

Fathers and Sons: Family Relationships in Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* and *True West*

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Date of Acceptance 5/5/2008

Abstract:

The idea of the happy, functional family where each member willingly performs his or her role is completely shattered in the American playwright's drama, Sam Shepard. He paints a disturbing image of the contemporary American family that consists of three character types: the father, the mother and the son. The research aims at studying these character types and their loveless relationships in Shepard's **Buried Child** and **True West**

adheres to his or her prescribed role within the family. But Shepard's families fail to conform to their roles and they are, therefore, regarded as "troubled" or "problem" families.

The American "gothic" family consists of certain character types: the "fallen" father, the "alienated" mother and the "haunted" son. These recur in Shepard's family plays. The father is the focal point around which the rest of Shepard's family portrait revolves. According to Richard Stoner, one consistent character type in Shepard's plays is "a distant father in conflict with a dominating mother."¹ Spiritually and, sometimes, physically absent, the father, in Shepard's plays, rejects his appointed role as head of the household with all its responsibilities

From one of his earliest plays, **Rock Garden** (1964) to one of his recent works, **The Late Henry Moss** (2000), the twentieth century playwright Sam Shepard (1943) has been fascinated by the American family as a subject for his literary work. He presents a markedly "gothic" portrait of the American family as a "dysfunctional" social unit whose members are alienated, loveless and suffering from psychic and emotional wounds. In doing so, Shepard intends to criticize the long-held beliefs about the American family as a typical, functional social institution, including the belief that a type of social harmony will result if each family member

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children. She demonstrates little or no affection toward her children and exhibits hostility toward her husband. Shepard's portrait of the mother is not usually a sympathetic one: like the fathers, Shepard's mothers are responsible for their own demise. In her article "Ties of Blood", Lanelle Daniel suggests that if the fathers in Shepard's plays are responsible for bringing a "curse" on the family through their selfishness and abdication of patriarchal duties, then Shepard's mothers, likewise, renounce their maternal role which might alleviate the curse brought by the father:

Shepard's mothers seem indifferent and that lack of interest represents the demise of the American Dream just as surely as does the inherited curse of the men...The alleviation of the curse that should come from the women does not exist and the audience is left wondering if it did.³

resulting in an aggressive personality whose only outlet is self-destructive violence. Accordingly, he falls prey to the same "hereditary curse" which befalls his father.

The portrait of the American family is not more evident in any of Shepard's plays than in **Buried Child** (1979). What distinguishes Shepard's **Buried Child**, as Michael Taav states, is its "familial world where heredity ultimately prevails, where drunken

and duties. He is usually described as cruel, violent and drunken. He flees his home and allows his personal desires to run amok, resulting in the destruction of his family, especially his sons who remain wracked by his abnegations and betrayals. David J. DeRose has pointed out that Shepard's plays are marked by the dissolution of "the institution of family when sons turned to ineffectual and absent fathers for love, and found none."²

The other character type in Shepard's plays is the "alienated" mother. Shepard portrays the mother as, emotionally and physically, alienated from both her husband and

The combination of the "fallen" father and the "alienated" mother inevitably produces the "haunted" son, the third character type in Shepard's family plays. Born into a "gothic" world, the haunted son is full of doubt and despair about his destiny. Violence is his way of coping with the world around him. He is usually haunted by his father's abdication of the paternal role and by his mother's selfish indifference to the maternal role,

trapped by his crimes against his family and his failure in fulfilling his paternal role. In an analysis of the relationships the fathers have with their children in Shepard's plays, Laurie B. Steinke has pointed out that "Dodge is a negligent father, refusing to carry out the responsibilities of being a father and that even his name indicates this flaw."⁶ Dodge violates one's expectations of the ideal American father and husband. Whereas the ideal American father would prefer to be surrounded by his wife and children when he is home, Dodge seems most comfortable when he is alone. In the opening scene, He warns his wife, Halie, "Don't come down! [the stairs]" (BC,1) while he is talking to her. Dodge's apparent preference for isolation seems a natural result of abdicating his position as head of the household. He is emotionally "dead" as far as his family is concerned. In act one, he complains to Halie about his haircut by his next son, Bradley, saying:

