

## **Theatre or anti-theatre: An analysis of characteristics in absurd theatre and its classification as theatre.**

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Absurdism or Absurd theory is a prominent offspring of the Second World War. The genre explores the futile and existentialist nature of human life, the breaking down of all logic and communication in a godless universe. Many European authors were influenced by this experimental movement during the post war era, thus resulting in an absurdist fiction. Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett brought this movement into the limelight. All these authors took great care to distance themselves from all conventional forms of theatre. The characteristics of absurd theatre differ from conventional theatre to such an extent, that the playwrights themselves referred to their works as “anti-theatre”. These works are considered to be anti-thematic, anti-ideologic and anti-realist. Thus, the focus of the research is to explore the anti-theatrical characteristics in Ionesco’s “Cantatrice Chauve” (The Bold Soprano) in comparison to conventional theatre, and the possibility of it being justified as an actual form of theatre. This study seeks to answer three major questions; What defines conventional theatre? What defines absurd theatre? Can absurd theatre be considered as “theatre”? Thus the research intends to identify the characteristics of the conventional theatre and those of the absurd theatre in order to make a comparison. Furthermore, the research will ascertain the possibility of absurd theatre being categorized as real theatre. Hypothetically speaking, absurd theatre, with its anti-theatrical characteristics, cannot be considered as “theatre”. Initially, in a qualitative approach, the researcher will identify the characteristics of both conventional and absurd theatre. The title, theme, characters, events, action, stage settings, stage directions and structure of the two forms will be closely observed and analyzed. Secondly, the research will include a detailed analysis of Eugene Ionesco’s “Bold Soprano” (La Cantatrice Chauve).

Absurdist literature has appealed to the researcher’s interest due to its novel and refreshing nature. This new school of thought represents a shift in the European ideologies. Thus the research would be an exploration of the collision between these old and new ideologies.

**Keywords :** absurd theory, anti-theatre, conventional theatre