

The Concept of Time in Beckett's *Happy Days*

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المستخلص :

اظهر بكت الانسان في مواقف صعبة ليس لانه مهتم بالجانب المرير والمريض من الحياة ولكنه ركز بالدرجة الاولى على التجارب الانسانية. ويشكل هذا جزء كبير من المواضيع الادبية. ومن هذه المواضيع العلاقات الاجتماعية بين الافراد وسلوكهم والصراع على المكانة الاجتماعية والمادة . يعتبر بكت هذه العناصر مجرد مغريات للحياة والتي قد تغطي السبب الحقيقي وراء الوجود.

ان مسرحية (الايام السعيدة) تكشف عن امرأة مستمرة بالغرق داخل الارض وبالرغم من ذلك تستمر بممارسة تفاهات حياتها اليومية. يستخدم بكت عامل الوقت ليظهر اقتراب الشخصية من الموت.

يشمل البحث مقدمة وثلاثة اجزاء بالاضافة الى الخلاصة.

تهتم المقدمة بالمسرح العبثي ومفهوم بكت عن الوقت.

يشرح الجزء الاول فكرة انعدام الوقت في المسرحية.

ويركز الجزء الثاني على علاقة الوقت مع استخدام الشخصية لادواتها وعادتها اليومية

اما الجزء الثالث فهو عبارة عن عودة الشخصية بالذاكرة الى الوراء

Abstract :

Beckett dealt with human beings in extreme situations not because he was interested in the sordid and diseased aspects of life but because he concentrated on the essential aspects of human experience. The subject matter of so much of the world's literature—the social relations between individuals, their manners and possessions, their struggles for rank and position, appeared to Beckett as mere external trappings of existence, the accidental and superficial aspects that mask the basic problems and the basic anguish of the human condition.

In *Happy Days*, a woman, literally sinking continually deeper into the ground, nonetheless continues to prattle about the trivialities of life. Beckett employed time to bring her closer to her death.

The paper includes three sections with an introduction and a conclusion.

The introduction presents a brief summery about the theatre of the Absurd, and Beckett's use of time in his works.

Section one introduces the timelessness in the play *Happy Days*.

Section Two focus on the relationship between Winnie's props and habits and time in the play.

Section Three explains Winnie's flash backs and memories.

Introduction

The theatre of the Absurd has become a catch phrase much used and much abused. What does it stand for? And how could such a label be justified?

There is no organized movement. No school of artists, who claim the label for themselves. A good many playwrights who have been classed under this label when asked if they belong to the theatre of Absurd, will indignantly reply that they belong to no such movement and quite rightly so. For each of the playwrights concerned seeks to express no more and no less than his personal vision of the world.¹

Samuel Beckett is one of the greatest playwrights of the twentieth century; his well known play *Waiting for Godot* was awarded the Nobel Prize.

Happy Days is one of Beckett's recent plays; he finished writing it in 1961. This play shows the protagonists' agony and their suffering in this world.

Samuel Beckett lived with a clock and calendar. Since his birth on the 13th of April 1906, until his last days in this world, he succeeded in punctuating all the important days of his life and that of those who are around him. To Beckett holidays, anniversaries do not slip by unnoticed. Though he walked to most of his appointments, he was never late. In 1930, his poem *Whoroscope* won the Press prize for the best poem on time. Time in Beckett's plays abandons itself to its pure state, a kind of natural force, implacable like night never ends since it never began. Beckett mentions time in all his plays in one way or another through watches (Pozzo's watch) alarm clocks, or bells as in *Happy Days*.

The basic time convention of drama is that playing time equals played time. However, many hours, years, or centuries may elapse between acts. Various techniques are used for stretching the feeling of duration within his plays, but each play seems to open in a time without a beginning. Time in Beckett's plays does not follow the Aristotelian beginning, middle, and end because Beckett's plays are endless (continua)ⁱⁱ

Beckett usually begins his plays near their crises, and his protagonists are cursed to endure through time. Beckett is the follower of (Zeno).² The Greek philosophers in their world finite beings are incompatible with an infinite universe. But unlike Zeno who creates and invents paradoxes, Beckett broods about his finite creatures and inspires them with a theatrical life.

