in an irrational and illogical way. The genre characterized the lack of inspiration and motivational factors within human beings, depletion of moral values and loss of identity.

**Key words:** Absurd, Existence, Purposeless, Meaningless, Bizarre, Futile

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#### 1. Introduction

The idea of absurdity has been prevalent in philosophy since the times of ancient Greeks as both Plato and Aristotle discussed absurdity denoting the poorly reasoned arguments. The absurd originates from Latin *absurdus*, meaning out of tune or discordant. Martin Esslin (1961), coined the term 'Theatre of the Absurd' as school of thought, a philosophy, which gained currency in the latter half of 20th century Europe. It denoted the universe as inherently meaningless and empty of any purpose. Esslin (1961) elaborated it as human conditions which denote helplessness, insecurity and perennial inability to cope with the its desperateness, death, and irrationality. The theatre is supposed to confront man with the unpleasant fact that human efforts are illogical and futile. Similarly, Camus (1962) in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) opined that the world that can be described through reasoning, though being defective, is a familiar world. Nonetheless in a universe that is abruptly devoid of illusions and light, man is reduced to the status of a stranger, in an irreversible exile. He is without the memories of a lost homeland and is devoid of any hope to come across the promised land. The disconnection between man and life and the actor and stage, essentially produces the sense of Absurdity.

Human history mostly remained under the potent influence of the philosophy of Essentialism which denoted Man's creation in the image of God; and universe is a place infused with profound determinism and absolute optimism (Rajoria 2023). However, certain events in 19<sup>th</sup> century shook the foundation of Essentialism. Life for a person who was born in 1900, was full of socio-political and economic upheavals. At the age of 19 he saw the beginning of WWI, leaving 22 million people dead in 1918. In 1920, the pandemic of Spanish flu wiped away 50 million people from earth. At the age of 29, he witnessed the global economic crisis as New York stock market crashed, causing unprecedented inflation, hunger and unemployment. In 1933, Nazism takes over in Germany and just after six years, WW-II (1939-45) started which claimed the lives of 60 million. All of these events challenged the proverbial notion about universe and human existence, questioning that universe is imbued with divine purpose, determinism, optimism and pre-ordained destiny and is the creation by omnipotent, omnipresent and infallible God.

The Absurd as a literary movement emerged in the back drop of the wreckage of World War II, as reaction to devastating impact on European society and rejection of old-style narrative structures and themes. It emphasized on the insignificance and vainness of human existence and entailed in a sense of disappointment and a quest to investigate in the purpose and meaning of human existence (Javaid,2023). It devastated public faith in reason and humanity, notwithstanding, the accomplishments of arts and science, humans went senseless with incredible savagery and gluttony. The post war intellectuals too were in a state of confusion and bewilderment and the dream to conceive a meaningful purpose-oriented world instantly degenerated as fear of destruction. Hence, living normal life was rendered impossible, leaving people with no choice but to live a life full of bizarre, anxiety and cynicism. Hence the absurdism in literature characterizes an era wherein cogent and rational decision making is rendered difficult because of all human actions are empty, futile and listless. It signified an internal conflict between human tendency to search intrinsic meaning in life and man's incapacity to find the same because of his limited capabilities. Absurd writings are unpredictable, unstructured, humorous, portraying irrational situations and events, purposelessness of action, in unidealistic, questioning the meanings of life and exploration of subjective ideas about human existence.

### 1.1 Genesis of the Tradition in Europe

The genre of absurd literature, encouraged by post- 2<sup>nd</sup> world war disenchantment and cynicism, appeared in 1950s in literary circles of France and Germany. It was also a response to the rise of Romanticism in France, the downfall of religious institution in Germany and socio-philosophical uprising guided by thoughts and literary constructs of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche (Wegener,1967). The common essentials in absurdist literature comprise black humor, satire, degradation of reason, incongruity and discussion on philosophical condition of being "nothing" (Cornwell, 2006f).

## 2. Literature Review

Absurdist literature is most commonly associated with prose fiction, though it exists in other mediums as well. Absurdist poetry has many of the same marks as absurdist prose, and sometimes it even intersects owing to its highly figurative nature, the genre of absurdist poetry can be difficult to grasp in most of the cases.

