

3. ABSURDITY IN WINNIE AND WILLIE

In this chapter the thesis writer explains and finds out the way the absurdity is expressed through Winnie and Willie's behavior, thought and speech related to the situation in this play. The meaningless behavior and Winnie's routine, and ridiculous thoughts by being cared by two couple, also her repetitive speeches and pauses and also meaningless behavior of Willie in treating his belongings include the elements of absurd in *Happy Days* world. In analyzing them the thesis writer uses the literary theories that is characterization and the supporting concept of the Theatre of the Absurd. The play itself is divided into two acts. The sight of middle-aged woman in her fifties opens the first act, named Winnie, who is buried up to her waist in a mound of earth. Beside her is her black bag that contains many items. The first act is filled with her daily routine of searching objects from her black bag, taking it out, examining, using it, and praying. The second act lasts shorter than the previous acts, she is buried up to her neck, and she is not able to do anything like she used to in the first act. It is even impossible for her to turn her head. It is evident in this act and only her eyes and her lips can be used. The absurdities happen not only in the first act, but also in the second act. But as usual Winnie does the most of the talking or in other words she is being monotonous. And Willie seldom opens his mouth to talk or just answer Winnie's questions.

Therefore the thesis writer divides this chapter into two main sub headings. In the first sub heading, the thesis writer will analyze the absurdity in Winnie's behavior, speech, and thought. In the second sub heading, the thesis writer will analyze the absurdity in Willie's behavior in treating his belongings.

3. 1. Absurdity in Winnie's behavior, thought and speech

In this part, the thesis writer will analyze the absurdity in Winnie's behavior, thought and speech. There are two elements that can be related in behavior such as the situation and her surrounding that will be analyzed in this chapter. Her situation is the mound of sand and her belongings are items from her black bag, all of

them got the thesis writer's attention when reading this play. The setting of place is illogical, strange, and extraordinary. Therefore, the thesis writer wants analyze them by using the Theatre of the Absurd concept.

3. 1. 1 Absurdity in Winnie's behavior related to the Situation

Winnie's situation can be categorized as absurdity, which is unreasonable and the world of estrangement and also it is a metaphor as a person who is waiting for death. In the first act, Winnie, who is buried up to her waist, in a mound of sand in the center of a stage with the hellish sun: "Expanse of scorched grass rising center to low mound" and "Imbedded up to above her waist in exact center of mound, Winnie."(I, I, 595). From those quotations her situation, which locates in "Expanse of scorched" and her condition which is "Imbedded up to above her waist in exact center of mound" are the traits of the Theatre of the Absurd concept, which is called unreasonable. Therefore the thesis writer considers it as absurdity, because there is no human in Winnie's situation in the world without any logical explanation that can be accepted by our logic or the thesis writer can also say that Winnie lives in the world of estrangement, the other traits of the Theatre of the Absurd concept. In other words, Winnie lives in unreal world or in other dimension that real human cannot accept.

The mound of sand that limits or restrains her physical movement makes her stay into static or motionless of existence. She is not able to use her legs of course, although she wants to:

WINNIE: I speak of when I was not yet caught - in this way - and had my legs and had the use of my legs, and could seek out a shady place, like you, when I was tired of the sun, or a sunny place, when I was tired of the shade, like you, and they are all empty words. ... (I, xiii, 602)

But she can still do various actions with her free two arms and head, including her long monologue:

WINNIE: (Pause. she turns to bag, rummages in it without moving it from its place, brings out toothbrush, rummages again... turns back front, unscrews cap of tube, lays cap on ground... hold tube in one hand and

brushes teeth with other. She turns modestly aside and back to her right to spit out behind mound. (I, vi, 597)

Winnie, in the first act, although buried to her waist, she can still do a lot of things with her hands. She can crane her body back and turn her head, although she cannot move at all. As the play continues in act two, only her head is visible. The ground covers her body to the neck. She cannot make her body move like she used to in the first act:

Winnie imbedded up to neck, hat on head, eyes closed. Her head, which she can no longer turn, nor bow, nor raise, faces front motionless throughout act. (II, xv, 604)

