

# **ALLEGORY IN THE PLAYS OF SAM SHEPARD**

By

**LALITHA.P.R**

*A Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut  
for the award of the Degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**August 2003**

**Research Guide**

**Dr.Sankaran Ravindran**

**Professor and Head of the Department of English**

**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

Lalitha. P.R  
Department of English  
University of Calicut  
Malappuram - 673 635

### DECLARATION

I, Lalitha P.R, do hereby declare that this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

Calicut University Campus.

14-8-2003.

*PR Lalitha.*  
14-8-2003.  
Lalitha. P.R

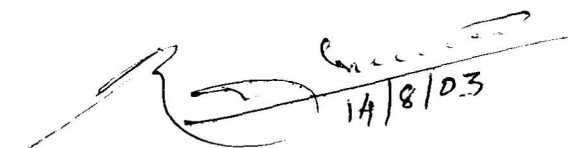
(Research Scholar)

Dr. Sankaran Ravindran  
*M.A, M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D (University of Kansas U.S.A)*  
Professor and Head of the Department of English  
University of Calicut

### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled "**Allegory in the Plays of Sam Shepard**" submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of bonafide research carried out by the candidate under my supervision. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any degree before.

Calicut University Campus.



Dr. Sankaran Ravindran

(Research Guide)

# CONTENTS

	PREFACE	
<i>Chapter I</i>		
	INTRODUCTION	1 - 36
<i>Chapter II</i>		
	THE AMERICAN THEATRICAL TRADITION AND SAM SHEPARD	37 - 73
<i>Chapter III</i>		
	ALLEGORY AS A LITERARY MODE	74 - 94
<i>Chapter IV</i>		
	ALLEGORY AS SATIRE : SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND PERSONAL	95 - 161
<i>Chapter V</i>		
	ALLEGORY AS MYTH, IMAGE AND IRONY	162-231
<i>Chapter VI</i>		
	CONCLUSION	232-246
	WORKS CITED	247-259
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	260-271

## Preface

Having written more than 40 plays and with a lot of plays still remaining unwritten in him, Sam Shepard has carved out a niche for himself in the Pantheon of American Drama. He was born in Fort Sheridan, Illinois in 1943, while his army officer father was in Italy. He grew up as an army brat in South Dakota, Utah, Florida and Guam until the family settled in California in 1955. He has been writing prolifically for the stage since 1964, epitomizing America with its beautiful as well as ugly aspects. The Wild West with its spell-binding music, trance-dances, faith-healing ceremonies, magic, witch-craft and myth, comes alive in many of his plays. In contrast to this, the betrayed American Dream, the fateful families and the tension between American wilderness and industrial civilization are also depicted in some of his plays. Like Whitman, Shepard is every inch an American writer, probably, the most American of all the contemporary playwrights in America.

Shepards' plays were mostly performed in the Off- Off- Broadway theatres like Theatre Genesis at St. Marks in the Bowrie, Cafe Cino and La Mama which had only limited financial backing . These were theatres "run on shoe-string bedgets" as Ellen Oumano, Shepard's biographer, remarks. Such theatres were audience - oriented. The plays of the Off-Off- Broadway have a common language that is built on a set of new symbols and images which are familiar to the audience as they are to the playwrights. The images sustain the meaning in Shepard's plays. These images are rooted in the oldest traditions of American culture. His vivid use of language and flair for fantasy have suggested something less like drama and more like poetry. Words to Shepard are "living incantations", "the writer's instruments for penetrating into another world, a world behind the form". So his plays mean more than the paraphrasable content. One has to read in between lines to get at his meaning because he works through an "open-ended structure" persistently avoiding "the carefully planend and regurgitated event"<sup>2</sup>. The open ended structure, which evolves out of the matrix of metaphor, images and myths which possesses the potential for endless suggestion and signification beyond the reach of intellect, is in the line of allegory. Such a structure has the inner vitality and a capacity for growth which will increase with time.

Allegory is an intrinsic aspect of the American literary tradition which has stemmed out of the puritan ethics. The Puritans believed that some "symbolical significance lurks in all things, else all things are of little worth". The fables and parables are simple stories of birds, animals and human beings. But they exemplify a moral thesis or principle of human behaviour and have an undertone of didacticism. Shepard, too is primarily a story teller. The episodes and images which he invests the plays with, as those in fables and parables, point beyond themselves to emblematic significances.

My present study aims to define allegory as the shaping artistic principle underlying the plays of Sam Shepard, which are rich in ideas and concepts of his people's history and resonant with philosophical and spiritual content. I have made an earnest attempt to probe into "the text, context and connections" in his plays.

What held my attention as I first sighted his plays in print, were the bewitching titles - *Angel City*, *The Tooth of Crime*, *Mad Dog Blues*, *True West*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child*, *Operation Sidewinder*, *Geography of a Horse-Dreamer*, *States of Shock*\_\_\_to mention a few. As I was drawn to read more of Sam Shepard, the idea of doing an indepth study of his plays slowly

took shape. I based my study on the above mentioned plays because they fascinated me more than most others. Hence, I don't claim this study to be exhaustive and comprehensive.

What made me focuss on the allegorical intentions and implications of Shepard in his plays in my conviction that though he is an outsider to the literary establishment, his work is clearly linked to the American literary tradition. His roots extend from the nineteenth century of Transcendentalism, Romanticism and frontier ethics. He is a playwright of exhilarating vision like Emerson. The ample geography of America dazzles the imagination of Shepard as it invigorated that of Whitman. Like the Transcendentalists, he searches for the spiritual world behind the material.

The 'Preface' to this work is a misnomer. It is actually a post-script. So, naturally, it exudes my sense of relief and fulfilment of having transformed a dream into a reality. It was a supreme experience of learning. But the cruise was not without its snags. During the course of my research both my parents passed away. Under the anguishing oppression of their final sickness and death my work lagged behind. They were an inexhaustible source of inspiration and encouragement to me. I bow before their memory. Despite the misfortunes that weighed me down, like Bunyan's pilgrim, I

plodded on and have finally reached the destination much too late, ie, after my retirement from service.

To come back to the here and now \_\_\_ my study has taken its present shape mainly due to the discernig suggestions, liberal encouragement and healthy criticism extended to me at different stages by my genial guide Dr. Sankaran Ravindran. Discussions with him were always stimulating and fruitful. I place on record my boundless gratitude to him.

In a very special way I thank my younger sister Smt. Sadhana and her husband Mr. T.P.Rajeeven, P.R.O of the University of Calicut, who very generously helped me in many ways during my stay in the University.

I thank my husband Dr. Sreedharan and daughter Sudakshina who have ever been with me in the full sense "from beginning to end" without whose co-operation and moral support this project would not have materialised. This dissertation is as much theirs as mine.

I have been able to get at the original works of Sam Shepard and the entire corpus of criticism on him chiefly through the unstinted co-operation of the ASRC, Hyderabad, the persent "Indo-American Centre for International Studies". My thanks are to be ASRC family as a whole For

providing me with all the available materials, I thank all the members of the staff of the University Library, the Library of the Department of English, Calicut University and the library of the Department of English, N.S.S. College, Ottapalam.

It would be a grievous act of omission on my part if I fail to record my appreciation to Smt. and Sri. Prasanth who have done a neat job of the typing.

Again, there are the unnamed many who by their little acts of kindness and consideration facilitated my striving. To them, one and all I am indebted.

Lalitha. P.R

# INTRODUCTION

Lalitha.P.R “Allegory in the plays of sam shepard ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

To me, Sam Shepard the “play-dreamer” holds eternal fascination for he is primarily a story-teller with abundant theatricality and inventive energy. His plays which combine social vision and formal experimentation, make us think penetratingly about the social conditions of America and at the same time evince a kind of passage back into the exotic wild west, far away from the claustrophobic urban setting. He mixes the real and the surreal, the mysteries and the magic, the charms and the supernatural. Nostalgically, Shepard conjures up the American landscape of Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Mickey Free and Buffalo Bill. Television, old movies and the Romantic myths provide him with characters and settings. There is something quintessential about his dramatic technique that makes his plays legible to the interested readers and spectators, though they do not work like plays in the traditional sense. Shepard has always talked of his idea of drama as an open-ended structure which explores the construction of meaning.