"Jabberwocky" and "The Walrus and the Carpenter" by Lewis Carroll's poetic works are featured in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the sequel, *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. These works depict some coined words and phrases to arouse the element of the absurd and the sequential humor. "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat" by Edward Lear, employs absurd and surreal ideas to amuse and shock the readers. Similarly "Pyjama-Speed" by Simone Yoyotte, was a surrealist writing with some absurdist elements, closely interwoven. Since the Absurdist poetry is meticulously linked with a genre named as nonsense poetry, which is what Carroll and Lear were primarily composing.

However, The Absurdist Theatre focused on experience of the depicted characters, centered on the idea of the oddity of life with its incompatibility, irreconcilability and worthlessness (Esslin,1961). According to Dickson (2020) major among the galaxy of the absurdists are Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, and Eugène Ionesco and the earliest instances of absurdism in literature include *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison.

*Waiting for Godot* (1953) by Samuel Beckett is the absurd play depicting the two vagabonds Vladimir and Estragon, spending the entire play waiting for Godot. They keep on talking and however they do not attempt to quit their situation wherein they are trapped, till the very end of the play. In the play, the change which is the most sought after but the character remains illusory and impossible. *Endgame* (1957) characterizes a blind and crippled man along with his servant who are waiting for the end — which possibly denotes the end of life or the end of the play. The tragicomedy discovers the existential anguish and misery when one grasps the meaninglessness of human existence. *The Bald Soprano* (1950) by Eugène Ionesco deals with two families residing in London. The characters engage in a meaningless dialogue and spinning stories which are leading nowhere. They hardly communicate anything which is evocative and they do not make a connection, or even actually listen to each other from beginning to the end of the play. *Rhinoceros* (1959) too was written by Ionesco, set in a small French town wherein people gradually turn into rhinoceroses. It is generally read as a reactionary response to the upsurge of Fascism and Nazism during 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. It deals with the strain among mob mentality, conformity and human morality. *The Balcony* (1957) by Jean Genet's is set in the backdrop of a brothel, in an unknown city under revolution wiping out the most influential members of society. The patrons of the brothel take over their vacant roles. Genet's play delineates power and showcases it even when it is faced with unrest, the status quo always reaffirms and repeats itself. *The Birthday Party* (1957) by Harold Pinter is dealing with a birthday party which is disrupted by the arrival of two frightening outsiders. The characters of the play are unreliable and frequently challenge themselves. It is not clear why the strangers arrive to frighten the main character during his birthday party? The technique of broken sentences, pauses and even incorrect phrases emphasize the futility of language and pre-defined organized structures in the human existence. The use of such abrupt language in the plays in fact reflects the pointlessness of the efforts designed to inject a sense of order and meaning in the world and the human condition. Besides, how the plays ultimately afford a dull, dreary, bleak and pessimistic view of human existence. The absurd plays generally and the works of Beckett particularly are known for the use of repetition, minimalism and emphasis on the human condition. These plays have blurred the lines between comedy and tragedy, bringing the concept of tragedy from an intellectual plane to level to an existential pedestal, highlighting the disconnect between human existence and thoughts- the utmost disaster that could befall on human beings (Javaid,2023). The essential characteristic of absurdist plays encompasses the struggle to discover an intrinsic resolve in life, described through the characters by way of display of meaningless actions in pointless events. Absurdism when viewed and analyzed as a philosophical movement, looks as an extension of, or departure from, Existentialism, which emphasizes the pointlessness of humanity; and precisely the emotive anguish and anxiety when the existence of purpose is tested and defied.

### 3. The Streaks of the Absurd Tradition in the Sub-Continent

The genesis of the tradition can be traced in the poetry of the renowned poet Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib. The great poet, happened to be in Delhi at the time of mutiny of 1857 in the British India. He witnessed the revolutionary changes occurring during his life span. Even childhood was equally miserable. He was born in Agra in 1797 became an orphan at the age of five. He lived an easy and carefree life, spending his youth in customary pastimes like kite flying, wagering, cock fighting, , drinking and womanizing. He was married when he was barely 13 years old to a girl aging eleven; and the marriage was doomed to be a failure. Undoubtedly, his early years left considerable emotional and mental stress on him and it is not simply a coincident that he started writing poetry at very young age (Varma,2016). Besides, his arrest and imprisonment in gambling case in 1846, failed rebellion of 1857, prolonged suspension of his pension, exile of his benefactor King, his inclination to the Sufi philosophy and quest for meaning of life and existence further added to his disturbed personality. The victors' dread in the aftermath of the Revolt (1857) crushed him emotionally, entailing in a permanently destabilized life, dearest friends were executed or banished, public hangings and brutal massive executions, desecration of religious institutions, destruction of socio-economic fabric of life, devastation of feudal class, effluents rendered paupers, he remained penniless, an exceeded, deserted and voiceless witness to this prolonged confusion and upheaval and a paralytic stroke in 1869 liberated the beaten and battered soul from the bondage of existence.

