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THE THEATER OF ABSURD – AS A MIRROR OF OUR LIFE

Abstract. The article deals with absurd drama and theater of absurd in the context of Lotfi Zadeh’s “Theory of Fuzzy logic”. Innovative peculiarities that unite the absurdists and the author of this theory are researched, the essence, the possibility of its use in the humanitarian sphere and the synergetic adaptation of this theory to the theatrical art are explained in the article.

The paradoxical logic of absurd plays is determined. The history of formation and development of “the theater of the absurd”, which is one of the most interesting directions of the European theater, is studied during the analysis.

The author comments the works of the first founders of the 20th century avant-garde theater and the absurdist movement: “Rhinoceros” by Eugene Ionescu, “The Bald Singer” and “Waiting for Godot” by Samuel Beckett, including essays by Edward Albee and Martin Esslin, as well as grotesque-comic farce “Ubu the King” by Alfred Jarry in European and Russian theaters; and absurd experiments written and directed by Sergei Yursky.

Elchin Efendiyev’s dramaturgy and his absurd works, which acquire a scientific, theoretical, philosophical and cultural character in the context of the theory of “Fuzzy Logic”, are considered in the article. As a result of the analysis of the poetics of the absurd in Elchin’s plays, it is confirmed that he is a prominent representative of absurdism and approves himself as a “writer of fuzzy absurdity”. According to the author’s conclusion, the world and the theatre are optimistic about the future with Godot’s longing.

Key words: theater of the absurd, absurd dramaturgy, theater harmony, fuzzy logic, literary movements.

Introduction. The psychological upheavals experienced by people after the First World War, the abnormal, chaotic situation observed with deep depression, and the deformation of the society caused by this situation worried the highest intellectuals of Europe seriously. European philosophy and literature sought ways to save people who had lost hope and faith in the future from the moral, psychological and spiritual upheavals, and tried to revive and heal them spiritually from depression. However, not having recovered from the cataclysms of the First World War, the Second World War broke out with lightning speed, creating chaos that dictated a new, but also more destructive, more intense way of life.

It seemed to be the only way to influence the “logic of impasse syndrome” that had been ingrained in people’s minds through the philosophy of illogicality and to change people’s thinking in such a difficult time of the situation. In order to create a new spirit and mood in this way, a movement called absurdism seemed to be the only promising salvation.

The interpretation of the main material. Absurdism has triumphantly changed the trajectory, reflected by writers and directors with different mindsets, through its unusual form and artistic-philosophical, aesthetic style. The society, gripped by the vortex of absurdity in which humanity was caught, faced the absurdity of the time in fear and insecurity in the absurd world. The theater of absurd tried to instill in people who felt themselves on the edge of the precipice against the background of the intense world events what the future would promise in the reality of life. Of course, it was difficult to understand at first, boring the spectators with its “absurd”, “meaninglessness”, but at the same time it managed to surprise. Absurdism introduced illogical models in the spectators’ logical thinking, gradually taking a special place in people’s worldview and finding its confirmation. Absurdity began to appear as a trend in literary and theater figures’ thinking in Europe even before the First World War. For an example, Alfred Jarry is a vivid example of this. However, Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett and others, who went down in history as the founders of absurd drama, gained gradually more fame in this genre after the Second World War, although they were not welcomed in society. E.Ionesco said that “We wanted to bring the existential existence of human, his profound simplicity, fate, in other words, the understanding of the absurdity of the world to the stage and show it to the spectators” [5, 191].

According to the authors of the absurd drama, “The world, life and common sense are quite contradictory and incomprehensible in terms of rationalist interpretations. Therefore, no one can understand their own life, even themselves” [4].

We should note that at first, people could not logically explain what and why the dark comedy was aimed at in the theater of absurd, why these “whys” happened, what the happenings were trying to explain, and this caused an absurd mood. For this reason, the theater of the absurd tried to explain the thought of the “absurdity of the human condition” and the fact that reason is connected with rejection of human thinking. Generally, the purpose of this theater was to dissolve the conditions of human being theoretically in absurdity. The incoherence of events, the illogicality of the behavior, the absurdity leading to the denial of the traditional theatre concept, illogical play, etc. in E.Ionesco’s plays forced people to think and find answers to the questions. “Just as there is always a place for hope in life, there must always be a place for hope in art”, – E.Ionesco, who based on this principle in his work, said that “I think that about half of all theater productions that have been staged up to our time are as absurd as they are comic, because comedy is also absurdity. To my mind, Shakespeare, the great ancestor, the founder of this theater, said through his character: “This world is a story without any meaning or significance, which was told by a light-minded person”. We have reason to claim that the roots of the theater of the absurd go back to ancient times, and even Oedipus is an absurd character” [5].