More than a theatre-artist, Shepard is a literary phenomenon. His language is that of a generation which grew up with the television, science fiction, jazz, rock and the drugs. It arises out of the vernacular speech and gets developed into verbal games, sometimes into tools and weapons.

In every play by Sam Shepard, there is a dominating idea which begins usually as a simple image. In his search for meaning, Shepard makes the image interact with private and popular myths. It is not the intellectual meaning, he has in his view. Through an interplay of theme, image and myth Shepard effects a reversion to the older order and restores the individual to the natural world. His relentless experiments with language are focussed to the discovery of a communicative medium that would fully represent the signified. Even when he speaks to the audience on an emotional level, he goes beyond what one calls "meaning", which makes his plays appear "carefully constructed elaborate allegories"<sup>1</sup>(C.W.E.Bigsby.248).

Sam Shepard is one of the most important and prolific playwrights of this generation. At 42 years of age he had more than forty plays produced in New York city. He has constantly been praised. At last count, he had won eight Obie awards, a Rockefeller Grant and a Yale University fellowship in 1969. He is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1979 for *Buried Child*, one of his family-plays.

There have been perspective discussions of Shepard's works which included a variety of critical approaches, biographical, bibliographical, historical, mythical, post-structuralist, which attempt to elucidate the power and appeal of the plays of Shepard.

*Sam Shepard : A Case book*<sup>2</sup> is a series of collected essays edited by Kimball King. The essays discuss not merely his better known achievements such as the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Buried Child* but also the less famous works like *Cowboys*, *Rock Garden*, *Upto Thursday*, *The Dog* and *The Rocking Chair*. Patrick J. Fennel deals with these early plays which are almost forgotten, in an essay titled "The Lost Sheep". Elizabeth Proctor, author of a full fledged book on *The Art of Sam Shepard*, has contributed an essay titled "Off-beat Humour and Comic Mystery in Sam Shepard's Plays". She discusses his special brand of comedy and the mythic implications of his subject matter. She is of the opinion that incongruities which create comic theatrical situations demand myths which have the power to reconcile opposing forces.

Albert E. Wilhelm, taking up the play "*Icarus's Mother*," delves into the Icarus - Daedalus myth in detail. In the motif of the rebellious son\_\_ the explorer, the narcissist\_\_ Wilhelm provides an interpretive key to Shepard's canon of the artist.

In "Character Behaviour and the Fantastic in *Buried Child*," Bruce Mann of Oakland University, gives credit to Shepard for creating a new sort of dramatic character, the character who belongs to the "Fantastic mode". Generally speaking, Shepard's characters are to be evaluated by a very different set of standards, standards other than what we adopt for an Arthur Miller drama.

Ann Wilson, professor at the University of Guelph, in Ontario, speaks about Shepard as "the pre-eminent playwright of the contemporary theatre" in her article titled "Expectations : Language and the problem of presence in Sam Shepards' writings". Ann Wilson places Shepard in the tradition of the American Transcendentalists, Emerson and Whitman. She does not call him a Transcendentalist. But he evinces, according to her, a yearning for the merger of the signifier and the signification. She does not claim that Shepard's theatre is evangelical but rather that his sense of language gives it a theological impulse. "..... language is corporeal, the union of the body (signifier) and the spirit (signified) celebrated by the sound of voice"<sup>3</sup> (Ann Wilson.135). I could like to acknowledge the fact that I have been influenced by Ann Wilson to a great extent, who enabled me to look at the signifier, signified co-ordination in the language of Sam Shepard. He has very often spoken about the potential of language "to make leaps into

the unknown". Propelled unawares by the latent puritan tradition in him, Shepard turns didactic in his plays and airs out his critical views about the society and the country in allegorical terms. Allegory, at its best, is the art of saying something to mean something else.

Christopher Brookhouse, an English Professor from North Carolina, evaluates Shepard's characters as good story-tellers. Characters appear to create fantasies, both about the past and about the future. His view is that truth about any person or group is never substantiated. It is all a matter of speculation. *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child* and *Fool for Love* are all concerned with the process of story-telling.

In *A Casebook*, Kimball King the editor, offers the biographical factors and the sequence of performances in the chronological order to refresh the memories of the readers. At the conclusion of the book, there is also a bibliography.

Robert Coe, in his article "Saga of Sam Shepard" published in *New York Times Magazine*, 23 November 1980, focusses on Shepard's fascination for myth and the rhythm of the vernacular speech. Shepard's pre-occupation with family plays also has been high-lighted. According to Coe, *True West*, though originally a family-play, extends itself into one of the persistent

themes of the author, "the dislocation and impermanence" which characterised the American experience since World War II. The latter part of the article includes biographical data of the dramatist, his work in England and his present pre-occupation with the Off-Off-Broadway theatres and the San Francisco Magic theatre.

Thomas Nash analyses the ritual qualities of *Buried Child*, in his article "Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*: The Ironic use of Folklore"<sup>4</sup> (Thomas Nash ) Nash also illustrates how the play conforms to the mythological pattern of the death and re-birth of the Corn-king.

Ruby Cohn in *Contemporary Dramatists*<sup>5</sup> makes special note of Shepard's language, particularly his command of the slang. To her, Shepard is a dramatist who has absorbed American Pop - art and media myths in order to create image - focussed plays in which the characters speak "inventive idioms in vivid rhythms". She singles out *The Tooth of Crime*, *La Turista* and *Mad Dog Blues* for special praise.

Jack Gelber, in his introduction "Sam Shepard: The Playwright as Shaman", to the Anthology *Angel City and Other Plays*, holds the view that Shepard's plays are "dramatic trips, quests and adventures". Gelber insists that Shepard is "the modern equivalent of a primitive Shaman who

confronts the supernatural for purposes of cure"<sup>6</sup>(Jack Gelber.) through rituals and incantations.

Ron Mottram, in his *Inner Landscapes: The Theatre of Sam Shepard*,<sup>7</sup> proceeds chronologically to present a critical overview of Shepard's career.

*American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard*<sup>8</sup> is a Kaleidoscopic collection of materials edited by Bonnie Marranca. In the introduction, Marranca discusses Shepard's "Play of Words", "Use of music" and "the rhythm of imagery".

William Herman in *Understanding Contemporary Drama*,<sup>9</sup> devotes one chapter "Geography of a Play Dreamer" to Sam Shepard. Here, the author analyses how the interplay of ideas, social life and historical events like the wars in Korea and Vietnam, the Chicago seven, civil rights and the association of the Kennedys helped to shape the American theatre. In the 50's and the 60's, the theatre witnessed a really different kind of aesthetic which had as ingredients rock-music, films and the video. The separation between the audience and the players came to be considered false. There were theatrical moves to break down all kinds of barriers between the theatre and the spectators.

William Herman attempts biographical criticism in his work, writing at length about the biographical details of Sam Shepard and showing how the substance of his life is woven into his plays. In the light of his findings he makes a study of the major plays of Shepard — *The Tooth of Crime*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child*, *True West* and *Fool for Love*. William Herman sees also an unmistakable strain of myth passing through all the above mentioned plays. For example, the characters in *The Tooth of Crime*, are archetypes. The action of the play assumes a mythic dimension. Hoss and Crow are the contending brothers, opposing candidates for public office and they also represent how the older generation yields place to the new.

In *Curse of the Starving Class*, the Curse is the devastation of the land. The land is allowed to deteriorate and is finally sold off to developers. This is the first of his family plays.

The Second play in the family-trilogy, is *Buried Child*. The play moves towards myths and rituals, while dying gods appear in it. The play is about home-coming; it is also about burial and rebirth — the burial of the corn-king for greater fecundity.

*True West* underscores the doubleness of existence, identity and conception of creative art. *Fool for Love* is a play about the various aspects of love, love as sweet, passionate and mystical.

