

**Theatre new methods in contemporary drama an analysis of Edward Albee's
play The Zoo Story**

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Abstract:

Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*, his first play, established him as a leading advocate of "the Theatre of the Absurd" across the globe. The play's controversial satire of a national icon earned its author the label of "enfant terrible" in the American theatrical world. A masterfully rendered conversation between social outsider Jerry and conformist Peter was cut short by a shocking conclusion. The bench served as a stage for assertion and was thus the most important set piece. A life was lost in the bench fight.

Jerry finally shut off his internal monologue by impaling himself on Peter's knife. The whole play consists of talk between two characters until a shocking climax. It's a linguistic drama, where words build scenes and drive the action. Jerry is a well realised creation who ably performed the human condition. He can only express his need to talk to others and get over his gnawing isolation via words.

The whole modern condition of drama is successfully depicted on stage with a minimal number of people, hardly no props or stage sets, and little action or drama in the traditional sense. There was such a seamless integration of form and substance that it seemed the latter had become the former. *The Zoo Story* seems to be an application of the Absurd approach, yet it also has its own unique flavour.

Keywords: (Contemporary Drama, Edward Albee, the Zoo Story).

1. Introduction

The Theatre of the Absurd portrayed a reality that was absurd and went beyond the limits of logic and literal awareness. The Absurd dramatists—Eugene Ionesco, Edward Albee, Samuel Beckett, and Jean Genet, felt the same profound loss, despair, and hopelessness as a result of the carnage of both world wars and reacted to it in comparable ways (Saad & Ali, 2020:90).

Since the Theatre of the Absurd never adopted a catchphrase, banner, or manifesto, it cannot be considered a movement. Instead, it was a way of thinking and living that caught on widely. When compared to Surrealism and Expressionism, the Absurd Theatre is evocative of many of the aesthetic tricks and gestures used by surrealist performers on the stage between the two world wars (Stein, 2019:217).

Both it and Existentialism have a fundamental affinity for the idea that man is more than the sum of his reasoning faculties. The absurdist play is a drama of being that explores the intangible, otherworldly sensations. And the language, which is a discourse of actual life rather than abstract ideas and rational deliberation, reveals these experiences (Goldstein, 2020:132).

As a result, it avoided using realistic methods of presenting. Theatre of the Absurd is distinct from existential theatre because of the emphasis on unity between content and form. Absurdist don't care about things like the polished carpentry of story in a good play or the realistic replication or well-motivated characters (Den, 1967:157).

Comic gestures, exaggeration, repetitious action and conversation, and the use of mismatched or unusual items may all contribute to the dramatic

impact. The audience is not spoon-fed answers but rather encouraged to foray into possible interpretations of the play (Decker, 2016:233).

In addition, he refers to it as writing that is full of "verbal nonsense." The productions present the audience with virtually robotic puppets and have no discernible narrative or recognisable characters. Incoherent babblings, or clever repartees, and sharp conversations, with no clear beginning or finish, appear to be reflections of hallucinations and nightmares (Woodward, 2018:135).

The plays are a reflection of the concerns and fears, emotions and mental processes of the contemporary man. The cornerstone of this outlook is the view that the timeless tenets and age-old truths of bygone eras are nothing more than naive and simplistic fantasies best left in the hands of children (Sheehan, 1969:561).

The absurdist theatre is a revival of an antiquated form. It's novel because of the unconventional way in which it combines elements of the past. What seems to the uninitiated observer to be an iconoclastic and incomprehensible innovation is often merely the extension and development of tried and true methods used in a little new setting (Baker, 2016:12).

Another distinguishing feature of Absurd play is its novel and shocking approach to language. This linguistic relativization and contempt reflect the current climate. Cliches, banalities, mechanical thinking, and customary attitudes have smashed the English language to the point that it no longer conveys meaning plainly. The play blends light and dark humour, defying easy categorization (Koepsell, 2016:93).