What is absurd? It is the incomprehensibility of the laws of conflict arising from the contradictions between reality and dreams, from human’s struggle with himself. Human looks for a way out on the border between life and death; he craves for death and life at the same time.

The more incomprehensible absurdism was in its early days, the more mesmerizing and thought-provoking its dynamic agility was. Ionesco believed that the theater of the absurd was also a theater of struggle: it parodied bourgeois theater and opposed realistic theater. Ionesco noted that the theater of the absurd, a new stage of theater, began to take shape in the 1950s. Shortly after that time, “Rhinoceros”, “The Bald Soprano”, “Chairs”, “Debt Victims” by E.Ionesco, as well as “Loveless Relationships”, “Murphy”, “Crepe’s Last Tape”, “Happy Days”, “Mercier and Camus”, “Endgame”, “Waiting for Godot” plays by Samuel Beckett, another prominent author of absurd drama, achieved great success.

As penetrating deeply into the problem of the theater of absurd or absurdism, interesting points of view and contradictory ideas of absurdists emerge. Some of the absurdists consider the theater of absurd as realistic theater, others consider the theater of absurd as unreal theater, etc. So, it seems that the very approach to absurdism itself is somehow “absurd”.

In fact, the theater of absurd denies realistic characters, situations, events and other theatrical elements. In other words, time and space are indefinite, changeable, even they collapse for the simplest reasons in absurd plays. Senseless arguments, repetitive dialogues, illogical talking, dramatic illogicality of events – all this is aimed at one purpose: to present a situation that sometimes resembles a fairy tale and sometimes a terrible story... This idea becomes clearer when we focus on Samuel Beckett’s play “Waiting for Godot”. What is this absurd work about: about nothing and everything; the event takes place: nowhere and everywhere; time – never and every minute; what happens: nothing and everything; the characters of the work: nobody and each of us... What should we do in this case? We must wait for Godot. If he comes, one fine day we will be saved.

S.Beckett wrote this play in French in 1948-1949 and translated it into English himself. Beckett is a writer of despair. He did not strive to adapt to his time. But when we doubt that “human was created to be happy”, we begin to hear Beckett’s voice: and both the World and the Theater must wait for Godot [2].

The play “Waiting for Godot”, which is considered the crown of absurd drama, was awarded the title of “the most impressive drama of the 20th century”. According to Beckett, he wrote this work to get away from the prose that did not bring him success. However, critics considered the work as a military drama, allegorically describing Beckett’s experience in the French conflict. War veterans used to say that “War is, above all, waiting for the end. And this work, like other works written after the Second World War, is an expectation of hope...” [3].

At the same time, the play “Waiting for Godot” – “... is the theater, illusion and cruel truths of life; “waiting and waiting, we disappear and get lost in timelessness... Look, this is life, look, this is absurd – a timeless waiting room...” [8].

When talking about the play “Waiting for Godot”, the writer Elchin admits that “...this play proved that it is possible to create great literature outside the “usual rules of literature”” [1].

The characters of the absurd drama and theater of the absurd, who created the masterpieces of the absurdity of the world and “great literature” and gave the verdict “The world is absurd and there is no way out of it” [3], think that “it is true, the world is absurd, but the absurd world cannot disturb the harmony of the world”. The object created by the theater of absurd, which illuminates the absurd course of the world in all its shades, should be viewed as a living, whole organism with a spirit, soul and body organs, i.e. it should not be satisfied only with the presentation of an absurd plot or performances in an absurd interpretation. Above all, the actor’s performance in the play, i.e. the actor’s performance that brings the dynamics of the theater to life, must meet the requirements of the absurd within the scope of all these attributes. Just as the truths of life subject us to their inevitable reality. According to Albert Camus, who called the fate of theater actors “absurd”, “...actors live in the roles they create, and roles live in the actors’ fates; actors are like travelers: their path is time, their aims are human hearts” [7].