All the above stated bitter facts triggered his desperateness, desolation, misery, disinterestedness, sleepless nights, unwarranted guiltiness, suicidal ideation and obsession with death. (Mulumule, N. M. (2022)). The deterioration in the externalities particularly the socio-economic and political upheavals took the better of his personality, generating the feelings of decay, despair, despondency and dejection, kindled the flame of the genre of the absurd, preempting the regular dawn of the Absurd tradition in Germany and France.

#### 4. The Elements of the Absurd Tradition in his Poetry

The following couplet truly epitomize his predicament:

An ocean of blood churns around me— Alas! were this all!  
The future will show What more remains for me to see (Diwan-i-Ghalib).

He realized that heart is not the like of dead stone or steel, hence it is bound to be moved and similarly eyes too are not dead cracks in a wall nevertheless will mourn and shed tears at the site of death and wide spread desolation of India. The city of Delhi was leaderless, without its sovereigns and was captured by creatures who knew no lord; and it resembled a garden sans a gardener, overgrown with fruitless trees. (Gupta, 2012). According to him the recalling of the aftermath of the failed mutiny, may look mere a tragic account, full of pain that even its recalling will cause the stars to shed the tears of blood. Ghalib, unlike Wordsworth and P.B Shelly did not nurse revolutionary ideas and nor he projected it through his verses. Notwithstanding, he found solace even in face of growing oppression and despair. His loneliness which is emanating from the meaninglessness and injustice within his society wherein he survived and it left him as a wandering soul without any solace and peace of mind. Hence, even his creative work is not affording him any mental relief and he laments the absurdity of existence, purposelessness of life. Ghalib's realized that his suffering are rather multiplied with the passage of time.

رنج سے خوگر ہوا تو مٹ جاتا ہے رنج  
مشکلیں مجھ پر پڑی اتنی کہ آسان ہو گئیں

When sorrow brims over greatly, then the sorrows cease;  
My woes weighed on me so much that my burdens eased.

Ranj se khugar hua insaan to mit jaata hai runj  
Mushkilein mujh par padi itni ke aasan ho gayi

He realized the perpetual nature of grief, sorrow, depression and dejection against the limited capacity of humans to endure it. This imbalance situation was somewhat permanent and ultimate destiny of man. Escape or liberation from such a situation was an impossibility and the numbness caused by its enormity in fact served as its antidote. Ghalib found solace in the limitation of human capacity to undergo pain as pain crossed its limits it becomes its own antidote.

ہوا جب غم سے یوں بے حس تو غم کیا سر کے کٹنے کا  
نہ ہوتا گر جدا تن سے تو زانوں پہ دھرا ہوتا

Hua jab gham se yoon behis toh gham kya sar ke katne ka  
Na hota gar juda tan se to zaanu par dhara hota (Translation).

The verse states that when one has been so stunned/shocked by sorrows, then why feel sad of being beheaded; if the head were not detached from the body, even then it would have been placed on knees.

Since Ghalib happened to exist during 1857's war of independence in the sub-continent against the colonial masters, he had to bear the brunt of it after the rebellion was put down. In the post mutiny conditions, he found himself beset with want dejection and despair; shaken to the core by fever and fret of life 'Ghalib' (the dominant)

looked as ‘Maghloob’ (the dominated). He was so fraught with the perpetuity of the gloom of which mankind was destined, even his existence appeared worthless to him. He felt though his head was not rolled during the mutiny but what difference it would have made as it is constantly lying on his thighs in a continuous mourning posture. Deewan-e-Ghalib Jadeed (Al-Maroofo Ba Nuskha-e-Hameedia) (Pg. 194)

Despite being an essence of handful dust, imbued with senses and emotions rendered helpless to undergo the pointless life in listless world; this perpetual state of despair and dejection to find meanings in life, certainly rocked the finer and sensitive souls like Ghalib. This state of agony finds expression in the following verse:

کیوں گردشِ مدام سے گھبرا نہ جائے دل  
انسان ہوں پیالہ و ساغر نہیں ہوں میں

Why shouldn't the revolutions of life agitate my heart?