² Zeno of the Elea (c. 495B.C_c. 430B.C) Greek philosopher ND mathematician. He is especially known for his paradoxes that contributed to the development of logical and mathematical rigor and that were insoluble until the development of a precise concept of continuity and infinity.

Unlike other plays, time cannot be rendered visible, but as space looked different in Beckett's successive plays, time sounded different. Time and space those perpendicular coordinated immerge dependently but distinctly in Beckett's dramas; time can be static liquid and salutatory.

As for Beckett's characters though they speak abundantly, they are unable to cry out either to complain or to protest because they are unable to suffer.ⁱⁱⁱ He shows that man who is like a tumor on time can no more live than die.

Happy Days opens at a woman buried up to her breasts in a barren mound of earth – she wakes up at a clanging of an alarm bell and blinding flash of white light is directed towards her throughout the whole play. She wakes and immediately she starts murmuring a half – forgotten prayer. she stretches and says “**another heavenly day**”^{iv} (Act I, Page 9). The name of this hopeful futilitarian is Winnie and for the balance of this brief two act work she chatters without stopping over such trifles and reflecting nostalgia on trivial events of the past, and trying to communicate with her uncommunicative husband Willie. Willie and Winnie exist in a totally vacant world without diurnal distinctions where time seems to both have stopped and to be rushed madly towards dissolution, decay, and death. Thus while Winnie is trying to kill time, time is more successfully killing her.

Beckett's techniques have always been extraordinary compelling but in *Happy Days* these same techniques, the abandonment of all anecdote, the manipulation of time, the static dream atmosphere, the use of two parallel days laid side by side in the employment of a visual metaphor to convey a spiritual feeling are used almost mechanically possessing neither variety nor intensity.

In *Happy Days*, Beckett for the first time allowed woman her fair share of human futility, it was thought that Beckett viewed life's tedium and pointlessness were noticed only by men and they along suffer the grief of being alive and not being able to die. This seems unjust to women because nowadays there is nothing to prevent a normal woman from stepping out into the world and falling on her face down those long stone stairs. Women suffer in a spiritual way, and the man who fails to understand this can only exacerbate the apposition, so we see in *Happy Days*, that the husband has long abandoned all responsibilities for his wife's happiness and has retreated into a quiet tunnel. He leaves his tunnel only to bury himself behind a newspaper, a picture which is most common to everyone. The main reason for that is simply not wanting to listen to his wife's voice. The husband wishes to be deaf while Winnie wishes him to hear, but she is not perfectionist. This sensible wife, if she hears only an occasional word, she is pleased; if he grants her a grant in reply, she is enraptured. What a mercy for this unfortunate man that his wife is buried up to her waste in a scorched earth. She cannot make him hear, which she would certainly do if Beckett had not had the wisdom to bury her.

The play's main purpose is to show how misplaced Winnie's optimism is to make us laugh at her for being happy in circumstances that would make any reasonable creature miserable.

Beckett's characters have nothing to do with realism, either psychologically or socially, nor do they come out of the cabinet of dreams; they are neither machines for shouting gesticulating (theatre of cruelty) nor sacks full of ideas (Sartreian theatre). The matrix of their origin is neither the natural nor the supernatural, but mythic memory.^v

Section One: Timelessness

1.1 Days in Beckett's Drama

The idea of a day provides Samuel Beckett with a measurement of activity that fits his sense of dramatic form. 'Day' seems the only unit of time that most of his protagonists can comprehend, and Beckett divides the experience into a series of days each similar but each is a discrete unit. Beckett's protagonists usually appear in couples, Vladimir and Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky, and Winnie and Willie. Each couple of his protagonists separate at night and reunite when the light of the day exposes them to each others' view. The association between daylight and the experience of being seen works subtly in *Happy Days* as well as for Beckett's other plays.