The sight of a buried woman in the sand must be giving the audience a shock, because of its strange and extraordinary setting. The setting is so minimal with objects except her black bag and the contains and it is drawing an image of isolation or alienation because in that setting, there is only a desert, no houses, village or city and far from civilization and no other people who appear in this play, except in Winnie's imagination about "Mr and Mrs Shower -or Cooker" (I, xiii, 603) or it is far from society, if there is a society in *Happy Days* World. That is not an ordinary setting of play as in the conventional play. The element of traditional or conventional drama setting that reflects reality does not happen in *Happy Days* world. Winnie is a person in the state of being nothing and doing nothing or helpless. Referring to the statement of absurdity in the Theatre of the Absurd by Martin Esslin: "metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of the human condition is [...]" it states that the idea of a woman getting sunk into a mound of barren earth as dune was an absurd way to describe how hopeless human can be struggling with his or her life. Winnie's absurd visualization could be a metaphor for a number of conditions such as the helplessness of disability, because of an old age, and the isolation of the human condition. The mound of sand, which eats her body slowly, may symbolize the age of someone that becomes older and older. The condition that she must bear by sinking deeply into the ground, symbolizes the coming of someone's death. It occurs in Winnie who is waiting for her death to come to her. So in the conclusion, the situation around Winnie can be categorized as an absurdity, which is unreasonable, isolation or alienation, and the world of estrangement because it is extraordinary

setting, so that human sense cannot accept it. Referring to Martin Esslin, this situation can be also “metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of the human condition is [...]”. It states that the idea of a woman getting sunk into a mound of barren earth as dune was an absurd way to describe how hopeless human can be struggling with his or her life and a metaphor as person who is waiting for death.

Her other absurdity in her behavior by doing the repetitive routine that she always does. Winnie's opening words, “Another heavenly day” (597), set the tone for a long monologue that lasts until she can no longer busy herself with the contents of her enormous handbag. She follows the routine of the day, praying, brushing her teeth, reminiscing about the past and endlessly trying to recall “unforgettable lines” that she has once read about “genuine pure” (I ,vi, 597). Winnie always does something meaningless in her condition. Meaningless here means that everything she does is unreasonable and no purpose. She is engaged in playing with little things like a mirror, a magnifying glass, a tube of toothpaste, a toothbrush, a comb, and various objects she has in her bag. Actually the bag represents her previous life, and the things she has in it stand for what she used to do.

Due to repetition, Winnie's action loses any sense of movement and turns into a static state. Every morning Winnie examines her own body but found no particular change:

WINNIE. ” Yes, something seems to have occurred, something has seemed to have occur, and nothing has occurred, nothing at all, you are quite right, Willie.” (I, xiii, 602)

She speaks and does things constantly, but the sum total of all her activity always remains zero:

She clasps hands to breast, close eyes. Lips move in inaudible prayer...She turns to bag, rummages in it without moving it from its place, bring out toothbrush, rummages again, brings out flat tube of toothpaste...(I, vi, 597)

Her routine is different from what normal people, like eat, work, sleep, and so on. Her routine consists of strange behavior and speech. Thus the thesis writer concludes that her strange and repetitive routine is an absurdity and her routine is questionable and makes the thesis writer wonder about the meaning behind her routine. So in my conclusion, the objects, that Winnie has, are not important and

inappropriate or improper, because a person in that condition cannot survive with those ridiculous items, and of course the person needs something else to survive like food or water. So these items, toothbrush, comb, magnifying glass, and revolver are an absurdity, which is unreasonable, ridiculous illogical and devoid of purpose.

3. 1. 2 Absurdity in Winnie 's Behavior Related to Her Belongings.

In this part, the thesis writer wants to analyze and find out the absurdity is expressed in Winnie's behavior related to her belongings, such as her black bag and its contents. The ridiculous items, which Winnie has, cannot make her survive in that such condition in this play, so the thesis writer considers her way in choosing those items as absurdity, which is ridiculous, unreasonable and illogical, some of the traits of the Theatre of the Absurd. Winnie has a big black bag and the contents she used to fulfill the time between "the bell for waking and the bell for sleep" (I, ix, 599). Winnie's belongings are toothbrush and toothpaste, spectacles, hairbrush and comb, nail file, parasol, revolver and the music box (it plays the waltz from "The Merry Widow"(I, xiii, 603)). Winnie never plumbs or never dares plumb the bottom of her black bag because the black bag stores all the rituals of Winnie's life like her toothbrush, comb, magnifying glass, and most importantly, "Brownie," her revolver (I, xii, 601) and creates an empty or static world of ritual. The bag's color gives connection to death, because it is black. Black is a color for people in mourning and Winnie eventually takes out for good the revolver, which always seems to rest at the top of the bag despite its weight.

WINNIE: ... what all have you got in that big black bag, Winnie? Give an exhaustive answer? (Pause) No. (Pause). The depths in particular, who knows what treasures. (Pause) What comforts. (*Turns to look at bag*) Yes, there is a bag. (Back front) But something tells me, Do not overdo the bag, Winnie, make use of it of course... (I, xii, 601)

The sense of absurdity comes to the thesis writer when Winnie takes out her objects out of the black bag. It is not making any sense, what good a toothbrush, comb, magnifying glass and revolver can do in her situation with the hellish sun and sand dune. The most logical thing the thesis writer can think about someone in her situation is to have food and water to survive, not toothbrush, comb, magnifying

glass, and revolver. Therefore the thesis writer considers Winnie's way in choosing and having these objects as an absurdity, which is ridiculous and illogical.