Since it accurately portrays the human condition, Albee claims that the Theatre of the Absurd is the Realistic theatre of modern times. In a related

article, he defines the Absurd theatre as "Man's endeavour to create sense within himself out of his meaningless situation in the universe." (Blessing, 2016:78).

Absurd play uses the disruption of logic and the breaking of language into components to include these themes. The goal of the Absurd playwright is to use the theatrical framework to convey the enigmas and contradictions of human life. Attempts at rational dialogue have devolved into incoherent wails. They effectively portray their view of life via the use of clichés, silences, and ambiguities (Hough, 2016:219).

Gaps, snatches of dialogue, and half-told tales all serve to communicate the unspoken meaning by either keeping the underlying intentions and facts secret or cryptically revealing them. The text's use of ellipses, pauses, and missing phrases leaves room for a wide range of interpretations of the drama. Actors use vocal intonation and body language to create the illusion of two-way conversations between themselves and their audiences (Waller, 2016):319.

In this research, we will study the features of modern theater through the analysis of Edward Albee's play *The Zoo Story*. We will demonstrate the features of the change brought about by the new playwrights by devising mechanisms commensurate with the understanding and mood of modern civilization (Stein, 2019:223).

The purpose of this study is to clarify the viewpoint from which this particular dramatist is to be read and analysed, with special attention paid to Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*. With its extensive substance and innovative forms, this playwright significantly contributed to transforming the face of theatre. The issue that has to be explored is the various theatrical tactics that each group uses to handle the expanding post-World

War II material. The Zoo Story by Edward Albee was the play chosen for examination.

3. Edward Albee and American dream

Dramatic absurdity, therefore, is not a drama of ideas but of the very essence of being. It does away with theoretical musings and intellectual crutches in favour of everyday vernacular. Since the absurdists consider Realism insufficient to fit the current condition of affairs—that is, "man's loneliness, fear, fragility, and the perception of his captivity in a convoluted, terrible, and confusing situation"—it disregards the realistic manner of presentation (Stein, 2019:217)

While absurd theatre has some connections to Existentialism, it differs from existential theatre in its efforts to reconcile form and substance. Edward Albee became well-known as a writer thanks to his works The Zoo Story, The Death of Bessie Smith, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, as well as The Sandbox and other works (Parvaneh, 2019:423).

By confronting and exposing the idea his nation represented in The Zoo Story, which contains Absurdist elements, Albee became known as the enfant dreadful of American theatre. As an experimental artist and a cultural iconoclast, he railed against the shallow ideals and deterioration of communication in the United States (Bottoms, 2015:77).

Albee has made it one of his primary concerns to draw attention to the drawbacks of clinging to myths and delusions as false sources of solace in the face of an otherwise meaningless life. His literary career is a case study on the value of experimenting and the Jong method of training by trial and error (Goldstein, 2020:131).

Twenty years old, he abandoned his wealthy adoptive parents for the bohemian lifestyle of New York's Greenwich Village. Albee dabbled in a

wide variety of literary styles, but he is most known for his plays that capture the essence of modern America (Finburgh, 2015:191).

The chance encounter of two strangers in a park in "The Zoo Story," the satirical treatment of a marriage in "The American Dream," and the life of two elderly people revolving approximately a son who never existed in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" are all situations that readers will find immediately familiar (Cornwell, 2006:127).

3. Absurdity Theatre as Projection of Human Predicament

Albee, a critic of the consumerist culture of the United States shaped by advertising and marketing, sets out to dispel the myth of the American Dream. His plays, written from an absurdist stance, poke fun at the idea of a perfect, happy life, complete with financial security and material wealth. Scenes from the works of Absurd drama, such as Krapp's Last Tape (Oliver, 1965:125)

The story is about an elderly man listens to a recording of his life, and Waiting for Godot, in which two homeless people wait endlessly under a tree, and A View from the Park, in which a middle-aged man desperately tries to make contact with a snoozing companion, all appear vividly on the mental screen. These photos are a reflection of the human condition as dramatised onstage (Shaughnessy, 1996:39).