In *American Voices : Five Contemporary Playwrights*,<sup>10</sup> the author Esther Harriet notes that the terror in Shepard's plays is not of physical annihilation but of psychological annihilation of identity. Identity of the self is his major concern. His heroes, mainly outlaws and mythic figures, with their insistent egos, make assertions of the self against the anonymity of a mass culture. In *The Tooth of Crime*, Hoss stands for authentic identity while Crow is the symbol of manufactured identity. Hoss is attached to history. Crow is disconnected. So he does not feel Hoss's identity - crisis. When Hoss finally chooses suicide, that is the only way left to him for the authentic assertion of his identity. "It can't be taught or copied or stolen or sold. It's mine. An original. It's my life and my death in one clean shot"<sup>11</sup> (*The Tooth of Crime*.251).

The emotional centre of *Curse of the Starving Class*, is Wesley's identity and its connection to the identity of Weston.

In *Buried Child*, it is the identity of Shelley that has been unacknowledged. Halie's refusal to accept her and the intended physical assaults by the male-members of the family shakes her off her equilibrium. When Vince decides to stay as the designated heir, the strong young grandson to carry on the family line, Shelley quits.

*True West* is the story of an inconclusive struggle between two brothers. The struggle is an endless one because each is a threat to the others identity.

In *Seduced*, Hackamore is the hero with a mythic status and an elusive identity. He has a public image —the image of a man with Herculean strength. When face to face with death for the last encounter, Hackamore realises the truth about his identity, that he has had no identity apart from his public image. Even his blood which he has received through transfusion is not his own. This is the penalty for inventing one's own identity . It is an irony that the millionaire has nothing which he can call his own.

"Albee and Shepard," is one of the chapters of Ronald Hayman's book *Theatre and Anti-Theatre*<sup>12</sup>. Hayman calls Shepard "the poet of the theatre" for his deft use of imagery. He is more interested in the communicative aspect of the plays of Sam Shepard. According to Hayman, Shepard thinks about the current conditions of America in theatrical terms and presents them in an exciting succession of theatrical images.

Hayman takes up plays like *The Unseen Hand*, *The Tooth of Crime*, *Icarus's Mother*, *Operation Sidewinder* and *Angel City* to analyse the three-

dimensional metaphors and the compellingly watchable series of stage-events which defy, very often, norms of realism, logic and plausibility.

In *The Unseen Hand*, Willie is the central character who claims to have travelled through two galaxies. There is a black hand - print buried into his baldy head. This is emblematic of the power which the sorcerers have gained in the country of Nogoland. This sign of the hand restricts the circumference beyond which his thoughts cannot go.

Visually the most imaginative sequence of this supernatural power occurs, when Willie rejuvenates Blue. Willie shakes Blue violently as if a rapid series of high-voltage electric shocks were passing from Willie to Blue as if there is an interior shrinkage as the inner organs re-arrange themselves. At the end Blue becomes younger\_\_younger by several years and is now a man of just thirty years of age.

The central image in *The Tooth of Crime*, is a duel which is wholly verbal. The established pop-star Hoss has to face a challenge from an outsider. The dispute is to be settled by a song duel a strange system which is extant in Alaska or in Greenland even today. The disputants sing to each other and to their audience. The verses are of down-to-earth quality and since they are intended to humiliate the opponent they are full of venom

and no physical deformity, personal shame or family trouble is considered sacred. As verse after verse is sung by the opponents alternately, in the manner of hits are received and returned in a duel, the audience also begin to take sides, and finally the one who gets applause for a longer time is declared winner.

The images in *Operation Sidewinder* and *Angel City*, are unrealistic but they catch the attention of the audience instantaneously. The computer in *Operation Sidewinder*, looks and sounds like a six-foot rattle-snake with flashing eyes and a darting tongue.

The key-image in *Angel City*, is even more unrealistic. A particular Hollywood production-company is trying to cook up a film about disaster, in order to avert a financial disaster. The skin on the arm of the film-magnate Wheeler is turning green. Rabbit Brown is called to cure Wheeler. His herbs of medical and mystical qualities do not work. Rabbit Brown himself is turning green and slimy. The green slime that infects everyone, is the spreading malady in the film world. Those who are in the film industry \_\_ Wheeler, Lanx and now Rabbit\_\_ trade their creative energy for the commercial potential of a vampire art which suck their life-blood.

Apart from employing images, Shepard exploits the multiple meanings of some of the words. The structure of *The Tooth of Crime* depends on the multiple meanings of 'hit' "big-killing" and "contract". The dramatist extends the idea of killing into business and rock-music, thereby suggesting "the quasi-criminal ruthlessness in both"<sup>13</sup> (*Ronald Hayman*.167).

David J. De Rose in his book *Sam Shepard*,<sup>14</sup> considers Shepard as a self-made myth who created an artistic identity at the age of 19 and "who has successfully reinvented himself leaping into new areas of artistic expression, succeeding in re-emerging again and again in new artistic guises"<sup>15</sup> (*David J. De Rose*.2).

De Rose makes a full-length and comprehensive study of Shepard as a 'theatre artist' diving deep into his theatrical as well as thematic intentions. The career of Sam Shepard, according to De Rose is the gradual acknowledgement and reacquaintance with the social, geographical and hereditary elements. Shepard is a product of the post - World War era. The post - war suburban expansion broke like a tidal wave over a previously rural life-style, causing sudden destruction to a traditional agrarian way of life. More than any one of these socio-economic changes, it is the trauma ensuing these changes that shattered the personal and

cultural mythology. According to De Rose, Shepard's plays are about a world that has become "unfixed".

The plays of Shepard do not fall into neat categories. De Rose examines the entire dramatic output in the light of the vision of reality, self and society. He categorises the plays according to chronology, biographical content and some of the major thematic and theatrical patterns.

Shepard's early plays have little to do with theme or plot. These plays climaxing with *La Turista*, have at the centre a young man suffering from a highly personal state of agitation. The playwright is not interested in the social ramifications in his early plays. It was after his tie-up with Michael Angelo Antonioni, the Italian Film-maker that his plays began to show signs of a growing "social consciousness". His *Forensic and the Navigators*, *Operation Sidewinder* and *The Tooth of Crime* attempt at a meaningful statement about the post-modern social and cultural malaise of the early 1970s, the malaise of America still at war with Vietnam.

In 1971 Shepard moved to London with the hope of re-inventing himself and becoming a rock-and-roll star. In England also he could not get the "balm of Gilead" that he sought after. He was further haunted by a sense of rootlessness. Nevertheless, his trip resulted in the writing of two of

his important plays - *The Tooth of Crime* and *Action* in both of which rock-and-roll makes expansive inroads. He returned to America to settle down in San Francisco. His experimentation with jazz music led to his artistic collaboration with John Chaikin. In *Suicide in B Flat* (1976) Jazz music and the musicians are seen at close quarters. It has been evidenced in the play how music makes Niles lose his grip on reality. In 1978, Shepard re-invented himself by writing two family plays *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child* thereby establishing himself as a family - playwright.

David J. De Rose divides his book into eight chapters through which he courses along the career and plays of the dramatist.

In Chapter I "Sam Shepard : Self-Made Myth" De Rose gives a biographical sketch of the playwright "tall, dark and ruggedly handsome" known as "steve", who moved from military base to military base following his father, a service man in the Army Air Corps. He discusses at length the family background, the impact of the post-war anxieties, the industrial boom and the inflated Hollywood myths upon the young man. De Rose also gives a fore warning of the kind of highly disturbing theatrical vocabulary of words and images used by Shepard to put across to the audience his personal trauma.

In Chapter II "Cowboys and Indian Country" De Rose deals with the earliest plays of Shepard. *Cowboys, Dog, Rocking Chair, Upto Thursday*, and *Fourteen Hundred Thousand* are plays for which he is deeply indebted to the Theatre of the Absurd.

In Chapter III, "The Accumulation of Image," De Rose makes the spot-light fall on the next five plays of Shepard in the order of succession — *4H Club, Icarus's Mother, Chicago Red Cross* and *La Turista* — plays which convey an acute sense of discomfort and a deeply disturbing view of reality. According to De Rose, these plays demonstrate "a growing comprehension of dramatic form in image and language"<sup>16</sup>(David J. De Rose.19). Jim whose head is about to burst open in the play *Red Cross*, the young man paralysed at the end of *Dog*, the final sequence of the play climaxing with Kent's leap through the upstage wall set in *La Turista*, are all theatrical expressions of a personal state of extreme psychic agitation. In *Red Cross* Jim's Crabs take on the same function of the off-stage plane in *Icarus's Mother* or the unseen mices in *4H club*. These images symbolise an intelligible source of anxiety and contribute to the audiences discomfort by their palpable but unseen presence.