My appearance is out of his [Bradley's] domain! It's even out of mine! In fact, it's disappeared! I'm an invisible man!
(BC, 3)

As a "fallen" father, Dodge has lost his patriarchal power as a result of his own crimes and transgressions

fathers need alternately be protected by, and from their sons, and where mothers must find whatever emotional sustenance they can outside the home."⁴ Set in rural Illinois farm, the play is a macabre look at an American Midwestern family, suffering from a terrible secret: years ago, Tilden, the eldest of three sons of Dodge and Halie, has committed an act of incest with the mother. The result of incest is a child which Dodge has drowned and buried in the field behind their farmhouse. The play begins with our being introduced to a lump beneath a brown blanket on a couch. The lump turns to be Dodge, the family's patriarch. Described as being "very thin and sickly looking"⁵, Dodge is, in fact, so weak that he can't physically flee his family and must escape as best he can via television and the whiskey he keeps hidden in the cushions of his couch. Dodge's attire suggests that he does not move from the living room to the outside world for many years, creating a sense that he is, somehow,

Dodge is, indeed, "invisible" in that he is "dead" as a father figure to his sons.

Besides, always dressed “completely in black, as though in mourning” (BC, 6), Halie's outside appearance is, once again, a manifestation of her alienation from the rest of the family, suggesting the death of her traditional role as a mother.

Having established Halie as a woman of repressed sexual appetites that she, later on, has turned upon her own son, Shepard shows the extent to which Halie and Dodge's marital relation has deteriorated. It, also, indicates the “threat feminine sexuality poses for patriarchy:”⁷

Halie: I went once [to a horse race] with a man.

Dodge: (mimicking her) Oh, a “man”.

Halie: A wonderful man. A breeder.

Dodge: a what?

Halie: A breeder! A horse breeder! Thoroughbreds.

Dodge: And he never laid a finger on you, I suppose. (long silence)

Halie?

No answer. Long pause. (BC, 2)

indicates the failure of her marriage to Dodge and of the love they once have had for each other and for their sons. She neither loves nor respects her family anymore. Like Dodge, Halie violates the traditional portrait of the American mother who represents the crucial link which binds the family together. Yet, Halie's family are a shambles, due in large part to the mother's own weakness which seems

against his family. Dodge's tenuous hold on patriarchal power has been usurped by the members of his family. Halie, Dodge's wife, always stands resolutely and consistently against him and is a constant threat to his patriarchal authority. During most of the play's opening scene, Halie remains upstairs, away from a husband she neither loves nor respects. She is even referred to as “Halie's voice” at the beginning of the play. By physically distancing Halie from her husband, Shepard intends to communicate the sense of alienation and estrangement between them.

Halie's promiscuity is not confined to her maiden days, but it continues even now as Dodge declares: “She won't back for days...There is life in the old girl yet!”(BC, 11). Though in her mid-sixties, Halie is not a submissive wife who keeps her sexuality under wraps. Her indulgence in a sexual relation, first, with her son and then with Father Dewis, a hypocritical clergyman,

would, among other things, help to thwart the possibility of incest:

Presumably, these sexually fulfilled and appropriately submissive wives would lavish care on their children and sexual affection on their husbands. Sexually frustrated mothers whose husbands were not in command might turn their perverted desires toward their sons...⁸

psychological condition, Tilden violates the stereotype of the first born son. Though the oldest, Tilden can't take care of his old father and protect him from his aggressive brother, Bradley. He, as Dodge claims, "can't even protect himself" (BC, 3). Haunted by his father's abdication of the paternal role, Tilden is weak, submissive and dependent. And it is little wonder, in this family of loveless, selfish and perverted relationships, that Tilden's attempt to escape fully the influence of the father is ultimately futile.