The evaluation of the works itself is sufficient for a complete understanding of the avant-garde movement and literature, as groundbreaking stage technique, as an embodiment of modern sensibility and present pains. Due to a lack of a widespread loss of religion and sense of purpose, the movement was slow to emerge in the United States (Herrera, 2016:105).

However, Edward Albee criticised the premise of the 'American Dream,' or the optimistic view of America as a global powerhouse. That's how he became famous as a dramatist in the Absurd movement. The success of his first play, "The Zoo Story," in 1959 established him as a leading advocate of the Theatre of the Absurd (Curtin, 2017:39).

4. The Zoo Story Play

The first scene of the play takes place on a stage that is empty but for a park seat. Even though it's in a public park, you'll feel as alone as if you were in a back alley. The premise of Absurdity is immediately apparent: the play has just two actors performing the whole plot without any set or props. Like in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, nothing of note happens in this play, and there are no noticeable shifts in location or storyline (Stuart, 1983:18).

The play's climax is Jerry stabbing himself in the chest with the knife. Peter, a decent middle-aged guy, sits alone in the park on a sunny Sunday and spends the day reading, painting a picture of alone and calmness. Sadly, the play's initial calm is really an illusion. The bench is something to conquer, a place to make one's presence known (Benatar, 2017:216)

As it turns out, the fight over the bench was fatal. Jerry finishes it all by impaling himself on Peter's knife, breaking Peter's introspective bubble. Peter, in his haste, avoids participating in the suicide/murder. In truth, he has no idea what Jerry's true motive is. At the play's conclusion, Peter has stolen another man's life and undergone a relentless change himself (Dave, 1985:19).

In Edward Albee's lengthy one-act drama "The Zoo Story," "nothing occurs" but the talk between the characters until the shocking climax. It's a linguistic drama. Absurd drama, as shown in the play, aspires to merge

substance and form. Since language conveys subject matter, the latter metamorphoses into the former; form is content (Wong & Tepperman, 2017:83).

The use of language helps to shape and propel the plot of a play. Only via words is Jerry Albee's antihero able to convey the aching isolation and hopelessness of the human condition. Albee injected fresh perspective into American theatre with his creation of *Jeny*. The play successfully depicts the plight of the modern man despite having a small cast, few stage decorations and sets, and no overt dramatic events (Hopgood, 2021:23).

Man became a Stranger in his own planet after the Second planet War due to disillusionment, religious faith loss, alienation, isolation, separation from fellow humans, and a breakdown in communication. Irrational playwrights attempted to dramatise this human struggle (Kanterian, 2017:109).

The content and form are so intertwined that it seems that the former has become the latter. The *Zoo Story* seems to be an example of this "Absurdity of Absurd" approach. Therefore, language plays a crucial part in Absurd theatre. On one side, language serves as a vehicle for expressing the universal need of humans to connect with one another (Fusini, 2020:59).

On the other side, theatre also created failures of communication and language to overcome this chasm. The ineffectiveness of language is a point of emphasis. The play is solely in a dramatic mode via the use of language, since there is no discernible action (Krejčí, 1993:207).

4.1 Narrative Style in the Play

In its most basic form, the story tells how JeiTy, weighed down by isolation, strikes up a discussion with a stranger in a park, and how that talk leads to a horrific deed. The play's stage directions depict Peter as "a guy in his early forties, neither fat nor gaunt, neither attractive nor homely." He's the stereotypical nerd: tweeds, pipe, and horn rimmed specs. The photo hints to Peter's ideal life, which he appears to be living according to his own standards (Shovlin, 2017:259).