In the subsequent chapter "Pop American Pastiche," De Rose observes how Shepard gathers archetypal characters, not from mythology

but from American Pop culture; and freely mixes them with characters and images from American Folklore, rock-and-roll, comic books and television. The plays he cites as examples are *The Unseen Hand* (1969) *Mad Dog Blues* (1970), *Operation Sidewinder* (1970) *Cowboy Mouth* (1971) and *The Tooth of Crime* (1972). In the *Unseen Hand* the Morphan brothers use a wild trio of gunfighters who appear to be folk-loric relics in the contemporary setting. *Mad Dog Blues* projects two heroes, Yahoodi and Kosmo, who seek to escape their oppressive urban environment not to the parched desert of the old west but to the exotic back lots of Hollywood's adventure films. *Cowboy Mouth* is about the quest for a new Messaiah of rock and roll, who can speak for the contemporary American culture. In *Operation Sidewinder*, an Air Force Computer escapes into the desert disguised as a giant side-winder. The Indian tribe mistakes it for the long-awaited snake-god that will reunite them with their spiritual selves.

In the next chapter "Critical states" De Rose examines two plays *Blue Bitch* (1973) and *Geography of a Horse-Dreamer* in the light of the heightened perception of one's environment. Shepard went to England in 1971 with the intention of becoming a rock-star. The playwright has experienced what it means to be an American living in a foreign country. The two plays articulate the peculiar disorientation the Americans feel,

when they are in a foreign land even if the natives speak the same language as they do. Cody in *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* had been drugged while being transported. Yet he could sense it, when he was taken out of America. Away from his native environment, his psyche is mysteriously at odds. Cody in *Blue Bitch* has been actually conscious of the inner origins of his peculiar disorientation and anxieties.

In 'Playing Out,' De Rose takes stock of the series of theatrical experimentations indulged in by Shepard after his return from England in 1974. He conducted experiments to see how music and sound helped the evolution of characters. Shepard had enormous faith in the potential of music and once he said, "with music you could move in all emotional territories"<sup>17</sup> (David J. De Rose.78). In *Inacoma, Sad Lament of Peacock Bill on the Eve of Killing His wife, Tongues, Savage Love Angel City, Suicide in B flat* music has served several primary functions. It communicates the emotional perspective of either a character or situation or the thematic centre of a work; it establishes the mood and tone. As Shepard himself said in a Theatre Quarterly Interview,

" I think music is really important, especially in plays and theatre; it adds a whole different kind of perspective, it immediately brings the audience to terms with an emotional reality. Because nothing communicates

emotions better than music... not even the greatest play in the world"<sup>18</sup>

(*Interview with Kenneth Chubb*.12).

In *The Tooth of Crime*, the songs function in multifarious ways. Hoss begins the show with a tune that initiates us into the play's aims and themes. In *Operation Sidewinder*, the employment of rock-and-roll is as a bridge between scenes as a commentary on the action and as an explosive method of establishing feelings. In *Angel City*, music is specifically employed to establish an ominous mood. *Seduced* starts with Randy Newman's plaintive "Sail away" while *Suicide in B flat* begins with a jazz piano sounding.

In Chapter VII "The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghostly" De Rose speaks about the 'family-plays' which were rather unanticipated by critics from Shepard. *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child*, both published in 1978, contain a lot of autobiographical elements. With *Curse of the Starving Class* began a string of five plays about the American family. Though the setting, tone, characters and themes varied from play to play there remains "the constant element of a young man haunted by unresolved ties to the family, father and personal heritage"<sup>19</sup>(*David J. De Rose*.91) in every play. The family plays are *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child*, *Fool for Love*, *True West*, and *Lie of the Mind*. Wesley, Vince,

Eddie, Lee and Jake are respectively the young men with apron-strings attached to their families.

In Chapter VIII De Rose evaluates *States of Shock* which was written by Shepard after an artistic silence of more than five years. The play is about war — “the pity of war and the pity war distilled”. He depicts the inglorious and gruesome war and its brutal aftermath through the character, Stubbs, who is disabled and rendered impotent by an unnamed war.

David De Rose establishes in his book how Shepard grows into a self-made myth by assuming an artistic identity which he re-invents through consistent and sustained efforts by leaping into new areas of themes and dramatic expressions.

Doris Auerbach in her book *Sam Shepard, Arthur Kopit and the Off-Broadway*<sup>20</sup> follows Shepard’s career up through 1979 to provide a good introduction to his life and work. She also gives the history of the Off-Broadway theatre to which he and Kopit contributed profusely. Auerbach speaks about the America Shepard lived in, the American hero “whose quest has been perverted”. She also speaks about how Shepard uses myths to explain the world about him and explore the causes of the current American malaise, the consumerist culture to which the American has fallen a prey. Like Rabbit

in *Angel City*, everyone is asking the question "How can I stay immune? How can I keep the distance from a machine like that? (film)"<sup>21</sup> (*Angel City*.13).

Doris Auerbach comments also on the theatrical language used by Shepard. According to her Shepard "brought the word back to the theatre" Words to him are "living incantations" which provide glimpses into the total world of sensate experience. She has also commented upon the theatrical effect produced by music in plays in which it forms an integral part, for example, *The Tooth of Crime*, *Angel City*, *Mad Dog Blues* and *Cowboy Mouth*. Music and its connection with myths have been emphasised. Myths, like music, speak to "everything at once especially the emotions"<sup>22</sup> (*Sam Shepard*, "Visualization, Language and Inner Library.217).

According to Auerbach Shepard projects a male-dominated world which is brutal and cold, where adversaries struggle endlessly for domination. From the world of loneliness and lost quests they are reaching out for some kind of communication. Female characters are marginal figures who are mainly "macho fantasies of familiar female stereotypes".

C.W.E. Bigsby in *A Critical Introduction to the Twentieth Century Drama Vol III*<sup>23</sup> devotes the VIIIth chapter to Sam Shepard. Bigsby is of the opinion

that the plays of Shepard, sprout out either of a single image or a cluster of images. In *Chicago* there is the central image of a man who for much of the play occupies a bath. *Icarus's Mother* and *Operation Sidewinder* contain clusters of images.

The origin of the play *Icarus's Mother* lies in a Fourth of July celebrations during which fire-works are exploding in the sky. It is an image of nuclear destruction. It also contains a reference to the apocalypse. He presents different possibilities that co-exist. For one character the plane has written the formula  $E = MC^2$  across the sky while for another it has exploded and crashed into the lake.

In *Operation Sidewinder* the dominant image is that of an advanced computer in the shape of a huge sidewinder which has escaped from a military base. It was designed to identify and track down the black revolutionaries who plan to use drugs to undermine and capture the country. Having escaped from the military base, it ranges at will creating its own selfhood. When provoked by tourists, it wraps itself around the young wife Honey who along with her husband had come for sight-seeing. The husband is then shot dead by a member of the gang of conspirators—the black revolutionaries. An Indian tribe captures the computer and they

dismember the sidewinder but later take it to the 'Spider Lady who unites the two ends in a ritual. The Spider Lady then relates the story of creation to the computer and highlights the significance of uniting the head and the tail. Humanity will find its inner peace and rise above both body and spirit in a synthesis of the two. Thus the lady transforms the computer from a "military property to a religious icon"<sup>24</sup>(*Ruby Coin*.178). The image of the Sidewinder brings out the contrast between the spiritual world of the American Indian and the materialistic world of the modern American.

Bigsby is of the opinion that the images in the plays of Shepard work by an association of ideas rather than by rational analysis. In *La Turista*, the central images of diarrhoea and sleeping sickness speak about the American incapacity when confronted with Third World realities. *Icarus's Mother* has an apocalyptic dimension. *Operation sidewinder* is very much a play of its times — the fact of Vietnam war, the concept of body as moral agent and the attainment of selfhood through a restoration of the individual to the natural world all find reflected therein. It is Bigsby who called the work of Shepard "mythic Bildungsroman" for the first time, to mean that they are accounts of the search for meaning and value.