The intensified lighted stage-space clearly functions as an arena in which the protagonists confront themselves self-consciously. The concept of night promises the relief from the compelling need to create an image of the self, because we tend to think of Beckett's dramatic writings as wholly innovative and independent of dramatic or theatrical tradition. This is a false idea that drives from the shock of his radical simplification of conventions. We see that Beckett works here within the same scheme in which Racine framed to the concept of (day) in his play *Phedre*.^{vi}

The unit day provides the temporal boundaries of classical drama, and the conventional period of time in which the dramatized action should occur. With some exceptions it limits become more stringent in 17th century drama. Like Racine Beckett used the opposition of day and night, light and darkness to signify the antitheses between private and public.

From this we conclude that Beckett's familiarity with neo-classical drama particularly Racine revealed to him the potential significance of this concept as a means of building an image of space and time.

In *Happy Days* Winnie uses the temporal notion of the day as basis of her perception of herself.

1.2 Bell and Sun

Winnie caught in her mound is subject to an endless blazing light in what seems to be an endless noon. A piercing bell rings periodically dividing segments of time into arbitrary days and nights.

Winnie feels herself obliged to separate her activities according to the bell for waking and bell for sleep so the sun never sets on Winnie, and throughout the play we watch it victimize Winnie as she is sinking into her grave. The bell is nothing but invisible sound of radio drama. In any early version of *Happy Days* that precedes the published text, the bell is an alarm clock controlled by Winnie, but in the final text, the bell is sounded by some external agent who marks the time and Winnie senses its hostility:

“The bell. (pause) it hurts like a knife. (pause) A gouge. (pause) One cannot ignore it” (Act II, Page40)

Within the limits of the bells division of day and night Winnie is free to organize her day at will. Consequently she confronts the basic problem of allocating her activities in such a way that they are distributed throughout the day so that she is left with **“ hours still to run, before the bell for sleep, nothing more to say, nothing more to do.....”** (Act I, page 27).

Winnie's golden rule is to make little go a long way so as not to dry up before the closing bell: " **don't squander all your words for the day**" (Act I, page, 31).

While Winnie is caught in a situation in which she must improvise the events of her day, she has the resources of multitude of objects at her disposal in combination with a sense of time that encompasses the idea of a past in which those objects played meaningful roles.^{vii}

Since the sun never sets, there are no more days. There is no more death. Winnie begins her bell bound day with a prayer and plans to end with a song and prayer. Winnie uses other resources for living through her day: the stage props, her husband Willie, composition of stories, and almost inadvertent recollection of lines of verse.

Winnie tries to endure through the happy day with careful deployment of props and Willie and to a lesser extent, with fictional invention. She tries to endure by talking her way through each bell bound day.

Winnie suffers a hellish light that does not shift into a darkness; she seems suspended at a point of infinite noon. While the mound of earth that holds Winnie captive provides a strong visual image of both her immobility and her isolation. The unchanging, relentless light which blazes down on her constitutes the dominant quality of this space.

For Winnie darkness remains a dream and the frames that idealized reality in images of release from the light and the body "**Why then just close the eyes –(she does so)- and wait for the day to come- (open eyes)- the happy day to come when flesh melts at so many degrees and the night of the moon has so many hundred hours.**" (Act I, page 16).

At this point which comes at the first third of the play, we recognize the hollowness of Winnie's affirmation of her present existence, the falsity of her repeated declaration that this day is a (happy day) the real happy day in Winnie's mind would be an extended night in which she would be free from compulsion of creating a sense of a day, a sense of herself as the focus of her own perception as long as she is caught within the blazing sun she is tied to words and the objects that words name.