He is typical of the bourgeoisie, a social class that Albee often skewered in his works. Albee sees Peter as representative of the comfortable middle class in America. Peter is the protagonist, while Jerry is the antithesis, the polar opposite, of Peter. His representation accurately reflects his declining mental state. Despite the fact that he is not attractive now, it is clear that he was previously slim and lightly muscled (Brino-Dean, 2006:104).

His "fall from bodily grace" shows "a profound tiredness." Peter's book onstage represents an intellectual refuge that protects him from Jerry's meddling. He shows Jerry both caution and disinterest by repeatedly averting his gaze and staring into his book. Upon hitting the stage, JeiTy immediately attempts to strike up a discussion with the audience by declaring, "I've been to the zoo." Albee invents Peter's silence in brackets, saying, "Peter doesn't notice," so that the unusual way of beginning a discussion remains undetected (Biggin, 2017:157).

If you're unfamiliar with Albee's signature "quiet and pauses," The Zoo Story is a great place to start. Narrative silence allows the author to emphasise a breakdown in communication, a growing feeling of estrangement, an attempt to conceal the past, and the ambiguity and uncertainty of the characters' motivations as they interact (Oliver, 1965:173).

While Jerry, the conversation's initiator, utilises eloquent, lengthy talks to avoid dealing with his own feelings, Peter employs silence to convey his refusal to listen. Peter's replies to Jerry's queries are short and evasive. Jerry feels inadequate because of how he responds. When the talk turned to Peter's family, his responses started to stutter. On page 18, for instance, when Jerry asks whether he has any sons, the father responds regrettably but off-script, "No, females...both girls." (Robb, 2010:319).

4.2 Sense of Isolation and Emptiness in the Play

To get Peter's attention, Jerry yells, "Mister, I've been to the zoo!" as scripted by Albee in big letters. This is something that Peter is unable to ignore, as shown by the fact that he "puts his book down, his pipe out and aside, smiling" (page:17). To communicate the shift in mood, Albee uses almost no stage instructions at all. Jerry seemed to have convinced Peter to talk to him and make some kind of connection (Biggin, 2017:73).

As a result, the play's opening lines set up the inevitable collision between the two protagonists from different social strata. Peter's 'paradise' is on the east side, while Jerry's 'jail' is on the west, and they've decided to meet in the middle, in Central Park. Instead of emphasising their differences, Albee aims to highlight the loneliness and emptiness that affect both protagonists. Jerry recognises his isolation, whilst Peter's remains hidden under his veneer of middle-class contentment (Bottoms, 2015:85).

4.3 The Uses of Repetition Tool to Escalate Action

In addition, there is a technically important significance to the phrase "I've gone to the zoo, What occurred at the zoo," which is used rather often. Albee makes heavy use of repetition to build up to climactic

moments. The first and central plot point of the play is the use of repetition for emphasis (Rimmer, 2016 :416)

The playwright, in true Absurdist fashion, used the slogan to focus attention on the plight of humanity. In order to set the stage for the much-anticipated zoo tale, Jerry shares many significant anecdotes from his own life during the course of the play "erry... when I tell you about the dog, do you know what then?). When I tell you what occurred in the zoo, you'll understand" (page 26).

The play's unspoken message is that zoo life is symbolic of American society as a whole. The Americans developed a system of compartmentalised existence in which interaction, empathy, and acceptance of one another's plight became all but impossible. Jerry is attempting to tell Peter and the audience that he has gone to the zoo three times at the opening of the play to show that he has been here, to modern America, to New York City.

The author of the play gives Jerry various sidetracks in his statements. The audience/readers are able to recall the initial concept thanks to the repeated use of the term. When the reader becomes engrossed in Jerry's lengthy recollections of his past, the recurring phrase "what occurred in the zoo?" breaks the reader's attention and creates a "estrangement effect" in his article "Between Absurdity and the Playwright," .

William 1st Oliver makes an interesting observation "One of the advantages of the expressionistic control in Absurdist drama is its power to alienate the audience, keeping it alive to the ideological by-play of the symbols" . He goes on to say that the Absurdist have been more successful than Brecht, who came up with the idea of alienation via comedy, in achieving this impact.