Ron Mottram in his *Inner Landscapes : The Theatre of Sam Shepard*<sup>25</sup> provides a critical over-view of Shepard's career, proceeding

chronologically. Mottram makes special use of Shepard's prose and poetry as means of understanding his plays. It is commendable as a work of biographical and critical study in a text of nearly 170 pages.

Mottram's interpretation of the plays is based on a reading which constitutes them as a coherent unified body. He sees a progressive evolution from the early pieces (the auto-biographic works of an immature writer) to the later works which although still auto-biographic, articulate a more mature vision that is no longer simply personal. The study is informed by the supposition that the playwright reveals himself in his work. Mottram's essay on *Lie of the Mind* in the collection is very significant. The critic believes that the major strength of the play is its "structural integrity". He remarks that the male characters in *Lie of the Mind* cause pain and rend the fabric of family life. In the author's work, for the first time Mottram finds a suggestion that "ingrained male-hate and violence might be healed". In order to clarify his assertions Mottram devotes a segment of his essay to an inventory in the form of a chart which specifies inter connections between actors, stage directions and language.

Another commendable as well as useful introduction to Shepard's works is *Sam Shepard : Life and work of an American Dreamer*<sup>26</sup> by Ellen

Oumano. She integrates effectively and efficiently biographical details with incidents that occasioned respective plays.

Every method of interpretation has its peculiar assumptions. As Santayana observed "each sort of net drawn through the same sea catches a different sort of fish"<sup>27</sup> (*George Santayana*.40). In the case of Shepard, as General Weales suggests, reviewers have found it too congenial to handle plays by "talking about what they are a about". This is the least valuable way of approaching Shepard's work. For Shepard is 'wordsmith' who is more interested in exploring the construction of meaning. Words mediate experience in the plays of Sam Shepard.

Michael Earley, in his essay on Sam Shepard, "Of Life Immense in Passion, Pulse and Power," places him in the Transcendental tradition by the side of Emerson and Whitman. The tension between the American wilderness and a new industrial civilization is the fundamental conflict in Sam Shepard. Everywhere in his dramatic world there are characters who resemble Natty Bumppo, Ahab and Huckleberry Finn. Such resonances run deep even though they are most unintentional. His great theme is American expansionism. Like Whitman of the Transcendentalist tradition, Shepard too takes an unmediated delight in language as a means of imaginative

freedom. When Shepard says that “the power of words for me is not so much in the delineation of a character’s social circumstances as it is in the capacity to evoke visions in the eyes of the audience” he connects himself with Emerson’s notion that “words are also action and actions are a kind of words”<sup>28</sup> (Michale Earley.130).

Shepard believed that words possess the power to change the chemistry of our consciousness and they retain the potential of making leaps into the unknown. This essential transcendental belief in the power of language to transform and take us to a higher plane links Emerson with Whitman and Whitman with Shepard. The range and variety of the American idiom that Shepard uses, his delight in the vernacular, cant and slang, the lyricism that could compose a language of the mind, body and soul, the majestic and visual values that could be summed up through the word are very much like the ones used by Whitman in his ‘Song of Myself’. This is too evident when we examine the continuous monologue in *The Tooth of Crime*. The conflict of the play lives and dies in the field of language.

Shepard’s final link with the Nineteenth Century American literature, is his recourse to mythic impulses. At one level, the reading of myth in his plays is quite classical: the fertility myth of the corn King, the myth of Oedipus, the myth of Daedalus and Icarus—he has a great range of

mythical pre-occupations. The theatre experience exists in the space between what is there in the performing space and what is not there. The realm of myth is the spectator's imagination.

Ann Wilson also, in her article, "Great Expectations: Language and the Problem of Presence in Sam Shepard's writing"<sup>29</sup> (*Ann Wilson*.136) places Shepard in the tradition of Emerson and Whitman. The Transcendentalist yearns for the union of the self and the over-soul. Shepard shares the Transcendentalists yearning for a merger of the signifier and the signification. It is in response to the theological impulse which lies embedded in the Puritan tradition of America that Shepard searches for the spiritual world behind the physical and the material. In that sense, the plays of Shepard are allegories or fictiional representations of the true nature of the people, the society and America at large.

My intention in the dissertation is to focus on the plays of Shepard as theatrical pieces subscribing to the mode of allegory, devoid of the evenlgeical sense associated with it in the Puritan period. I have based my study on the important plays like *Angel City*, *The Tooth of Crime*, *True West*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child*, *Operation Sidewinder*, *States of Shock* and *Geography of a Horse-Dreamer*.

The first chapter "American Theatrical Tradition and Sam Shepard", I have traced the origin and development of the American Theatre up to the Off-Off Broadway. Since it was Puritanism that shaped the culture and tradition of America, drama which was supposed to be emotional, and of the earth, earthy, had only a marginal importance at the beginning. The Puritans had always frowned upon the theatre. To them, the purpose of any art was the glorification of God. Life was a big allegory and the struggle for the soul between God and Satan was its theme. Every happening in the world, they believed to be the direct working out of God's will. This evangelical tradition seemed to promote the allegorical mode in the American theatre because it appeared to be the most handy device to mediate between the physical and the metaphysical. The allegory becomes an extended metaphor and at times a symbol expressing the mysterious connection between two ideas. This slant for the symbolic or the allegoric (which is conscious symbolism) has made the American reject everything explicit in literature and indulge in a sort of double meaning. From the plane of spiritual struggle, drama moved to realism, social satire, social protest. Existentialism, with its sense of absurdity, also entered into the realm of drama. Modern playwrights like Albee wrote allegories of human isolation, the tragic gap between man's environment and his inner being. Before Albee,

the playwrights known as the trio of the American Theatre, Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, "with a hanker after the higher" and searching after meaning and value, treaded the same path. Sam Shepard, one of the most modern of the American playwrights, also shares the same puritan inclination to morality, the feel for the inward virtues and the ethical imagination for positive values, which he evinces through visual images, metaphors and mythical orientation of events. In this sense, Shepard's plays are "nostalgic"<sup>30</sup> (*Stambolin*.81) as Stambolin has pointed out, nostalgic Stambolin of the firm convictions and conventions of a bye-gone age.

The Second Chapter "Allegory as a Literary Mode" is about allegory as a narrative technique having different forms, as the fable, the parable, and the exemplum. In all these forms a coherent set of circumstances which signify a second order of correlated meanings, is present. The archetypal, moralistic, mythical and spiritual strains of imagination integrate themselves in this mode. Allegory is also an instrument for social and political satire. Myths also function as allegories because they too very often contain a lesson, the Kernal of meaning concealed within a shell of fiction. The myth of Demeter and Proserpine may be read as an allegory of human immortality and perhaps as rebirth after death.

To the Europeans, Allegory is Greek in origin as M.H. Abrams notes in his *Glossary of Literary Terms*. The evolution of this mode in English and American literature has been traced in the second chapter. The implicit meanings of the allegorical work, are made explicit by means of figures of speech like metaphor, images and irony.

In Chapter III "Allegory as Satire," my endeavour has been to present an over-view of the major plays of Sam Shepard as allegoreis with satirical intentions. The chapter deals with the elements of political and personal satire in the major plays of Sam Shepard. Satire is one of the oldest literary modes used in Greece and Rome as an instrument for social criticism and the eradication of vices. In England, Chaucer the father of English poetry also made use of the satire for the same purpose. Except for the royalty and the nobles on the one hand and the dregs of the people on the other he painted almost the whole English nation in his "Canterbury Tales" He has recourse to Satire and allegory in his poem. Wife of Bath, who is indubitably the most vigorous of Chaucer's creation, is the essence of satire against women. The monk, the Frair and the Prioress are ridiculed as misrepresentations of religion.

In the Age of Reason, Alexander Pope wrote 'Rape of the Lock' a mock-heroic satire to satirise the superficialities of an aristocratic society.

John Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel" is a political allegory on the political manoeuvrings in England at the time of Restoration. Similarly *Gulliver's Travels* is a powerful satire on human beings and institutions. *Animal Farm* is a satire on the political scenario of Russia when Stalin wielded supreme power. T.S. Eliot's *Wasteland* and W.H. Auden's *Unknown Citizen* are satires in the sense that they scathingly criticize the spiritual degeneracy of the human nature and the loss of individual identity in the modern mass society.

In America, even the earliest of the dramatists made the theatre a venue to project their moral consciousness. *All My Sons*, by Arthur Miller, is a powerful indictment against moral vulnerability. Miller draws the dismal picture of the post-modern America where things are falling apart. Sam Shepard's *Angel City* is a spectacular satire on the film city of Hollywood and the big-business of the film industry flourishing there, with all its attendant evils. The play is heavy with contempt for Los Angeles, the dream factory. Here, in this city of Los Angeles, protection is offered only by money. Innocent individuals are caught victims by the magic of the dream machine which produces an alienating effect upon the perception of reality. In *The Tooth of Crime*, Hoss and Crow are any rival pair in American life in a savage state of competition for domination. The

play is powerful as a satire on the dirty power-game. In *Curse of the Starving Class*, we find how a family is hustled out of their farm when the traditional agrarian way of life was destroyed. Similarly, In *Operation sidewinder* ,the misalignment between technology and primitive environment has been high-lighted.

In *Buried Child* Shepard presents the unhinged world of the American society where paternal authority is persistantly questioned, where the individual feels homeless and alienated, where one cannot feel one's identity.

There is a strange historicity about his plays. "The pity that is War" is the theme of *States of Shock* which was written against America's gulf-war of 1991.

Satire as a confessional mode has been exploited in his plays *Angel City*, *The Tooth of Crime* and *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*. The alienation experienced by the Shaman- like artist in these plays, is exactly what was experienced by Shepard while living in England. In many of his plays he transforms the personal experiences into those of the public. Many of the father-figures in his plays are patterned after his own father who appeared drunken, violent and irresponsible; and contributed not a little to spoil the harmony at home. The relationship between his father and himself was

never set right till the end. Ellen Oumano presents an account of the inter-relation between the incidents in the life of Shepard and his plays.

Another personal experience which Shepard allegorises is the artist's pursuit of the golden dream. The worst tragedy that can befall an artist is when the consumerist society imposes its procrastean measures upon him. As an allegorist, using the mode of satire, Sam Shepard criticises evils of all sorts, \_\_\_personal, social and political\_\_\_ inviting the attention of all concerned.

In Chapter IV, titled "Allegory as Myth, Images and Irony" my attempt is to show that the myth, allegory, image nexus is ever operative in the plays of Sam Shepard. "Myths are allegories of goings on in the universe around us as K.K. Rutheun points out in his book *Myth : The Critical Idiom* that Myth "originates in some sort of word play, an image, for instance. It is also metaphorical. Irony is a by-product of the metaphorical delineation and interpretation of the image . It acquaints us with the opposite state of affairs depicted by the myth In *Buried Child*, a play of home-coming, is a play about losses, from the angle of Shelley. She loses her home, her hopes and her dreams.

I have also examined the mythical orientation in the plays *Buried Child*, *The Tooth of Crime*, *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* and *Icarsu's Mother*,

so as to analyse the allegorical and ironical implications in them. *The Tooth of Crime* is a play that works as a variation on the myth of the dying god who dies only to make a more powerful return. A similar structure of power-game is witnessed in the Greek myth of Cronos. The ruling monarch is ever under the threat of an ouster and the tenure of reign is no longer a bed of roses for him.

The Biblical story of Cain and Abel is the underlying myth in *True West*. No wonder, the West is not the legendary west of peace, promises and plenty. In *Mad Dog Blues* the orphean quest is given an ironical twist and delineated. The treasure they hunt after and chance upon, reveals itself to be a bundle of bottle-lids. In *Geography of a Horse-Dreamer* the mythological paradigm of Philoctectus who is used only as a means to an end, is presented. Cody is the unfortunate victim. In *Cowboy Mouth*, cavale tries to make slim the Messaiah of Pop-music, who would represent the love, hate, agonies and ecstasies of the common people. She wants to canonize him to be "the Jesus with a cow-boy mouth" But Slim refuses to accept the cross. Cody and Slim are, ironically, artists who are entrapped by virtue of their vision and the selfishness of the society.

Icarus is another mythical figure who conceives the potential for fabulous success as well as the possibility of failure. The outward failure of

the protagonist is compensated by the dignity and greatness of his character. The memory of the lost hero remains as a perennial source of inspiration for the future adventurers. Hackamore in *Seduced* and the Pilot in *Icarsu's Mother* are such ego-centric artists who crash-landed into the "magnanimity of suicide".

The organisation of this dissertation is simple. All interpretation is a kind of naming. While reading Sam Shepard, one of the modernist writers in American drama, one cannot help experiencing nostalgia about the American past. His very obvious links with the Transcendentalists like Emerson and Whitman who hankered after a higher truth, made me associate Shepard too with the Puritan tradition of which allegory is an in-built aspect. The open-ended device came handy to Shepard who wanted to make his plays "open-ended structures". The allegorical disposition enabled Shepard to effect the union of the signifier and significatin so that he could make leaps into the unchartered ocean of ever new experiences and it becomes a sort of revelation to the readers of Sam Shepard.

In the plays of Sam Shepard, the themes are very simple. They are, generally, taken from the daily chore of domestic and social life. But, the simplicity of the themes is deceptive as the artist can never remain detached from the social milieu and immune to the issues of the community.

Naturally, Shepard develops a kind of social and moral consciousness which he expresses through methods of sophistication. It is true, that the words of a writer are based on the small 'visible' things. But the, artist extends his sense down to the infinite deeps of the invisible. When Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, he himself said that the book was based on a man, a whale and a ship. But, the moral bearings of the book surfaced forth in no time and manifested themselves too obviously to any reader. He himself had a feeling at the time of writing the book, as he confessed later, that "the whole book, was susceptible to an allegorical construction". Every artist has such a pragmatic intention, consciously or unconsciously. The allegorical approach, I am convinced, would help to investigate ideas projected in the plays of Shepard, that are socially, politically and morally significant. The stories are only the soil out of which these thoughts spring.

# THE AMERICAN THEATRICAL TRADITION AND SAM SHEPARD

Lalitha.P.R “Allegory in the plays of sam shepard ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter II

### THE AMERICAN THEATRICAL TRADITION AND SAM SHEPARD

Of all literary arts, drama is the most social, the one most immediately responsive to the context from which it emerges. It reflects the complex systems of values and ambitions, focuses on a range of commitments and reveals a variety of concerns; attitudes and activities. Intertwined with the habit of thought and existential pattern of a particular people, at a particular time, in a particular place it becomes at once an idiom of expression and an archeological evidence of the history of the times. Thus we tend to think of the theatre as a part of the culture of a country. The failure to produce a great theatre, is looked upon as the measure of failure of a culture. In the standard history of American literature, drama is accorded only a marginal position and has been treated with casual disregard.

America never had a theatre like the one that existed in Athens in the fifth century B.C or that in London in the sixteenth century or that in

Paris in the mid seventeenth century. The novelists early told their tales and the poets sang their songs but those who might have written great drama were mute. The unique factor that led the Greek, the English and the French to express themselves fully and greatly in drama was absent in America. The reasons for it may be attributed to the accidental, historical circumstances. America was a wilderness to be tamed first, then it became a colony, not a country. A country has its identify and culture. The pioneer group of settlers, the Puritans, frowned upon the theatre and considered it as an evil influence. In fact, a law against it was written into the constitution when freedom was won.