Beckett presented his creatures as victims of time, as he discusses the relationship between the perceiving subject and the object of its attention. Winnie talks about the bell for wake and the bell sleep but we only see the bell for waking, by Act II the sounds every time she closes her eyes- a torture of forces awareness.

The bells, according to the convention of *Happy Days*, are indispensable, daylight being eternal. Yet, being rung by somebody, they mechanize what remains a shrill voice. They could not counterfeit the indifference, with which a turning earth's daylight comes and goes. If Winnie does not at once begin her day the waking bell rings again (more piercingly).

“some one is looking at me still,” (Act II, page 37), she reflects as its echoes die out.^{viii}

Time stretches obscenely on in *Happy Days*. (Actual playing time in Beckett's production was one hour for Act I, and over half an hour for Act II) **“Another heavenly day”** (Act I, page 9).

This phrase opens up the play the word (another) refers to repetition and continuation. Winnie's last words before she sings the lyric of the (Merry Widow) conforms this continuation **“ Oh...this is a happy**

day, this will have been another happy day! (pause.) After all (pause) so far". (Act I, page 30).

The day is Winnie's life and it is happy by virtue of her temperament and training. Her day is also a tiny mote in infinity light " **holy light Hellish light**" (Act I, page 10) so bright that black nothingness would be a relief.

1.3 Infinity to Beckett

There is a bit of Zeno in Beckett. The little heap of millet grains is progressively increased by half the quantity that would have to be added to obtain the total. Thus it will never reach its end. This is impossible heap of days in *Happy Days* Winnie sinks into time rising around her without reaching the end of her story, because she has no story even when the play ends the actors freeze, remain suspended, as though the film had suddenly jammed.

Beckett shows time a double-headed monster, it does not allow man a moment in which to capture even an illusion of the self because under its influence, he is only acquainted with a multitude of continually changing selves.

We are not merely more worry because of yesterday because we are no longer what we were before the calamity of yesterday.^{ix}

Beckett writes about this theory. What was known and may have been certain yesterday is of no significance today. As we immersed in passing time we are no longer the same self but another with a total new significance. This countless succession of daily-ever hourly selves create an unending series of misrepresentations of the real self which is only to be discovered in the desired stasis of the timelessness, moreover beneath a minor alternation to his present condition but for the true end

when the arbitrary series of cause and effect began at birth will be closed in reunion with its own identity.

So time and the impossibility to escape from time passing into the supposed infinity of the self is one dimension of Beckett's art.

Winnie is a finite being incompatible with an infinite universe, infinity at once threatens and magnetizes her. She fights its silence with her brave flow of words; she imagines herself being (sucked up) into the azure though she actually sinks deeper into the earth. So Beckett concentrates upon a single moment in time and he is therefore, unable to represent the complex transition in the consciousness as it moves from moment to moment losing its identity and the reconstituting itself as some other being with other desire within coordinate of the single moment.

Section Two: Props and Habits

2.1 Winnie's Props

Beckett's plays are serious games, imposing their own rules. Conflict is condensed to basic opposition, so Beckett's successive plays reduce plot, character, speech or gesture and yet all of them present us with man playing. (I play therefore I am). Beckett's plays after 1950's however, are less like discourse in the spirit of a gamesmanship.

Winnie spends her day as if she is playing a game, where time is the basic rule, and she puts down other rules herself; when to start, what steps first, and even when to end. While doing this, Winnie entraps herself with an endless routine. The props show the daily routine of any western man or woman. Occasionally, Willie himself is no more than a prop for Winnie and yet Beckett creates a play-long tension between Winnie and her husband.