4.4 Description Jerry's Dwelling Place

Jerry lives in what Albee calls a "laughably little room" that is connected to a number of other rooms that are almost identical (page: 21). It alludes to the out-of-the-ordinary nature of his daily life. While he has some passing familiarity with "the coloured queen," "the Puerto Rican family," and "the woman who tears all the time" (page 20), he has no real relationships with any of them.

He lives alone with just the bare essentials, including a deck of pornographic playing cards and a few empty picture frames. His sexual exploits only serve to highlight the absurdity of his life. His words " I wonder if it's sad that I never see the little ladies more than once. I've never been able to have sex with, or, how is it put?... make love to anybody more than once.. And now; oh, do I love the little ladies; really, I love them. For about an hour " (page:24).

He doesn't connect with them deeply enough to have a memory with them worthy of preserving in one of those empty picture frames. This depiction of Jerry's captivity reflects his dissatisfaction with life in the United States. Through his narratives about his hive-like rooming home and the eponymous Zoo, Jerry paints a vision of a world where people are trapped and isolated from one another due to political and interpersonal hurdles.

Jerry argues that the zoo is a perfect metaphor for human isolation like this " I went to the zoo to find out more about the way people exist with animals, and the way animal exist with each other, and with people too. It probably wasn't a fair test, what with everyone separated by bars from everyone else, the animals for the most part from each other, and always the people from the animals. But if it's a zoo that's the way it is " (page :34).

4.5 Jerry loneliness

Jerry sees the zoo as symbolic of the United States. Jerry is aware of this, so he tries to find solace by reaching out to someone he doesn't know very well, Peter. The next interesting event occurs when Jerry is prompted to fill empty picture frames with images of his parents. Peter learns from Jerry that he was a little child when his parents passed away.

A variety of dramatic circumstances have resulted from just one initial event. His mother left his father after barely a year of an extramarital affair. The Christmastime death of his mother due to drunkenness and the untimely passing of his father left him an orphan. Esslin says that "Theatre of the Absurd overcomes the categories of tragedy and comedy and blends laughter with horror," which provides a lens through which to evaluate the tragicomedy of his parents' deaths. Esslin's 300-word count.

When his mother's sister passed away, Jerry was taken in and cared for until he was old enough to fend for himself. However, in an oddly insensitive manner, he concedes "that was a long time ago, and I have no feeling about any of it that I care to admit to myself" (page: 23).

4.6 Jerry Attempt to Establish a Connection with Peter

The emotional degeneration of his never-forming relationship is a direct result of these complications. That comes over in his fidgety stage movements, random queries, hidden anxiousness, and erratic demeanour towards Peter, who is clueless as to what he's feeling. Peter, whose world consists only of his happy family and secure job, cannot fathom Jerry's miseries and is thus unable to empathise with him.

Jerry, on the one hand, needs to talk to Peter in order to stop feeling so alone. On the other hand, he wants Peter to wake up from his slumber and face the harsh facts of life. Jerry tells Peter the allegory of "the tale of

Jerry and the Dog" in an effort to connect with him and make him aware of the meaninglessness of his life. Jerry's description of his landlord comes before, setting the stage for yet another dramatic development.

As far as he is concerned, she is a "fat, ugly, cruel, ignorant, unclean, misanthropic, cheap, intoxicated bag of rubbish" (page: 25). The Absurd writers are easily identifiable by their use of scatological terminology at this moment and throughout the play. When the play's famous theatrical reviewer Stephen Coy sees the intriguing new role of landlady, he has this to say "The land lady despite being one of the most arresting offstage presences in American drama is only the prelude to what might be called the third movement of the play" (page: 32).