3.1.3. Absurdity in Winnie's Thought

In Winnie's thoughts, actually there are several thoughts that can be considered as absurdity such as her thought about Willie's anger, hoping a miracle without any efforts, and choosing the tool name as human name.

First absurdity can be seen in the way she thinks about Willie's anger as his goodness and asking Willie with the inappropriate question repetitively.

"Can you hear me? (Pause.) I beseech you, Willie, just yes or no, can you hear me, just yes or nothing.

(Pause.)

WILLIE. Yes

WINNIE. (turning front, same voice). And now?

WILLIE. (irritated) Yes.

WINNIE. (less loud). And now?

WILLIE. (more irritated). Yes.

WINNIE. (still less loud). And now? (A little louder) And now?

WILLIE. (violently). Yes!

WINNIE. (same voice). Fear no more the heat of the sun. (Pause.) Did you hear that?

WILLIE. (irritated). Yes.

WINNIE. (same voice). What? (Pause.) What?

WILLIE. (more irritated). Fear no more.

(Pause.)

WINNIE. (same voice). No more what? (Pause.) Fear no more what?

WILLIE. (violently). Fear no more!

WINNIE. (normal voice, garbled). Bless you Willie I do appreciate your goodness...(I, x, 600)

Winnie asks Willie so many times in the first act, but she cannot get the same reaction from Willie. Of course the reaction cannot be the same, because Willie becomes angry and bored with Winnie's repetitive question, although Willie, finally

answers her question, but she still asks him again over and over again until she feels satisfied. After hearing Willie's sound that seems to be angry, she says, "Bless you Willie I do appreciate your goodness"(I, xi, p. 600). She knows that Willie is angry about her question, but she says that it is his goodness. The thesis writer thinks the way she thinks about making someone angry and then his anger is considered as his goodness does not make sense at all. It is absurdity in Winnie's thought, which is ridiculous. Also Winnie says when she is overjoyed with Willie's reaction and action by saying this sentence "Another happy day" (I, xi, p.599). So in the conclusion, her way of thinking about Willie's goodness and asking Willie with the inappropriate question repetitively can be said as an absurdity, which is ridiculous, repetitive and nonsensical dialogue

The second absurdity can be seen in her thought that everything can occur or change without any effort to change it and there must be a miracle to change it. As the previous explanation about her absurd condition that makes her suffer, in this section, she wants to be free from that mound without any efforts:

WINNIE. ...Yes, the feeling more and more that if I were not held-
(*gesture*)-in this way, I would simply float up into the blue. (*Pause.*) And that perhaps some day the earth will yield and let me go, the pull is so great, yes, crack all round me and let me out. ... (I, xii, 601)

From that quotation, the thesis writer assumes that she has a hope that someday she can be released from her suffering and is able to do like she always does when she was young and was not caught by this mound. She only hopes and wishes that there will be a miracle so that something will change suddenly without any effort to change it but she cannot do anything except accepting it and waiting for something will change or occur, and unfortunately there is nothing happened to her, but she says: "Yes, something seems to have occurred, something has seemed to occur, and nothing has occurred, nothing at all." (I, xiii, 602). From that statement, the thesis writer assumes that Winnie has an illogical and ridiculous thought and waiting for something uncertain. Commonly human need an effort to gain everything that they want, and without an effort, everything will not occur. For instance; if a person wants to graduate from this university as soon as possible, so that he or she should have an effort to make it come true by finishing and doing this thesis. She or

he cannot only pray to God, to help her or him finish this thesis without doing something or only hoping that there will be a miracle. All of that is nonsense. Without effort there will not be any result. It is the same with Winnie, who is only waiting for a miracle that takes her out from her condition without finding the way to get out. So in the conclusion the way she thinks to wait something to occur or change without any effort is an absurdity, which is ridiculous and illogical.

The third absurdity happens in the second act. Winnie builds a world of illusion with her words and thoughts, when Winnie feels someone who is caring for her condition. She imagines someone named Mr. Shower or Cooker with his woman. They discuss Winnie's buried body and then they fight and leave:

There floats up-into my thoughts-a Mr. Shower-a Mr. and perhaps a Mrs. Shower-no-they are holding hands-his fiancé then more likely-or just some-loved one. ...

WINNIE. I call to the eye of the mind...Mr. Shower –or Cooker...Has she anything on underneath? He says...Ask her yourself, she says. (*Pause. With sudden violence*) Let go of me for Christ sake and drop! (*Pause.*) Drop dead!.... (I, xiii, 603).