As Prof. Hudson Long points out in his hook '*The American Tradition in Literature*', Puritanism as a religious movement, had played a significant role in the history of the United States. The word 'Puritan' is formed from the Latin 'Puritas' which means 'purity'. The Puritans were the natural products of the Reformation which brought in its wake a high sense of nationalism. The movement evinced a desire for cultural and linguistic freedom which swept Europe in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. The Church of England established by Henry VIII and strengthened by Elizabeth I, his daughter, in whose time the 39 Articles were issued (1571), however, appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury as its religious head. The

Prayer Book, the official Protestant Book of common prayer, was drawn up by Archbishop Cranmer in 1549. The Church of England, however, was only a compromise between the rejected Roman Catholicism and the nationalistic Puritanism and it did not please the Calvinistic Puritans. This struggle reached a crisis - situation in the times of Charles I (1628-1642) and his Archbishop Laud, whose sympathies for the Roman Catholics angered the Puritans like John Milton whose 'Lycidas' is a condemnation of the Anglican church. The civil war (1638-1642) and the execution of King Charles I made enemies out of the Puritans and the King's supporters. After the Restoration (1660) the Puritans were persecuted by the civic authorities and so they left England to settle in America where the Mayflower expedition had already seen them settled in New England.

In America, they established a congregationalist church in close association with their political leaders. Heretics and dissidents were not accepted by them. Religion was the basis of the society. Church ministers were appointed by ability rather than by official patronage. They attached importance to the individual conscience in matters of worship; and the colonies in New England were founded to provide freedom of worship that was denied to them in old England. In due course, however, they grew up to deny liberty of conscience and of worship to their members. The only

official Church was the congregationalist church and dissidents were severely punished. Thus, arose an ironical situation in the Puritan history: the Puritans who had left their old homes in England to protect their freedom of faith worship denied the same privilege to the members who joined their sect later and insisted upon their conformity to the beaten-track.

Robert Spiller in his *Cycle of American Literature* maintains that the Puritans believed in the Bible as the source of all authority, accepted the 'inner light' as the source of understanding and maintained a rigid faith in hard-work and duty. They were mostly influenced by the French religious reformer Jean Calvin whose belief in 'Predestination' and 'Grace', they fully accepted. According to the theory of 'Elections' or 'Grace', God's ways are unknown to man. Men only have to work hard and pray hopefully, but, which souls are to be saved and whose to be condemned is not decided by one's devotion to God and the holiness of one's life, but by God himself, although purity of thought and action is important. Hence, all life was a stage for the constant struggle between the forces of good (God) and the forces of evil (Satan). Life was a drama in which everything was White or Black with no intermediate colours. Life was a big allegory and the struggle for the soul between God and Satan was its theme.

All the important types of colonial writings bear the stamp of Puritanism. The bulk of the prose of this period, consisted of sermons, theological writings and autobiographies. The Puritans could conceive of no better purpose for literature than the glorification of God. Literature became a hand-maid to theology. Even poetry did not soar into the realm of imagination. The poems of Anne Bradstreet of the Colonial Period, reflect the Puritan tenets like the transient nature of life and the need of subordinating the body to the spirit. In 'Day of Doom' Michael Wigglesworth gives a crude version of the Calvinistic doctrine to terrify the wicked. A considerable slice of the bulk of the Puritan writing came from the pen of the Mather family. Richard Mather, Increase Mather and Cotton Mather, in the order of succession, were typical representatives of the enlightened Puritans. The religious ardour of the Puritans and the trend of contemporary thought are found mirrored in the writings of the Mathers. Richard Mather was a prominent theologian and pastor at Dorchester. He wrote theological treatises like "Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed" and "A Platform of Church Discipline". Increase Mather, the son of Richard Mather was for some time, President of Harvard. He was a man of prodigious learning and had aired out his views in clear, lucid and direct style about many of the pertinent issues of the contemporary society, like inoculation

and cases of conscience concerning evil spirit. Cotton Mather, the son of Increase Mather is a prolific writer whose indefatigable works are on theology and history. His magnum opus *The Ecclesiastical History of New England* was written after the notorious Salem witchcraft - trial, when the public protest tended to weaken the power of the clergy. He traces the history of New England, revealing the special goodness of God, when people had kept to strict observance of religion and morality. His *Essays to Do Good* is not merely a collection of pious utterances by the belief and convictions of a man who was interested in doing good to humanity. Cotton Mather shows himself as having ideas on religion for broader than that of his time.

The dominant motive of the Puritan, was to establish in the Colonies a Church Government and a way of living in confirmation with their cherished beliefs. The Puritan influence had never been stifling to culture and refinement. As Prof. Hudson Long states in his introduction to *American Tradition in Literature*, "in their (Puritans') influence on American life there is much more to bless than to condemn"<sup>31</sup> (Mary S. David.13)

Colonial literature is deficient in fiction because Puritanism was uncompromisingly hostile to anything that was 'false'. The chief concern of the Puritan being the saving of souls, it was unthinkable that the early

American writers should give much thought to the composition of imaginative literature. By about the eighteenth century, circulating libraries were providing young ladies with romances. The newspapers which had marked their origin in the eighteenth century also published stories of adventure and romance in serials.

The end of the colonial period did not mark the end of Puritanism in America. Puritanism remained as one of the most seminal influences shaping the life and literature of the country. As Prof. Clarenie A. Brown and John T. Flanagan have pointed out in their book *An Introduction to American Literature* "the Puritan standing for the lit lamp and the 'loins girt' has left on our literature, the impress of his strong moral sense, of his emphasis on the drama of the inner life and of his conviction that spiritual beauties are infinitely the greatest"<sup>32</sup> ( *Mary S. David*.14) One of the chief problems, in the study of any literature, is to understand the relationship existing between that literature and the social milieu in which it was produced.

American Puritanism is an enhancement of Calvin's theological system, which is based on the complete sovereignty of God and the ultimate inability of man to comprehend His true nature. Yet, since man's highest

duty is to attain knowledge of god and of himself, he must constantly strive through the lessons of Nature and the revealed word of God in the Bible to achieve some measure of understanding.

The Puritan believed that every happening in the world was a direct working out of His purpose in the world. This is almost akin to the medieval habit of regarding even casual events of the day as signs, omens and portents of God's will. Thus, violent storms, floods, droughts, crop failures and epidemics were regarded as sure signs of disfavour and they prompted ever deeper soul - searching for the hidden sins that had brought on this calamity. Looking upon the natural phenomena as clear hints of a more transcendental order or as intimations of immortality, which help the individual to pierce through the veil of mystery, came to persist in American literature right from the colonial period itself. The Romantics saw the world in a grain of sand and Heaven in a wild flower and now and again they bring eternity into focus, as it were, in a phrase of utmost clarity. They speak of the slant of light on a winter day, the still brilliance of a summer noon, the sound of the wind before the rain\_\_and we share the shock of insight. This, creatively evocative tendency to compel the extension of meaning in a plurality of extra - literary dimensions over which the reader's consciousness wields the ultimate sovereignty, is the basis of symbolism or

allegory in any literature. The greatest theme of literature is, after all, a search for meaning other than literary.

Work was one of the cardinal puritan virtues. Hard work and unremitting toil in a country with natural resources as existed in abundance in the New World, very often made a man and his many sons comparatively well off in a very short period. The Puritan was indeed baffled by a strange paradox, he must toil mightily for the glory of God, humbly accept riches that resulted from it and yet continue to regard this world as nothing more than "a vale of tears," through which a sinner must pass on his way to Heaven. Human psychology is unsuited to remaining for so long, in such a delicate state of balance. The unlimited opportunities for farming, trade and commerce soon tipped the scale in favour of material things. Today, America takes pride in being the most idealistic nation in the world and takes even greater pride in her astounding material success. The interaction of idealism and opportunity, constitutes an almost sure formula for wealth and power. The Puritan kept an eye on the next world but the other eye was kept lustily on the enterprises of this world. It is this heritage of the Puritan, that accounts for much in the American combination of the visionary and the pragmatic, the righteous and the profitable. America became the "land of plenty" and the "land of promise", a cornucopia of well-being and

freedom. The theme of promise has been America's "great myth" and metaphysics. With this metaphysics of secular promise America evolved a civilization - pattern of her own. The American uniqueness derives from its special blend of geographical, historical, ethnic, religious and linguistic strains. America has been favoured by geography and historical circumstances. She has been blessed with a richness of resources as few other nations, the stretch of the Atlantic and the Pacific enabled America to develop in her formative years, far from the war and dynastic struggles of other nations. The divinities of the land and water, watched over America's destinies. Self-reliance, courage, alertness, obstinate endurance, friendliness, a willingness to take chances and an organising capacity and a sharp and shrewd aggressiveness are some of the traits that emerged from the continuous cycles of land settlement. The Americans consider themselves the history - chosen guardians of the values of freedom and abundance. The founders of the American plantations, regarded themselves as the chosen of God, divinely appointed to safeguard the moral imperatives.