The landlady's sensual overtures towards Jerry are shown with such vividness and strength that they almost leap off the screen and into the minds of the spectators. Language is supreme in Albee's plays. Peter is alarmed by the young publishing executive's reference to the Landlady persona because she represents a society that denies the reality of people like Jerry and the Landlady. For Peter, what is real is what he sees on TV and in "Time" magazine.

- "PETER. It's so... unthinkable. I find it hard to believe that people such as that really are".
- "JERRY. (Lightly mocking) It's for reading about, isn't it?"
- "PETER. (Seriously) Yes."
- "JERRY. And fact is better left to fiction " Page (25-26).

4.7 The Change of Peter's perspective.

However, as the play concludes, it becomes evident that Jerry has successfully altered Peter's understanding of the world to such a degree that Peter engages in a violent altercation over his perceived ownership of

the bench. In an act of self-defense, Peter inadvertently aids Jerry in taking his own life. Peter is now experiencing a profound sense of starkness and intensity in relation to a reality that, at first glance, seemed more authentic than fiction. This overwhelming sensation compels him to hastily flee while emitting a vocal exclamation of "oh my god!"

In the narrative of "Jerry and the Dog," Jerry's persistent oscillations on stage serve as a manifestation of his profound state of dread. Throughout the duration of this interaction, the individual recounts their attempts to appease the dog residing in their flat, which consistently emits growling sounds upon their entry. These efforts include using a combination of kind and aggressive actions. In this long soliloquy delivered by Jerry, the playwright offers little stage directions, mostly focusing on Peter's physical movements and emotional fluctuations. As an example:

- "*PETER* raises a hand in protest"
- "*PETER* indicates his increasing displeasure and slowly growing antagonism"
- "*PETER* sets to thinking..."
- "*PETER* reacts scoffingly"
- "*PETER* seems to be hypnotized" page (26).

Regarding Jerry's actions, Albee takes a more reserved approach and assumes a passive role, allowing the actor and director to use their own judgement in interpreting the dramatic elements.

4.8 Jerry's Odd Tone and language Development

The story has been subject to thorough scrutiny by critics due to its inconsistent narrative structure. Jerry's inconsistent variations in tone and correlation, as he attempts to connect unconnected items via unusual analogies, result in a peculiar use of language. For example :

“it's just that if you can't deal with people, you have to make a start somewhere. WITH ANIMALS\{Much faster now, and like a conspirator) Don't you see? A person has to have some way of dealing with SOMETHING. If not with people...if not with people... SOMETHING. With a bed, with a cockroach, with a mirror... no, that's too hard, that's one of the last steps. With a cockroach, with a ... with a ... With a caipet, a roll of toilet paper”. Page (29)

The apparent escalation of threat and increasing anxiety are clearly shown by JeiTy's rapid movements on the stage and recurring high-pitched vocalisations throughout the speech. The story exhibits linguistic distinctiveness as critics note Jerry's frequent interruptions in his thoughts through the inclusion of the words "and" and "oh, yes". Additionally, Jerry employs the linking word "so" to establish coherence in his fragmented narrative, while also relying on the repetitive phrase "it's just that..." as he grapples with articulating elusive emotions.

In the latter part of the story, Jerry's impaired speech, his manner of expression, and his bodily gestures effectively indicate his strong desire to establish a connection and engage in meaningful communication with a sentient being. Jeny serves as a vivid embodiment of the absurd position, skillfully portrayed on the stage. The idea of love and hatred is meticulously explored inside the narrative. For example :

“Two hours that we looked into each other's face, we made contact. Now, here is what I had wanted to happen: I loved the dog now, and I wanted him to love me. I had tried to love, and I had tried to kill, and both had been unsuccessful by themselves I hoped... and I don't really know why I expected the dog to understand anything, much less my motivations” page (30).