From that quotation, she imagines the couple and creates the name of those characters with Mr. and Mrs. Shower or Cooker. They are unusual names and the thesis writer doubt it, if there is a person named as Shower or Cooker, except the nick name but not the real name because Shower refers to a tool which is used to take a bath, where the water comes out from this tool, while Cooker is one of the name of kitchen wares that is used to cook food. It seems that she considers the death objects as human being, and why she must use or choose those names in creating her characters is an absurdity, which is unreasonable. Her way of choosing those names and considering the death objects as human being can be categorized as an absurdity in her thought, which is ridiculous, illogical and unreasonable.

3.1.4. Absurdity in Winnie's Speech

The absurdity can be seen in her way of speaking by using “pause” in her conversation. Actually her speech does not reflect the principles of traditional narration because it is an absurdity, which departs from conventional drama. Her

speech consists of various thoughts taken from her consciousness. Usually her sentences are short, lot of pauses and silences also feels like interrupted by something.

WINNIE. My Hair! (Pause.) Did I brush and comb my hair? (Pause.) I may have done. (Pause.) Normally I do. (Pause.) There is so little one can do. (Pause.) One does it all. (Pause.) All one can. (Pause.) Tis only human. (Pause.) Human Nature. (I, ix, 599)

As soon as the words spoken by Winnie like in that quotation, the words are stopped by the silence that following them. Winnie's words, Willie's sound, and their movements alternate to interrupt one another. Almost all the words of Winnie are followed by pauses. As we know, creating fragmented and incomplete sentences is included in world of absurdity. In the Theatre of the Absurd concept, it is called meaningless plots, repetitive or nonsensical dialogue. In the case of Winnie, the absurdity is showed by her speeches. Thus the thesis writer concludes the use of the word "pause" in Winnie's conversation is an absurdity, which is called meaningless plots, repetitive or nonsensical dialogue and illogical.

3.2. Absurdity in Willie's Behavior Related to His Belongings

Willie's belongings such as newspaper and his clothes are absurd. In such condition, Willie also does something absurd, he reads a newspaper and does not seem to care about his and Winnie's situation:

WILLIE. His Grace and Most Reverend Father in God Dr. Carolus Hunter dead in tub. (598)

Willie opens newspaper...turns page. Pause. He turns another page. Pause.

WILLIE. Opening for smart youth...

WILLIE. Wanted bright boy. (I, vii, 604)

From those quotations, the thesis writer assumes that his newspaper has no purpose in the hellish sun, because it cannot be used to survive and a person cannot stand or survive in that condition without foods or water, but brings newspaper also the way he does by reading a newspaper, it can be assumed that he seems to enjoy reading a newspaper and he does not care about the hellish sun and Winnie's condition and it can be considered as his absurd behavior. That is why the thesis

writer considers this newspaper, Willie's belongings, and his behavior by reading a newspaper as an absurdity, which is ridiculous and illogical.

About his clothes that appear in the second act, the thesis writer has two arguments, first he can change his clothes with the other clothes while there is no wardrobe, and second is about the purpose of wearing those magnificent clothes:

Willie's head appears to her right round corner of mound. He is on all fours, dressed to kill-top hat, morning coat, striped trousers, etc., a white glove in hand. Very long bushy white Battle of Britain moustache. He halts... (II, xviii, 607)

From that quotation, first the thesis writer figures out that he changes his clothes, and it is strange about his clothes, how come he can change his clothes, in fact he has no home. If the setting is in the village or city or in some community, the thesis writer can assume that the character has a house because he lives in the city or village or in some community, and in every house there must be a wardrobe for people who live there. But this play is different, the setting is absurd and only in the mound and hole, moreover Willie lives in the hole: "Go back into your hole now, Willie...in this hellish sun, go back into your hole...(Willie invisible starts crawling left towards hole.)" (I, x, 600). So, it is impossible if there is a wardrobe in the hole, and the thesis writer includes it as an absurdity, which is unreasonable, ridiculous and illogical. Moreover, the clothes are presented as "dressed to kill-top hat, morning coat, striped trousers, etc., a white glove in hand", actually there is no purpose by wearing those clothes. As every clothes has function and meaning but he uses improper clothes, which are malfunction and meaningless for him. For instance, if a person wants to sleep, that person will wear pajamas, but it is different if a person will go to school, so that person will use a uniform. But here, Willie wears formal clothes, "top hat morning coat, a white glove in hand", if he wears that, it means that he wants to go somewhere formally. But in this case, Willie does not go anywhere. Therefore, there is no purpose by wearing those clothes. If he wears formal clothes but does nothing with that, the thesis writer concludes his clothes as an absurdity, which means devoid of purpose.

Thus in the conclusion, the items, that Willie has is not important and inappropriate or improper, because a person in that condition cannot survive with

those ridiculous objects, and of course the person needs something else to survive like food or water. So these items, that are newspaper and Willie's clothes are an absurdity, which is unreasonable, ridiculous illogical and devoid of purpose.