I'm human, not a goblet to be passed around the floor.

Deewan-e-Ghalib Jadeed (Al-Maroofo Ba Nuskha-e-Hameedia) (Pg. 283)

Despite his praise of the British forces in his diary, Ghalib being a true native and an ardent lover of Delhi, criticized and lamented the attack on his fellow inhabitants by his British patrons. The victorious army callously slew the rebellious population of Delhi and it looked that it would not leave alive even a dog or a cat. According to him ‘the unwarranted revolt’ caused Delhi to suffer more than it deserved. It was robbed of its distinctive wit and humor. Even poetry, which was Ghalib’s permanent companion, failed to afford him comfort and solace his heart scorched with hot sighs.

غمے بستی کا اسد کس سے ہو جز مرگِ عاج

شمع ہر رنگ میں جلتی ہے سحر ہونے تک

O! Asad! What can dismiss or relieve the sorrows of life but death? The candle burns, as it has to, till the break of dawn. The verse narrates the melancholic temperament of Ghalib at its worst. According to Ghalib, death is eliminator of all despondencies of life like dawn terminates the burning agony of candle. The verse also characterizes that man must pass through suffering of his/her life till he/she is alive. existing. Since we are alive and burning like candles fully till we consumes ourselves.

Solitude, loneliness and the attendant boredom being the hallmark of the Absurd movement existed in Ghalib even prior to its rise in Europe. Ghalib beautifully characterized it in the following couplet:

کاو کاو سخت جانی ہائے تنہائی نہ پوچھ

صبح کرنا شام کا لانا ہے جوئے شیر کا

kaav kāv-e-sakht-jānī hā.e-tanhā.ī na pūchh

sub.h karnā shaam kā laanā hai jū-e-shīr kā

Deewan-e-Ghalib Jadeed (Al-Maroofo Ba Nuskha-e-Hameedia) (Pg. 147)

What constant pain this loneliness you may not believe

Like from mountains drawing milk, is passing morning to evening .



The verse clearly characterizes the socio-political settings wherein Ghalib survived and it truly represents the sheer melancholy. Ghalib here seem to be discussing not only the physical solitude but also a kind of internal loneliness in the face of his listless settings caused by the war of 1857. His solitude should have been seen in the perspective of mental, spiritual and social backdrop. Beckett seems to have accidentally plagiarized this idea when one of his character in *Waiting For Godot*, expresses the similar mental anguish: “no body comes, no body goes, it is awful”.

نہ تھا کچھ تو خدا تھا کچھ نہ ہوتا تو خدا ہوتا  
ڈبویا مجھ کو ہونے نے نہ میں ہوتا تو کیا ہوتا

na thā kuchh to ̣hudā thā kuchh na hotā to ̣hudā hotā

Duboyā mujh ko hone ne na hotā maiñ to kyā hotā

When there was nothing, there was God; if there was nothing, there would have been God my existence/living/life sank/destroyed me, if I was not there, what would have happened. Here Ghalib expresses the meaninglessness of his existence. He deems his presence or existence as nothing rather worthless and having no bearing or even an iota of significance in the scheme of things. He has further elaborated this thought in the following verse:

ہم کو معلوم ہے جنت کی حقیقت لیکن

دل کے خوش رکھنے کہ غالب یہ خیال اچھا ہے

ham ko ma.alūm hai jannat kī haqīqat lekin

dil ke ̣hush rakhne ko 'ghālib' ye ̣hayāl achchhā hai

paiman-e-gazal-avval (Pg. 152)

Gripped with anxiety and the absurdity of the situation not only quoting in existence of which he has no control or contribution to solve the enigma of it, he even goes further to challenge whether religion belief could be enough to tackle this phenomenon. Unlike the Absurd writers of the future, he is expressive of his thoughts in the proverbial diction of the absurd tradition i.e. illogical and incoherent presentation of thoughts in debased or non-sensical language.

Life is void of meaning and equally incapacitated is mankind to find the same. The fact alludes to mans' destiny to undergo the irresolvable emptiness - a dilemma between quest to ask question and impossibility of getting an appropriate answer to it. The conflict between the human tendency in looking for inherent meanings in life and the silent but tacit answer from the human social settings that there is no inherent meanings in life, finds full illustration in the following verse.