4.8 The silence and Jerry's hope

Prior to reaching a conclusion, Jerry remains mute, and this period of stillness is extended. The absence of sound may perhaps suggest Jerry's optimism on his prospects of establishing communication with Peter. The response shown by Peter at the conclusion of the narrative is in direct opposition to his likely expectations, as he is depicted as being "silent," "disturbed," and "numb." He promptly dismissed Jerry's emotional interactions. Furthermore, Peter's lack of verbal response communicates to Jerry his recognition of the implicit message inside the narrative, which he promptly rejects. The evident nature of this is shown by the hesitant and incoherent words.

- “PETER. I... I don't understand what ... I don't think I ... (*now almost tearfully*) why did you tell me all of this?”
- “... I DON'T UNDERSTAND! JERRY. That's a lie PETER. No, No, it's not”.
- “JERRY *{quietly}*: I tried to explain it to you as I went along. I went slowly; it all has to do with...”
- “PETER. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANYMORE. I don't understand you, or your land lady, or her dog” page (31).

The audience is perplexed by their lack of comprehension of the underlying significance. The playwright subverts the conventional function of dramatic irony, since typically a theatrical work employs irony to create a situation where the audience comprehends the significance but the characters remain unaware of it. Jerry and Peter possess a tacit understanding that amplifies the dramatic strain. The remark made by Peter, which has 'pauses' placed between words, indicates a lack of coherence. This reveals that Peter's mind is experiencing a disruption as he confronts a scenario that he has consistently disengaged from and evaded.

Furthermore, the affront to his masculinity exacerbates Peter's ire, prompting him to engage in a physical altercation in order to assert his claim over the bench. However, when Jerry unveils a knife and hurls it at Peter, the latter declines to accept it. Subsequently, the individual in question hastily approaches Peter, forcefully seizes him by the collar, administers a physical strike, and proceeds to expel saliva across his visage. This sequence of events prompts Peter to swiftly respond by retrieving a knife. Subsequently, Jerry, burdened by despair, deliberately impales himself upon the knife, resulting in his demise. In her article titled "The Role of Silence in Edward Albee's Plays," Mita Mitra provides an analysis of the moment in question.

" Taunted by Jerry, Peter denies in his response that the possession of the bench is indeed a "question of honor . But his anger at Jerry's encroachment contradicts his statement, and his effort to protect the bench implies that it has assumed an abstract meaning for him. In his turn, Jerry manipulates this (Absurd) confrontation over a bench to deflect attention from the despair he feels before he forces Peter to pick up a knife and then runs into it“ page (32).

Albee effectively portrays the core of the events via the use of subtext. For example :

"For just a moment, complete silence, JERRY impaled on the knife at the end of PETER's still firm arm... with the knife in him, he stumbles back to the bench that PETER had vacated. He crumbles there, sitting, facing PETER, his eyes wide in agony, his mouth open... JERRY is dying, but now his expression seems to change for the most part he seems removed from his dying. He smiles ..." page(40).

The theatrical production becomes form via the amalgamation of verbal communication and moments of absence of sound. 'The Zoo Story'

functions as a recurring musical composition that is reprised at each juncture of the play. Jerry often makes references to the zoo in order to prompt Peter to recount the events that transpired there, but consistently defers the actual narration, therefore captivating the attention of both Peter and the viewer.

The frequent reference to the zoo, although without specific elaboration, serves to maintain the audience's engagement and inspire a sense of inquisitiveness. The unforeseeable conclusion of the theatrical performance elicits a sense of astonishment among the spectators. Albee's use of partial or restricted disclosure and withholding aligns with the theme seen in "Waiting for Godot," whereby the characters engage in peculiar activities and engage in 'Absurd' dialogue as they grapple with the pursuit of recognition and expression.

The play establishes a sense of tension by presenting characters with apparent conflicts, such as their diverse geographical origins, fictitious identities, and even the contrasting usage of props. These conflicts are shown via the opposition between Jerry and Peter, the juxtaposition of the rooming house and Central Park, the difference between animals and humans, the dichotomy of freedom and incarceration, and the clash between conformity and confrontation. The Zoo Story explores contrasting beliefs, so presenting a fable that reflects upon the current state of humanity.