The triviality of her mind is underlined by the triviality of her actions. They are not only small in scope-as they are bound to be half buried in sand- they are petty, and the play constantly emphasizes how inappropriate they are to her situation. We see her cleaning her teeth, filing her nails, putting on lipstick and adjusting her hat rather like the joke about the English man putting on a dinner jacket to eat all by himself in the desert. Her insistence, fussy actions are marked out by stage directions.^x

Pause. Winnie resumes fanning, Winnie lays down glass brush, take handkerchief from bodice, takes off and polishes spectacles, puts on spectacles looks for glass, takes up and polishes glass, lays down glass, looks for brush, takes up brush and wipes handle, lays down brush, puts handkerchief back in bodice, looks for glass, takes up glass, looks for brush, takes up brush and examine handle through glass. (Act I, Page 14).

2.2 Habits

Winnie is shown as a brisk woman, she is the victim of habit, and as Beckett defines habit as a kind of shell people grow to defend themselves against full awareness of the 'suffering of being'. As for her speeches Winnie is only talking for talking's sake, she is afraid of silence, afraid of the vacuum.

What day? (Pause) words fail. There are times when they even fail (Turning a little towards Willie) is that not so, Willie? (turning a little further) is not that so, Willie that even words fail, at times?(Pause. Back front) What is one to do then until they come again? Brush and comb the hair. (Act I, page 20).

Beckett says in an interview:

Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment, or between the individual and his own organic eccentricities, the guarantee of a dull inviolability the lightning conductor of his existence.

Winnie sees the bag as her main prop: "There is of course the bag... There will always be the bag... Even when you are gone, Willie" (Act I, page 22).

In her bag, Winnie finds toothbrush, tooth paste, mirror, spectacles, medicine bottle, lipstick, hat, magnifying glass, comb, and brush, music box, nail file, and revolver. The objects that surrounds Beckett's protagonist appear to be fragile and elusive, and his characters perceive them as the few remaining items in a world that suffers progressive depletion and exhaustion. These things provide the evidence of an earlier time in which they existed in their original state, accompanied by a plenitude of other objects.

These objects hold no intrinsic, symbol or iconographic value. Their significance derives from their use by characters. They exist to be spoken of, or they exist because they are spoken of. One of the indications for Beckett as a director that the content of Winnie's bag should be worn looking, conspicuous and non-realistic.

Beckett reveals Winnie caught within a structure formed by supernatural objects. Winnie's consciousness is divided; where as one part of her mind envisages that happy day. When death will release her from the earth, her objects and her relationship to these (old things), her desire to maintain her life ties her to these objects because she reads them to pass on time and to sustain her conversation. So she needs to

process them in her mind in order to sustain consciousness, Winnie enjoys the security of routine days and times of rest; she lives in an unending present and she devises routines to pass the time. Most often she glimpses past moments in which she cannot believe and she envisions future moments in which she tries to believe. In *Waiting for Godot* Vladimir reminds himself "But habit is a great deadener". Habit is used by man to distort reality; it is an expression of his cowardice. Man uses habit to see the new, not as it is, but as he would like it to be. However, in those transitory moments between the boredom of living and the suffering of being man is also open to intrusion of beauty and spiritual enlargement. To Beckett a man is fortunate if he has both defective habit and poor memory (8).

With the remainders of femininity, the lipstick, the mirror, nail-file, brush and comb, habit subjugates eternity itself. Just as the condemned man buttons his trousers before leaving his cell, so Winnie combs her hair and reddens her lips, cleans her spectacles and arranges her hat while all around the universe is falling into nothing.

Section Three: Then and Now

3.1 Winnie 's Key Memories

Winnie's connection to her objects connects her to the memories of specific days and important incidents within them.

Winnie focuses on five particular days, three of them associated with her relationship to Willie. The two memories appear to be prior to her life with Willie: the childhood memory of sitting on the lap of Charlie hunter whose death Willie has just announced in his periodic reading of the yellowed newspaper with which he fills his days.

These memories which may be a recollection of childhood experience stimulate her memory of her first ball, and her first kiss with Mr. Johnson. Specific objects stimulate the memories tied to Willie and she identifies each of these incidents as 'that day' the first comes as she inspects a strand of her hair.