Acting should clearly convey uncertainty, exaggeration, imaginary, fiction, hypothetical scenography, performance that is difficult to perceive or understand, convincing and unconvincing acting styles and such subtle shades full of diversity. The absurd actor should raise his part above the events occurred in the bitter fate of the character in the plot, or he should rise above the comic situation with comic, grotesque, satirical variations, and such a style of performance directs the play from drama and comedy to a different course, to the absurd and in some cases even further, to the context of fuzzy absurdity. When these indicators are adapted to fuzzy thinking, the situation changes twice, i.e. the absurd becomes a fuzzy logical absurd. This is exactly how the world goes; it’s absurd, it’s fuzzy and it’s fuzzy absurd. Therefore, the path to salvation from all the chaos lies only through multi-lane paths and ways.

Unexpected questions may arise at this point – the cognition that wants to understand what are the features that distinguish the absurd from the fuzzy absurd tries to clarify their different characteristics for itself. Thought asks itself questions, what is the absurd, what is the fuzzy absurd? Thinking that is stirred between these questions leads to the conclusion that on the one hand, the absurd is fuzzy, isn’t it? First it agrees. Yes, the absurd is essentially fuzzy. So what is the fuzzy absurd then? The question is a very logical. However, when we think a little deeper, we realize that the main

place in the content of the absurd, which acquires the essence of an artistic and theatrical movement, is the absurd presentation of events. Meaningless meaning, such as an empty event in an empty space, a variation of dreams, an incomprehensible plot line, fictions that exist and do not exist, etc., is the very theory of absurdity.

A wide and mysterious space, which is full of rich colors, multi-line, multi-faceted and which has revolutionized in the technogenic system of the modern world, based on deep scientific reasons, has a non-circular speed frequency, rushes to infinity, comes to life in the essence of “fuzzy logic”. You have the opportunity to spread your wings as you wish, in any dynamics, form and style in this space, and you can elevate the absurdity to double level through this method, i.e. through the laws of “Fuzzy logic”, and you can create fuzzy absurdity within the absurdity through the theory of “Fuzzy logic”. For an example, it is enough to look at the play “Satan’s Deeds” created in “absurd within the absurd” by Elchin. Imagine, directing three different themes towards one idea and the incoherent connection of all three different themes, the dynamics of conflicting events following each other lead to the creation of another absurd play within an absurd play, and this is a sign of the philosophy of the absurd in the absurd.

“As a creative tool, the absurdity is a double-edged cutting tool. I have known this tool for a long time” [9], – said Sergey Yursky, theater and film director, playwright, screenwriter, who also used such a method in 2010. At the same time, the events of four different works, which were not connected to each other, were unfolding around one line throughout the play.

The absurd play “The Devil’s Game” was staged on a completely different concept from S. Yursky’s method. The difference was that S. Yursky created an absurd play using four plays, while Elchin, as we mentioned above, brought three different events into one concept in one play.

As we know, the theory of “Fuzzy logic”, which became a major event in the world of science, and its opportunities became the key to rapid development of thinking and led to a revolutionary change in the real way of life. All this indicated that the epoch and time were radically changed by the innovative features of both theories created by the absurdists and the inventor of fuzzy logic Lotfi Zadeh’s unifying thought products. Both theories laid the foundation for the starting point of a new era of thought. Therefore, we believe that the theory of “Fuzzy Logic”, which occupies an important place

in human life, will play a crucial role in the development of theater art, we determine its scientific foundations in Art History, bring it to the level of analysis through mutual comparisons and try to shed light on its contribution to theater criticism.

We conclude that the theater of the absurd, which arouses great interest in the field of literature and art, is sometimes harshly criticized and sometimes appreciated and popularized, because, as Ionesco said "...it will always exist, endless forms of the absurd will preserve its existence. Maybe tomorrow, or the next day, the veil on this secret will be lifted" [5, 191] due to its uniqueness and individual characteristics. The aim of uniqueness is the fate of the authors who feed on the basis of the theory of "Fuzzy Logic".

Conclusion. It should be said that it is possible to easily get out of the difficult and tense situation referring to the possibilities of this unique theory today, at a time when the world is most confused. It is enough to make room for this criterion in thought.

Theater art is already trying to determine its place in the context of the theory of "Fuzzy logic" in the philosophical world of the absurd movement, which has taken over the world long ago. But unfortunately, the world events still keep the society in anxiety. Are you curious to see if Godot comes, will it be possible to get out of the chaos and find smooth path in the world of fuzzy logic, or in what direction will the absurd way of life lead the society towards purification? Or what Godot will bring us in this frail world – in the space between life and theater [2]. In our opinion, the authors of absurd dramas, whose works we have discussed above and whose works we have cited as examples, reflected this pressing issue that worries people in an absurd context in order to save the world, life, and society from waiting. We think that in any case, there is always a sign of hope even in despair, so we do not lose our hope and believe that "Waiting for Godot" will have a bright outcome. In our opinion, both the World and the Theater are optimistic about the future with Godot's longing.