While Tilden represents "one aspect of the Oedipal impulse, the mother seducer"⁹, Bradley, the next son, "represents the other aspect: the father-slayer."¹⁰ Bradley is aggressive, predatory and violent. His personality is a foil to Tilden's. Whereas Tilden is meek and submissive toward Dodge, Bradley dominates his father with his physical strength and aggressive demeanor. Bradley's arms and

to be her uncontrollable sexual appetite. Elaine Tyler May explains how the theory of "containment"

Dodge is clearly not "in command" of his household which May says is essential in discouraging the possibility of mother-son incest. Rather, he has "dodged" his roles as husband and father and now he exists in a semi-comatose state on his couch between his whiskey bottle and his television set.

Like Halie, Tilden, Dodge's eldest son, has accomplished the usurpation of the father's patriarchal power by violating the incest taboo. Doing so, Tilden, like Dodge, is a breaker of taboo. Besides, he is mentally unstable: "Something about him is profoundly burned out and displaced" (BC, 4). Dodge, therefore, neither trusts him nor has any confidence in him. Described as a slow-witted child-man, Tilden can't fulfill the role of the elder son. Because of his diminished mental capacity as well as his role as a mother's seducer which results in his "burned out and displaced"

aggressiveness and refusal to submit to his father, Dodge both fears and hates him as he once tells Halie:

He's [Bradley] not getting in this house! He was born in a hog wallow, and that's where he belongs. (BC, 7)

Get my leg back! That's my leg! I can't do anything without my leg!"(BC, 26). He, therefore, commands submission and obedience from others as a compensation for his weakness. He is always obsessed with asserting his control and instilling fear in Dodge: "We could shoot him [Dodge]. We could drown him. What about drowning?" (BC, 20). Thus, Bradley has gained or otherwise usurped most of the power which Dodge has lost, fulfilling his role as a "haunted" son who is doomed to follow in his "fallen" father's footsteps.

Separating himself completely from his own family, Dodge even fails to recognize Vince, his grandson, who has been away for six years, as he returns home. Like Tilden and Bradley, Vince functions as a "haunted" son who is doomed to repeat the father's mistakes. But in fact Vince may be seen as being "doubly haunted" since he struggles under the weight of both his father's (Tilden) and grandfather's (Dodge) transgressions. Upset by his family's failure to

shoulders are "extremely powerful and muscular" and physically he is a "big man" (BC, 10). Because of Bradley's

Once Bradley appears on the stage, his first words are indicative of the violence raging within him: "Sonuvabitch!Sonuvagoddamnbitch!" (BC, 10) though he is physically deformed. His "left leg is wooden, having been amputated above the knee", so he moves with an "exaggerated, almost mechanical limp. The squeaking sounds of leather accompany his walk coming from the harness and hinges of the false leg" (BC, 10). Bradley's physical deformity is merely an outer manifestation of his psychological and emotional deformity. He seems angry at the world, ready to explode at any moment. Once inside the house, he attacks his father by using a pair of electric clippers to shave his father's head while he is asleep.

In addition to serving as a symbol of his psychological deformity, Bradley's wooden leg is a symbol of his weakness. He is totally helpless without his leg. Once his leg is taken from him, Bradley assumes the tone of a child and complains to Halie: "Mom!

jog their memory:

recognize him, Vince performs childhood tricks which he hopes will

Vince bends his knuckles backwards, talks through his belly-button like ventriloquist, and plays his teeth like piano key. (BC, 15)

With the failure of his attempts to be recognized by his family, Vince prepares to leave the house for quite sometime, only to return drunk and violent, falling under the same curse which has overshadowed the rest of the family:

By regressing into these childhood performances, Vince is emulating the child-like state of his own father, Tilden, a state which prepares Vince to fully inherit his father's destructive lifestyle.