Golden you called it, that day, when the last guest was gone. (*Hand up in gesture of raising a glass*) — to your golden... may it never". (*Voice breaks*)... may it never... (*Hand down. Pause. Low*) that day. (*Pause. Do.*) What day?

(Act I, page 20).

She marks the next specific day early in the second act. Here she remains caught in the earth, sunk to her neck, incapable of using her hands. The bag remains at her side, and she speaks to Willie.

"The bag is there, Willie, as good as ever, the one you gave me, that day... to go to market. (*Pause. Eyes front.*) That day. (*Pause.*) What day?" (Act II, page 38).

Close to the end of the second act Winnie returns to her memory of the day of the party and her encounter with Willie alone after the guests had gone.

"That day. (*Pause.*) The pink fizz. (*Pause.*) The flute glasses. (*Pause.*) The last guests gone. (*Pause.*) The look. (*Long pause*) What day? (*Long pause*) What look?"

(Act II, page 45)

Beckett organizes each of these references to a specific day within a similar pattern. While Winnie is able to discuss these incidents from the past in detail, Winnie cannot hold on to them or place them within a context. Each of these ends with a pause followed by the desperate question "*What day?*"

Winnie's consciousness divides between her attempt to encompass the past and her clear recognition that the past has no reality, no substance in her consciousness a part from the world that describe it. She perceives that her world suffers changes and radical deterioration, but once she has moved from one state to another the reality of the earlier moment is annihilated.

3.2 Winnie's Perception of Past, Present and Future

Winnie perceives her "now" only through its difference from her "then" and she uses the patterns of behavior that were normal "then" and imposes them on the strangeness of her "now".^{xi}

Then... now... what difficulties for the mind, (Pause.) To have been always what I'm, and so changed from what I was. (Pause.) I am the one, I say one, then the other. (Pause.) Now the one, then the other. There is so little one can say, one says it all, (Pause.) All one can. (Pause.) And no truth in it anywhere. (Act II, page 38).

At certain moments, Winnie's fiction of happiness fails, and Winnie recognizes that she cannot hold the past, the series of exceptional days she mentions. She can only speak about it. She uses simple time scheme-the opposition of the present mode of existence to the 'old style', 'The sweat old style'.

Winnie experiences the present through that scheme, marking the difference between the past and the present and sustaining the practices and the stories of the (old style) in this strange existence, she leads at the moment. At specific times, however, she recognizes that such differentiation is arbitrary; **"... did I ever know a temperate time ? (Pause.) No (Pause.) I speak of temperate times and torrid times,**

they are empty words... And should one day the earth cover my breasts". (Act I, page 29).

Winnie waves between her recognition that her existence is dependent upon sustained speech and her realization that language is self reflective, marking no connection to the world it seeks to describe. Her awareness of impossibility of knowledge is too painful for her to deal with except momentarily, and she returns to the fiction her speech maintains.

"My arms. (Pause.) My breasts. (Pause.) What arms? (Pause.) What breasts? (Pause.) Willie (Pause.) What Willie? (Sudden Vehement affirmation) My Willie! (Eyes right, calling) Willie! (Pause lauder.) Willie! (Pause. Eyes front) Ah well, not to know for sure, great mercy, all I ask" (Act II, page 38).

Beckett makes no attempts to explain the strangeness of Winnie's situation. Winnie's memories suggest that she has not always been confined in this mound of earth, and her twice repeated story of the man and woman who, passing by, speculate as to why she is there and Willie does not dig her out, indicate that Winnie's experience is exceptional even within the fictional world of the play.

Beckett leaves the cause of Winnie's confinement as indeterminate as the motive that brings Vladimir and Estragon to their appointment on the barren plain of Godot. While Winnie seems possessed by specific images of the past, they do not examine their memory to seek an understanding of their present situation. That situation is a given, and memory envisages another time, another place, but does not establish a connection between that time and place and this moment, this space.^{xii}

Throughout the text of *Happy Days* there are momentary breaks in which Winnie confronts the impossibility of differentiating between

then and now, but she dismissed that recognition and pursues her disguise even though that the frictional role itself attenuates and weakens. The pause, the frequency of broken speech and action to discontinuity of time (stage directions) Winnie's time experience in comprehensible

transport from one inextricable present to the next those past unremembered, become inconceivable.