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ABSURD TEATR – HƏYATIMIZIN GÜZGÜSÜ KİMİ

Məqalədə absurd dram və absurd teatri Lütfi Zadənin “Qeyri-səlis məntiq” nəzəriyyəsi müstəvisində təhlil edilir. Müəllif absurdçuları və bu nəzəriyyənin müəllifini birləşdirən innovativ xüsusiyyətləri araşdırır, onun mahiyyətini, humanitar elmlərdə tətbiqinin mümkünlüyünü və bu nəzəriyyənin teatr sənətinə sinergetik adartasıyasını izah edir.

Absurd tamaşalarının paradoksunun məntiqi müəyyən edilir. Təhlil Avropa teatrının ən maraqlı istiqamətlərindən biri olan “absurd teatri”nin formalaşması və inkişaf tarixini araşdırır. XX əsr avanqard teatrının və absurdizm cərəyanının ilk yaradıcılarından olan E.İoneskonun “Kərgədanlar”, “Keçəl Soprano”, S.Bekketin “Qodonu gözlərkən” absurd pyesləri, həmçinin Edvard Olbinin və Martin Esslinin esseleri haqqında ətraflı araşdırma təqdim olunur. Absurdizmin əsas sələfi fransız yazıçısı Alfred Jarrinin “Kral Ubu” qrotesk-komik farsının səhnə taleyi, eləcə də Sergey Yurskinin müəllifi və rejissoru olduğu absurd təcrübələr də yer alır.

Elçinin “Poçt şöbəsində xəyal” pyesi ilə absurd cərəyanın yaradıcısı olmasına diqqət yönəldir. Elçin dramaturgiyası və onun “Qeyri-səlis məntiq” nəzəriyyəsi kontekstində elmi, nəzəri, fəlsəfi və kulturoloji xarakter daşıyan absurd hekayələri araşdırılır.

Elçinin pyeslərindəki absurdun poetikasının təhlili onun absurdizmin görkəmli nümayəndəsi və “qeyri-səlis absurd yazıçı” olduğunu təsdiqləyir.

Müəllifə görə, həm dünya, həm də teatr gələcəyə nikbinliklə və Qodonun həsrəti ilə baxır.

Açar sözlər: absurd teatrı, absurd dramaturgiya, teatr harmoniyası, qeyri-səlis məntiq, ədəbi cərəyanlar.

Ифтихар Пириев (Азербайджан)

ТЕАТР АБСУРДА КАК ЗЕРКАЛО НАШЕЙ ЖИЗНИ

В статье абсурдная драма и театр абсурда анализируются в контексте «Теории нечеткой логики» Лютфи Заде, исследуются новаторские особенности, объединяющие абсурдистов и автора указанной теории, разъясняется сущность, возможность ее применения в гуманитарной сфере и синергетическая адаптация этой теории к театральному искусству. Определяется логика парадокса абсурдистских пьес. В ходе анализа исследуется история становления и развития «театра абсурда» – одного из самых интересных направлений европейского театра.

Автор комментирует произведения первых основоположников театра авангарда и течения абсурдизма XX века: «Носорог» Эжена Йонеску, «Лысая певица» и «В ожидании Годо» Семьюела Беккета, в том числе эссе Эдварда Олби и Мартина Эслина. А также гротескно-комический фарс Альфреда Жарри «Король Убу» в европейских и российских театрах; а также абсурдные эксперименты, автором и режиссером которых является Сергей Юрский.

Рассматривается драматургия Эльчина Эфендиева и его абсурдные рассказы, которые обретают научно-теоретический, философско-культурологический характер в контексте теории «Нечеткой логики».

В результате анализа поэтики абсурда в пьесах Эльчина находится подтверждение тому, что он является ярким представителем абсурдизма и проявляет себя как «писатель нечеткого абсурда». По заключению автора, и мир, и театр с оптимизмом смотрят в будущее с тоской Годо.

Ключевые слова: театр абсурда, абсурдистская драматургия, гармония театра, нечеткая логика, литературные течения.



**Fig. 1. “Ubu the King”
by Alfred Jarry**



**Fig. 2. “He too may fall in love...”
by Elchin**



**Fig. 3. “Rhinoceros”
by Eugene Ionescu**



**Fig. 4. “Telescope”
by Elchin**