Vince comes crashing through the screen porch door up left, tearing it off its hinges...He has a paper shopping bag full of empty booze bottles. He takes them out one at a time as he sings and smashes them at the opposite end of the porch. (BC, 28)

murderer!...I'm the Midnight Strangler! I devour whole families in a single gulp!"(BC, 29)

As a "haunted" son, Vince usurps or, otherwise, supplants the father by succumbing to the father's legacy of destructive behavior and repeating his mistakes. Vince himself makes a reference to this pattern when he declares to the entire family, "Maybe I should come in there and usurp your territory" (BC, 20).As soon as Vince enters the house, Dodge, indeed, surrenders his possessions to him:

Clearly, Vince is repeating behavior patterns long practiced by Dodge. Now that Vince is drunk and violent, he is easily recognizable to his family. Dodge tells him, "It's me! Your Grandfather! Don't play stupid with me!" (BC, 28). But Vince, this time, exhibits the same misrecognition which has plagued Dodge and Tilden. When Halie calls him by name, Vince replies, "Vincent who? What is this! Who are you people?" (BC, 28). Now Vince has discarded his old self and assumed a new identity: "I am a

Go ahead! Take over the house!... It's yours... I'm gonna die any second now. Any second. You won't even notice. So I'll settle my affairs once and for all. (BC, 29)

his family: "I just inherited a house... I've gotta carry on the line. I've gotta see to it that things keep rolling" (BC, 30). Vince's desire to "see to it that things keep rolling" may be read as his final surrender to his "gothic" fate. Dysfunctional relationships will continue to be the pattern in this family. With Vince in charge now, things will, indeed, "keep rolling" as they always have been.

Rather than being restored to his full strength, Dodge dies in the end:

His [Dodge's] death should have come completely unnoticed. Vince lifts the blanket, then covers Dodge's head. He puts Dodge's cap on his own head and smells the roses while staring at Dodge's body. Long pause. Vince places the roses on Dodge's chest then lays down on the sofa, arms folded behind his head, staring at the ceiling, his body in the same position as Dodge's. (BC, 30)

In **True West** (1981), Shepard, once again, presents the portrait of the entire "gothic" family, including father, mother and son. Unlike in **Buried Child**, the father never appears on stage. He is a mysterious figure whose name is never mentioned. He is simply known as the "old man". He has abandoned the family, escaped society and fled to the desert. Despite his absence, the old man dominates his

Upon hearing this, Vince "strides slowly around the space, inspecting his inheritance" (BC, 29) with the knife clenched between his teeth. Vince's demeanor now matches the loveless, hateful atmosphere which has infected the family members before his arrival. He becomes trapped in the vortex created by the family curse. And though Vince describes himself as being able to "devour whole families in a single gulp", he himself has been devoured by the curse which plagues

Dodge's "unnoticed death" is appropriate for a man who has spent his life dodging responsibility and disengaging from life. This type of sedate death is a fitting end for a man who has spent much of his life planted on a couch in front of a television set, using alcohol to insulate himself against both the outside world and members of his own family.

The brothers struggle against repeating their father's destructive behaviors as they try to pursue their own dreams of financial security, popularity and personal acclaim. For Austin, the younger brother, this struggle has been a lifelong one, but he eventually succumbs. For Lee, the older brother, the struggle is very different. Lee has lived his entire life repeating the father's behavior patterns, but midway he makes an attempt to reform his way only to fail in the end slipping back into his previous destructive, antisocial lifestyle.

A successful screenwriter and a family man with a wife and children, neither a drifter nor a drunkard, Austin has accomplished what so many of Shepard's sons have attempted and failed, namely, "he has got beyond the familial call of the wild and entrenched himself in the world at large."¹³ He is the son, or so it initially seems, who has broken free of the old man's spell. Lee, on the other hand, resembles the father. Like the old man, Lee is violent, nomadic and an incessant drinker. Moreover, he is, too, something of a desert rat, having fled society, its judgments and constraints, searching for a more solitary and autonomous life in the wild. Lee is also an outlaw. He is, in fact, a burglar

two sons' lives. Lynda Hart states that while the brothers Austin and Lee attempt to "disassociate themselves from their father...in reality, [they] can't escape... [his] influence."¹¹ Living alone in the desert, a toothless, ill-tempered old man consumed by drink, he, nevertheless, rules over his sons' lives like "a hermit king alternately driving them out of the wilderness and summoning them back."¹² Thus, the choice of whether to settle down and achieve a success or to abandon the restrictions of the civilized world, like the father, haunts the two sons.