In spite of Beckett's note, Winnie does have memories, and in Act I, she tries to conceive of a future by the receiving of memories, her past is converted to a present and her future becomes a mere prolongation of immediate moment.

Drama has long been defined as the art of present, and Beckett builds that definition into *Happy Days*. Winnie counts her blessings. Doubtful about past and future she embraces the presence of her present. Her kisses and wedding toasts have been replaced by the barren stage, but she will not admit that she was born merely to die. Winnie feels that time has no meaning even though she must endure it and the basis of that feeling is human morality, of which she rarely speaks. According to Beckett's theory of the changing self, Winnie might not be that trivial empty woman she appears to be, but because she knows

where she is — under a hellish light, returning to dust that she assumes this role rather than her real self. Because man's fate can drive him mad, Winnie maintains her equilibrium as well all do living in a minor key. Winnie doesn't allow her situation to trouble her mind because she has revolved to accept her present as her happy day, however, endless.

Winnie's fantasy about the future consists of Willie and words. She prophesies a time when she will need Willie to hear every word before

she can utter another, or even worse a time when she will have only herself to talk to.

In the climax of Act II, Willie does indeed come round to Winnie's side of the mound, but Beckett leaves it deliberately ambiguous whether he will live, die, or kill, Winnie's happy day closes on an unspoken question, that undermines the (Merry Widow) words "**you love me so!**" (Act II, page 47), how will husband and wife face this time of reunion?

Happy Days ends in stillness, but the last scene reflects obliquely on one of the oldest images of the western cultures — Oedipus facing the sphinx. Beckett's sphinx asks a different question — kiss or kill? — And Willie's answer is visual — man is the animal who crawls on all fours though middle — aged. Up right man is only a memory or legend.

CONCLUSION :

Beckett is one of the exceptional people, who saw life in a different way, and he repeated the same theme in all his plays, but each time he treats it in a different style.

In *Happy Days* the main theme was time and how man is imprisoned by his routine and memories. Voluntary memory is only an extension of habit and consoling images can be called upon almost at will.

Beckett believes that as long as the individual remains in time he is denied a full awareness of his self in as much as that self has been lost in the unreal distortion of the past. In addition, the individual as he stands is not his true self but a variety of changing selves, mutating according to the circumstances of any given moment in time.

Beckett attempts to reach this final, real self whose essence would be reached in an instantaneous moment in time. Habit and memories or both attributes of the time cancer, Habit is the compromise between man and reality, in the name of dullness and for the creation of boredom.

Beckett tries to find out how a life, despite its aimlessness, can actually go on, we make the most strange discovery. For although continuity, such a life does not go on, it becomes 'a life without time', this means that what we call 'time' springs from man's needs and from his attempts to satisfy them, that life is temporal only because needs are either not yet satisfied, or goals have already been reached or objectives reached are still at one's disposal. For this reason, in the play time does not exist either life is 'treading water', so to speak, and it is for this reason, and quite legitimately, that events and conversations are going in circles, before and after becomes like left and right, they lose their time character; after a while the circular inconvenient gives the impression of being stationary, time appears to be standing still and becomes 'bad eternity'.^{xiii}

Confined up to her waist in the earth on some Godforsaken heath, Winnie might be the saddest creature Samuel Beckett ever conceived. Thankfully, though, there is nothing remotely stick-in-the-mud about the brilliant Fiona Shaw, who makes of Winnie's pitiable predicament in "Happy Days" a glorious testament to the writer's achievement and an actor's extraordinary palette.^{xiv}

Notes :

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