The Zoo Story mostly revolves on the dynamics of language, whereby the actions are dictated by the power of words. The first portion of the text consists mostly of monosyllabic words, gradually building up to a dynamic exchange of conversations. Jerry, by his extensive and captivating speech, effectively disrupts Peter's state of complacency, which Peter had been unable to recognise until the tragic event of Jerry's untimely death at the hands of Peter wielding a knife.

The incident serves as a catalyst for Peter's emotional response, potentially imparting to him an awareness of despair, underlying pathos, and alienation. It also exposes him to themes such as crumbling faith, breakdown of communication, the sterility of human existence, and other existential challenges and dilemmas that pose a threat to his previously comfortable lifestyle. Jerry, as a representation of instability and threat, continues to persist in the consciousness of the readers.

Conclusion

Albee became known as the enfant dreadful of American theatre featuring the success of *The Zoo Story*, a play with Absurdist undertones that challenged and debunked the idea his nation represented. He criticised the consumerism, lack of communication, and shallow ideals of the United States as an avant-garde artist and a cultural iconoclast. Albee has made it one of his primary concerns to draw attention to the drawbacks of clinging to myths and delusions as meaningless sources of solace in the face of an otherwise meaningless life.

The extended one-act drama '*The Zoo Story*' by Edward Albee consists entirely of talk between characters until the shocking climax. It's a linguistic drama. Absurd drama, as shown in the play, aspires to merge substance and form. The language is what makes the topic come alive. It generates action and propels the play forward. Jerry, Albee's anti-hero, expresses the haunting isolation and the human need to 'connect' with others via his words.

The play captures the plight of the modern man despite its sparse cast, lack of traditional set pieces and props, and lack of traditional action and drama. Man became a stranger in his own world as a result of the demoralisation, loss of religious faith, alienation, isolation, separation from fellow creatures, and breakdown of communication that followed

World War II. Irrational playwrights attempted to dramatise this human struggle. The two are so intertwined that it's hard to tell where one ends and the other begins. The Zoo Story seems to be an example of the ridiculousness of Absurd method. The story tells, in the most basic terms, what happens to Jerry, a lonely man who strikes up a discussion with a stranger in a park and is ultimately driven to execute a violent deed because of that encounter.

Albee's signature "silence and pauses" are introduced here as a means of better appreciating the piece. When the author doesn't speak during a conversation between characters, it's because communication has broken down, estrangement has set in, the past is being hidden, or the characters' intentions are ambiguous or suspect. Peter's refusal to engage in discussion is communicated by silence, whereas Jerry, the conversation's instigator, employs eloquent, lengthy discourse to avoid dealing with his own feelings.

Technically speaking, it's relevant how often the sentence "I've been to the zoo/What happened at the zoo" is used. Albee relies heavily on repetition to build momentum for growing sequences of events. The playwright used the slogan as part of his absurdist strategy to highlight the plight of humanity. The audience is able to recall the original argument due to the expression's repetition. The 'estrangement effect' is also created by Jerry's usage of the phrase, "what happened at the zoo?" whenever the reader becomes engrossed in Jerry's tangled stories about his prior life.

Albee masterfully produces drama via linguistic coherence, with a rising and falling tone in line with the story's mood and temperament, and the resulting monologue is tremendously dramatic. Jerry effectively delivers the whole speech by role-playing the many situations and characters he discusses. Jerry propels the action forward.

His life narrative, Jerry's adventures with his dog, the landlady and the rooming house residents are all presented in a manner reminiscent of ancient Roman "pantomime," a kind of dramatic performance. The ease with which he switches between parts creates the sense that the whole production was improvised. Jerry's estrangement and the loneliness he feels are shown in the silences between words. strong emotions of a lost protagonist who would go to any lengths to have his needs met; his yearning to connect with anybody; his inability to get what he wants.

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