After not seeing each other for five years, the two brothers, Austin and Lee, meet at their mother's house which Austin is watching. The mother, Mom, has taken a vacation to Alaska and the father lives on the desert, a wilderness world outside of the bounds of society. Like the sons in **Buried Child**, Austin and Lee share the same "hereditary curse" of their absent, "fallen" father. Both are influenced by the destructive behavior patterns which have plagued their father, including drunkenness, violence and abandonment of family due to wanderlust or perhaps, like all Shepard's fathers, a selfish refusal to accept his paternal responsibilities.

neighborhood as he tells Austin:

There is a great neighborhood. Lush. Good class a' people. Not too many dogs...[they're] never gonna know. All they know is somethin's missing. That's all... Nobody's gonna know¹⁴.

nostalgia, like the “forefathers” who have “cabins in the wilderness” (TW, 250). Lee, on the other hand, is leaning against the sink, already “mildly drunk” (TW, 250), and he has a six-pack of beer beside him, a signal that, as eldest son, he has long ago fallen into the destructive pattern of alcoholism shown by their father. Yet, neither brother seems satisfied with what his life has become. Austin describes to Lee his dissatisfaction during his visit to their childhood home:

There's nothin' down here for me...I keep comin' down here thinkin' it's the fifties or somethin'... Streets I misremember... There's nothin' real down here, Lee! Least of all me! (TW, 282)

living in the desert like his father and brother to which Lee responds angrily:

Hey, so you actually think I chose to live out in the middle a' nowhere? Do ya'? Ya' think it's some kinda' philosophical decision I took or somethin'? I'm livin' out there 'cause I can't make it here! And yer bitchin' to me about all yer success. (TW, 282)

the social and economic skills to survive in the city and that the desert is the only life he is suited for. Besides,

and thief. He comes to visit his brother to burglarize his mother's

Lee's lawlessness seems a natural result of his drunken, violent lifestyle. Unlike Austin, Lee has no roots which tie him to a certain place: no family, no career to speak of and he delights that his solitude allows him the mobility to escape detection of his crimes. Both Austin and Lee, however antithetical they may be, are yet bound by one common thread: the memory and influence of their father who haunts them to the very end.

The play begins with Austin writing his screenplay by candlelight at the kitchen table, itself an act of

In a desperate attempt to fill the void in his life, Austin decides to try

Lee refutes Austin's illusion that a life of solitude in the desert is idyllic. He seems to acknowledge that he lacks

expresses a desire to live a “sweet kind' a suburban silence.” (TW, 255)

The chance to reform his antisocial lifestyle comes to Lee as he attempts to write a screenplay of his own, which is exchanged for his brother's tale, taking Austin's successful position as a screenwriter. Outraged at having his work dismissed and his position so suddenly and unjustly usurped, Austin's first impulse is, in turn, to escape back to the desert:

Austin: Just give me my keys! I gotta' take a drive. I gotta' get out of here for a while.

Lee: Where you gonna go, Austin?

Austin: (pause) I might just drive out to the desert for a while. I gotta' think. (TW, 269)

becomes even more apparent as Austin, who is now transformed as to actually “sound just like the old man” (TW, 275), sets out to burglarize the neighborhood and prove himself his brother's criminal equal as he tells Lee:

I'm gonna' go outside and I'm gonna' steal a toaster. I'm gonna' steal some other stuff too. I might even commit bigger crimes. Bigger than you ever dreamed of. Crimes beyond the imagination. (TW, 274)

“Midnight Strangler”. Like Vince, Austin begins the play as a typical, dutiful son, somehow passive, but by

Lee, a mere stamp of his father, is a restless wanderer who is dissatisfied with the restrictions of the civilized world. Yet he is, nonetheless, disenchanted with the life he has led, with having followed for so long his father's path. What he yearns for, sometimes, is the security and respectability of the civilized life. He seeks to obtain the type of life that Austin possesses. Admitting that “I always wondered what'd be like to be [like Austin]” (TW, 265), Lee