رو میں ہے رخس عمر، کہاں دیکھے تھے

نے ہاتھ باگ پر ہے نہ یا ہے رکاب میں

The stallion of my life is in sprint, let's see where does it stop? Neither are my hands on the reins, nor my feet in the stirrup.

Ghalib in these couplet defines human age through the symbol of horse that is galloping through life span, and no one knows where it would stop as neither hands are on reins, nor feet are in stirrup. Here, he is suggesting the ambiguity and uncertainty of life's course and humans' inability to control its drive and movements.

ہو چکی غالب بالئے سب تمام

ایک مرگے ناگہانی اور ہے۔

Ghalib says that he has endured all sorts of trials and tribulations rather he has fathomed virtually all likely troubles in his life. Notwithstanding, the final one that he has to counter is Death. In these lines he estimates death as the final ordeal of all that he has endured during his life and in dealing with the existence.

قیدے حیاتو بندے غم اصل میں دونوں ایک ہے

موت سے پہلے آدمی گم سے نجات پائے کیوں

Existence is a state of captivity and both are closely interwoven with each other. Hence before the dawn of death, how one can aspire to be free from the clutches of grief? Ghalib, in this couplet reckons death as force redeeming force for man from all distresses of life. According to him, the length or duration of life for each and every human is pre-fixed and existence is imbued with dreams, feelings and desires; and all of human activities lead to sadness and are blended with occasional sparks of pleasure; however the sorrow keep on lingering till our deaths. It is death which affords us freedom from distress and disasters of existence. Hence existence symbolizes as captivity or servitude and distress and grief a product of life.

ہو چکیں غالب بلانیں سب تمام  
ایک مرگ ناگہانی اور ہے

Offering life in constant hope for death  
The death comes, but still it does not come.

Despite having been through all catastrophes and misfortunes, yet the unplanned end or death, remains as the last stroke. Ghalib claims to have experienced all sorts of ordeals associated with the existence excepting death which according to him may befall suddenly and surprisingly. Having survived the pangs of life, the demeanor of the poet has gone soar. Hence he is all open to hail the event which will set him free from the bondage of the existence and the attendant pain. In the above couplet, the poet is passionately hankering after the death as he is desperate with life; and he is dying for death but like all of his other unsatisfied longings, death also remains elusive and evades him when the poet actually desires it. The poet is dying every day in longing for the lost desire and the last desire will come true but not the death (Tasleem, 2020).

## 5. The Tradition of the Absurd Theatre

The Absurd drama came to lime light during 1950s, however its lineage can be traced back to Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, staged in Paris on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1896; and the play is dubbed as the ever first absurdist drama (Brockett, 1979, p. 340). Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) another playwright illustrating the absurdist standpoint. In addition to that English translations of Russian literature too was flourishing in Europe and the techniques writing plays were gaining certain degree of importance and Emerson noted that it was primarily solemn but never irrelevant (Emerson, 2013, p. 3). Bhuvaneshwar too was cognizant of and read Russian literature including the works of Gogol and Chekhov and those of Alexander Vvedensky (1904-1941), Daniil Kharms (1905-1942) and Nikolai Zabolotsky (1903-1958). He might have gone through Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915), wherein the main

protagonist Gregor Samsa turns into a vermin as this metamorphosis has an ostensible resonances to the short play *Tambe Ke Keere wherein* the Kafkaesque imagery of “brown belly” finds full illustration in the color and several legs of the ‘keere’ (insects).

### **The Genesis of the Absurd Theatre in the Sub-Continent**

The tradition of the Absurd in the sub-continent, in realm of drama can be traced back in the works of Bhuvaneshwar 1910-1957. Indian literary historians take pride in declaring his play *Tambe ke Keere* as the foremost absurd play in the world as the it pre-exists Jean Genet (1910-1986). Even the works of famous Absurd playwrights such as Eugène Ionesco (1909-1994) and Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) were not. However, this obscured play can precisely be taken as considered as the first Absurd play in the undivided India.

Bhuvaneshwar lived a tough impoverished life and his bitter experiences nurtured a rebellious within who broke away from all traditional literary norms of his age. He was born in 1910 at Shahjehanpur. His childhood was marked by sheer neglect and abject poverty. He had no regular source of income rather he lived on the income by his writings. He spent all his life on railway station or in empty first-class compartments. He lived as pauper, wanderer, lastly he was spotted in Varanasi, among beggars, ill and mentally instable. He died in oblivion probably in 1957, his life clearly reminds the readers that existence has to evaporate ultimately into nothingness of an untraceable dream. Ones’ fate like wolf has is chasing and approaching him to be devoured.