At this time, the two brothers have completely switched roles: now it is Lee who is the artist, trying to write his screenplay despite the interruption of Austin who is laughing and drinking whisky, mirroring inversely the play's opening scene. This role reversal

Austin's words are reminiscent of Vince's in **Buried Child**, when Vince returns to the house claiming to be the

his father's legacy of drunkenness and violence, the more forcefully he resents his own transformation and tries to resist it. He has tried hard to bury his father's memory and to repudiate his legacy, but he fails. And though he voluntarily visits his father in the desert and tries to help him financially, the reception his father gives him only strengthens Austin's resolve to be different from the old man. But Austin, as a "haunted" son, is doomed to follow in the footsteps of the "fallen" father as he tells Lee:

Nobody can disappear. The old man tried that. Look where it got him. He lost his teeth...Woke up every morning with another tooth lying on the mattress. Finally, he decides he's gotta' get 'em all pulled out but he doesn't have any money...So what does he do?...He begs the government.G.I. Bill or some damn thing...They send him the money but it's not enough money. Costs a lot to have all yer teeth yanked...So he locates a Mexican dentist in Juarez who'll do the whole thing for a song...Dentist takes all his money and all his teeth. And here he is, in Mexico, with his gums sewed up and his pockets empty. (TW, 276)

he seems to look forward to the opportunity for solitude so he could write his screenplay, abandoning his duties as husband and father. Thus, Austin is, in some ways, already beginning to follow his father's pattern of behavior, at least partially, even as the play begins. Besides, Austin's tale of his father's missing teeth shows the father's suffering due to his own vices (drunkenness, violence and abdication

the end of the play, both Austin and Vince have transformed into violent aggressors and their transformation has been marked by drunkenness and an imitation of the behavior patterns of the "fallen" father.

Austin's attempt, at the beginning of the play, to transform his father and, in turn, save himself from his curse turns to be futile: "I gave him money and all he did was play Al Jolson records and spit at me"(TW, 275). This is Austin's dilemma: the more he becomes like his father, succumbing to

Austin implies that his father's attempt to "disappear" involves abandoning his paternal role and responsibilities as a father, like all of the fathers in Shepard's family plays. Yet, he is no better than his father in this regard. As the play begins, he admits to having abandoned his own wife and child in order to watch his mother's house and to water her plants while she is in Alaska. But in reality

plants” (TW, 286). Mom's lack of maternal love and emotional bonding with her sons has contributed to their own estrangement from her and from each other. Besides, evincing a lack of affection toward her sons, Mom is clearly out of touch with reality: she tells her sons that Picasso is coming to town on a bus and she seems insistent in her belief even after Austin tells her that Picasso is dead. Perhaps most significant, Mom, as her generic, emotionless name suggests, seems not the least surprised to find her sons following in their father's drunken, destructive footsteps:

Mom: You gonna go live with your father?

Austin: No. We're going to a different desert Mom.

Mom: I see. Well, you'll probably wind up on the same desert sooner or later.(TW,286)

three men living together and fulfilling their destiny as “haunted” sons. As Doris Auerbach points out:

The sons [in Shepard's family plays] are unable to end the repetition of abandonment. They're doomed to repeat the obsessive behavior of the fathers, rootless wanderers... [who] leave wives and children in the elusive search for themselves.¹⁵

him “like it done to Austin” (TW, 288), Lee reverts to his formerly violent self and prepares to return

of paternal role), and, by extension, the sons will, likewise, suffer financially, socially and emotionally if they follow the father's pattern.

Having left her home in Austin's hands, Mom, the mother, is shocked, as she returns from her vacation, to find her house a wreck and her plants dead. This confirms that Austin has fallen from his former position of a dutiful son and is, now, a drunken home-wrecker like his father and older brother. Like Halie in **Buried Child**, Mom's emotional aridity characterizes her as an “alienated” mother. She claims to have cut her trip short just because she starts “missing all [her]

Mom's reply suggests that the sons' emulation of their father's behavior will eventually end with all

Having failed in his short-lived attempt to reform himself and fearing that the civilized world will alienate

of fathers and sons imitating the actions of one another that makes Shepard once say the family is what “you never really get away from- as much as you might want to try”¹⁶ and that is the role it plays in his work, an image of a fate as inescapable as one's DNA.

alone to the desert and his father. Austin, on the other hand, is dissatisfied with the life he has chosen as Lee has been with his. What Austin yearns for is not money and worldly success, but the harsh autonomy of life in the wilderness where the old man is. He, therefore, reacts violently as he is dismissed by Lee to join him. As a result, both engage in a conflict. As they face off to attack one another, “the figures of the brothers now appear to be caught in a vast desert-like landscape” (TW, 290). This image of the “desert-like landscape” reinforces the idea that the brothers have succumbed to their father's influence and, like the father, they now find themselves isolated in a “vision” of the desert.

Neither in **Buried Child** nor in **True West** the sons succeed in their attempt to escape the influence of their families whose relationships deteriorate by selfishness, lovelessness and violence. These begin with the father whose own personal mistakes have directly contributed to the destruction of the other members of the family, especially the son who is fated to dethrone his father through carrying on the cycle of the father's behaviors of abandonment and violence. It is this cyclical relationship

Southern Illinois University Press,
1993),p.100.

⁸Elaine Tyler May, **Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era** (New York: Basic Books, 1988), p. 97.

⁹Tavv, p, 52.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Cited in Ibid, p. 65.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.,p.67.

¹⁴Thomas J. Lyon, ed., **The Literary West: An Anthology of Western American Literature** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.(251-52).

All subsequent references to this play are to this edition and will be incorporated within the text by the abbreviation **TW** with page number as follows: (**TW**, page no.).

¹⁵ Cited in Tavv, p.74.

¹⁶ C. W. F. Bigsby, **Modern American Drama, 1945-2000** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.168

Notes

¹ Cited in “The American Dream: Sam Shepard's Version in **Buried Child** and **True West**”, **Sam Shepard Term Paper** (URL:http://www.unc.edu/~puuci/english23/sam_shepard.html) February 2, 2007.

² Cited in Paul Rosefeldt, **The Absent Father in Modern Drama** (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p.51.

³Lanelle Daniel, “Ties of Blood: The Woman's Curse in Sam Shepard's Family Trilogy” , **Publication of the Mississippi Philological Association**,1998 , p.133.

⁴Michael Tavv, **A Body Across the Map: The Father-Son Plays of Sam Shepard** (New York: Peter Lang, 2000),p. 121.

⁵Sam Shepard, **Buried Child** (**American Theatre**, vol.13, 1996), p.1. All subsequent references to this play are to this edition and will be incorporated within the text by the abbreviation **BC** with page number as follows: (**BC**, page no.).

⁶Cited in “The American Dream: Sam Shepard's Version in **Buried Child** and **True West**”.

⁷Ann c. Hall, **A Kind of Alaska: Women in the Plays of O'Neill, Pinter and Shepard** (Carbondale:

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آباء وأبناء: العلاقات العائلية عند مسرحيتين لسام شبرد الطفل المدفون والغرب الحقيقي

المدرس المساعد نبراس جواد كاظم
جامعة بغداد-كلية التربية للبنات-قسم اللغة الإنكليزية

الخلاصة

ان فكرة العائلة السعيدة التي تقوم بوظائفها حيث يؤدي كل فرد منها، وعن رغبة، دوره قد نسفها بالمرّة الكاتب الأميركي المسرحي سام شبرد. فقد رسم هذا الكاتب صورة مزعجة للعائلة الأميركية المعاصرة التي تتألف من نمط الشخصيات الثلاث وهي تحديدًا الأب، الأم، والابن. يهدف البحث إلى دراسة نمط هذه الشخصيات وعلاقاتها التي تخلو من الحب في مسرحيتين لهذا الكاتب هما "الطفل المدفون" و"الغرب الحقيقي"