He was also influenced by the the writings of imminent contemporaries such as Ibsen (1828-1906), Strindberg (1849-1912), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Shaw (1856-1950) and D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930). He was similarly inspired by the ideas developed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in the realm of psychoanalysis and psychology and these inspirations are unquestionably evident in his dramatic works. Consequently, he challenged conventional truths, ideas and moral standpoints and his work reflects independent thinking, gender equality, socialism and iconoclasm. Owing to his modernist propensities, the anguish of existentialism is evident in his plays. Bhuvneshwar displays a shift from tradition to the absurdist. His plays are devoid of conventional methods as he employs distorted characters blended with sparkling comicalness, focusing on interiority rather than the externalities; hence his viewers come across a fine blend of realities and fantasy and a different and independent standpoint on the mutability of time (Rastogi, 2001, p. 64). The language of his characters is deliberately non-communicative, distorted and illogical; Bhuvaneshwar did it purposefully as he found language as a source and means of individual identity and a cause of our separateness from the unity of being. He decisively destroyed it through nonsense dialogues, arbitrary naming of things entailing in an expression of mystical desire for unity with the fountain head.

Bhuvaneshwar, clearly expresses the obscure, repressed and un-vented longings, feelings and views, which are frequently experienced by common man (Ankur and Anand 13). He by means of non-conventional techniques such as off-stage characters, conveying his thoughts to the viewers. At the end of the play an announcement conveys to the audience that the playwright and the work is devoid of structural rhythms and it is nothing short of neurosis. The entire play is meaningless and is creating confusion without any rhyme or reason. Besides, he avoids naming his characters rather – instead, he keeps them unidentified by giving them generic names. Elizabeth Sewell (1952) held that there was a suggestion that in losing your name was to gain freedom in some way since being the nameless one would be no longer under control. It also suggested that the loss of language brought with it an increase in loving unity with living things (p. 128).

A close reading of his work divulges the attributes both of avant-garde and absurdism. The world depicted by him in his play, is bleak, dull, dreary un-harmonious and appalling. It is highly nuanced and open to myriad explanations, even its very title can be understood at various levels. For instance, “*Tambe ke Keere*” may signify de-humanization of humanity, caused by scientific advancements. The characters are deliberately depicted as neurotic, ridiculous, violent, illogical, burlesque and non-sequiturs. The absurdities clearly specify human efforts futile to deal with the absurd and meaningless world. His writings and style have successfully influenced the posterity of Hindi playwrights such as Vipin Agarwal, Lakshmi Narain Lal, Lakshmikant Verma, Satyavrat Sinha, who developed the tradition further. Consequently, we see similar plays like “*Teen Apahij*” (Three Handicapped People), “*Coffee House mein Intezaar* (Waiting in the Coffee House), “*Roshni Ek Nadi Hai*” (Roshni is a River).



## 6. Conclusion

The genesis of the Absurd tradition in the sub-continent can be traced back to the poet laureate Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869). His poetic work has clearly shown the streak of this literary tradition (without assigning a particular name or title) even before its rise as literary genre in West (1950s). The Indian playwright Bhuvneshwar (1910-1957) continued this tradition through his writings. So far as the influence of the absurd movement in Urdu drama is concerned no dominant influence of the same is found. Instead of the outside the tradition of Urdu theatre is vastly influenced by Contemporary Indian Theatre. All the early masterpieces of Urdu drama were enacted by Parsi theatrical Companies and Urdu Dramatic tradition remained spectator's delight more than 100 years and counting. Historical playwrights like Shakespeare greatly influenced Modern Urdu dramatic tradition particularly when Indian, Turkish and Iranian folklores were dramatized with heavy amounts of Urdu Verse. Even the contemporary playwrights like Imtiaz Ali Taj, Rafi Peer, Krishan Chander, Manto, Upender Nath Ashk, Ghulam Rabbani, Prof. Mujeeb and many further developed this tradition without displaying any iconoclastic shift from tradition in consonance with the absurds displaying verbal drivel, debasement of language, quick and fast character responses, images with broad comic and deep tragic connotations.

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