Mary S. David in her book *A Short History of American Literature* speaks about the great changes American Literature underwent in the eighteenth century. The strain of colonising was over by that time. A conducive atmosphere for the flourishing of Belles letters was prevailing

in America. Religion was becoming broader. The Americans were beginning to think of themselves as one people. The new national consciousness was of a fierce nature. It was an age of quantum leaps in every field as far as America was concerned. They wanted to liberate their literature from the yoke of the British tradition and thereby to enable it to assert its independence. The facilities for travel and communication improved. The postal-system was introduced in the country. A number of periodicals and journals sprang up. Man's conceptions of the world and God were fast changing. Newtonian ideas were becoming immensely popular, in the light of which even religion was to be recast. The Harvard and the Yale Universities came to be established and they in their turn, accelerated the pace of the Age of Reason. Enlightenment, naturally, saw the weakening of the hold of religion on the people. While many grew lax and liberal in their outlook on religion, there were a few who were daringly outspoken in their criticism of the established Church. Thomas Paine's *"Age of Reason"* is the supreme example of this. It is a splendid exposition of the claims of the faculty of "Reason". In his exaltation of reason, Paine was a typical child of his age. He believed in a benevolent God but not in an established church and hence, he openly declared "My own mind is my own church". A master of persuasion, he always had a strong purpose in writing. The force, and

directness of his appeals to reason and emotion made him the foremost propagandist-agitator of his time. His *Common Sense* is a daring attack on the British crown and an eloquent plea for revolt. It remains one of the most interesting pieces of propagand a literature ever penned. Paine in this work, ridiculed hereditary monarchy and proclaimed "that one honest man was worth more to society than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived"<sup>33</sup> (*Mary S. David*.38) Benjamin Franklin, who was an enigmatic mixture of the idealist and the realist, was swiftian in the superb manner of his wielding the weapon of irony. In his brilliant satire "Rules by which a Great Empire May be Reduced to a Small one" he diagnosed the political situation and brought home to the British Government the thousand ways in which it forfeited the loyalty of the people of America. In the eighteenth century America, literature turned into an effective instrument in the hands of the politicians, with which they sought to gain their ends.

In her book, Mary David gives a brilliant account of the theatrical performances in America, in the eighteenth century. The theatre was something new to them. Staging of plays had been prohibited by the colonists during the years of struggle for independence. In the mid-eighteenth century, very slight and feeble attempts were made at Charleston, Williamsburg and Virginia to produce plays in the playhouses. But these were English plays,

not indigenous. In fact, in Williamsburg a dramatic troupe from London, under the name of an American Company stayed alive till 1800. In 1767 it presented the first native tragedy *The Prince of Parthia* by Thomas Godfrey. The "Boston Censorship" forbade dramatic activity in the city for many more years to come. A prejudice against plays on moral grounds, a lingering feeling among the middle-class folk that stage productions were frivolous and wasteful of precious time, helped retard theatrical progress.

During the years of the Revolution, that is, in the sixties and seventies of the 18th century, when the propaganda purpose predominated literature, voices of indignation urging the colonists into action and calling for a complete rout of the British forces, were allowed to be heard in the drama. American drama proper was born amid the din and bustle of political revolution and was hardly noticed at the time of its birth. The civil war which shook the very vitals of the country, was yet another landmark in the history of the American Theatre. Themes of wide interest and contemporary significance found their way into the dramatic literature during this time. Dion Boucicault presented a true picture of the social milieu teeming with slavery and race problem in his *Octoroon* (1859) Clyde Fitch in *The City* exposed through his characters, the magnitude of corruption in the lives of public officials. As early as 1881 Bronson Howard

a young idealist, dealt with the struggle of capital and labour. Edward Sheldon's play *The Nigger* (1910) came to grips with the race question as in *Octoroon*. The play is about an ambitious southern politician who on the eve of success, learns that he has negro-blood in his veins. *The Boss* (1911) was concerned with the rising trend toward Party Boss rule. Edward Sheldon was a playwright who revealed realistic tendencies in his plays.

Drama in America, was always incapable of keeping pace with the progress in other branches of literature. By the nineteenth century, the Puritan prejudice against theatre had completely vanished. But the plays which had been produced, seldom transcended mediocrity.

The sole figure among the early twentieth century dramatists, who held out a promise for the future, was William Vaughn Moody. His work related to a central problem which persisted as a major theme in every period of American expression. His principal themes were the conflict between Puritanism and passion, the search for truth, the sense of sin and its destructive power upon freedom and expression of the human soul. Very often, the sense of sin sprang from hereditary inhibitions or prohibitions which bear little or no relation to truth and justice. It is a clue to American behaviour and an evidence of the persistence of the puritan inheritance, the Calvinistic conception of the Original Sin and a total depravity of

mankind. These spiritual concerns have engaged the profoundest literary efforts of the writers so diverse as Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman who were directly influenced by Transcendentalism. There is a pervasive moralism fertilised by the puritan respect for the life of the mind in all the distinguished writers of the American Renaissance. In *Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne depicted the struggle between the Good and the Evil and the ultimate triumph of the Good. There is then the moral at the end, for everyman, to be true to himself and to others. The characters and incidents assume a luxuriance of meaning, more magnificent than the one to one allegorical equation of a character to a pervasive state of mind. Similarly, Emerson's preposition that "every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact" is the basis upon which Melville could build his cunningly linked analogies in *Moby Dick*. Melville, as Hawthorne, is concerned with the spiritual significances, that lie behind what Ahab called "the paste-board masks of appearance". Ishmale, the narrator in *Moby Dick* looks upon the white whale as a symbol, a symbol of infinitely multiple significance beyond the full comprehension of any man. Thus every new metaphysics of America has its theological and intellectual materials from the puritan past. Allegory seems to be the most handy device to mediate between passion and reason and the physical and the metaphysical because it is implicit in religion and

the religious rituals. From giving a visible form to a conception or substituting a figure for a living idea, allegory grows into an extended metaphor with symbolic implications, expressing a mysterious connection between two ideas. This slant for the symbolic, has made the Americans refuse everything explicit and always indulge in a sort of double meaning.

Coming back to William Vaughn Moody\_\_\_in his two verse plays *The Great Divide* and *The Faith Healer*, he deals with the sense of sin as a Puritanical inhibition. *The Great Divide* is the story of a girl from New England, who on a western trip had to submit to one in order to save herself from the others, to the best of the three men who attempted to attack her. Ghent falls in love with her and she with him. But she feels that she must first cleanse herself with abnegation.

*The Faith-Healer* has Michaelis, a mystic with a mission from a hermitage as the protagonist. He has healed Mary Beeler who is the invalid aunt of Rhoda, a young girl. In the midst of his work of healing, he discovers his love for Rhoda to whom sex has meant only sin. The sense of guilt causes Michaelis to lose his power of healing.

The romantic and the realistic tendencies are blended in his art which reaches out to the symbolic drama of the spiritual struggle. Endowed by the

complexities of life in the twentieth century, the same convictions later found a more masterful statement in the dramatic symbolism of Eugene O'Neill. The American writers are all entranced by what Moody called "a mystical hanker after something higher"<sup>34</sup> (Robert E. Spiller. 1015). The philosophical significance of Moody's plays is greater than their practical merits on the stage. Puritanism as a movement, expired in the eighteenth century but the spirit of Puritanism did not become extinct.

In 1905 George Pierce Baker, Professor of Drama, then at Harvard, set up *47 Workshop* for the benefit of the aspiring young writers. This sparked off several such ventures like the Wisconsin Players, Chicago Little Theatre and the Provincetown players. They came to be called Little Theatres. What the Little Theatres had accomplished was the very discovery of an audience for a kind of play which was supposed to have none before. As these developments were taking place in the American theatrical front, the World War I was brewing.

As has been observed by Robert Spiller, since about 1915 the most conspicuous tendencies in American drama have been toward realism, social satire and social protest. Stimulated by the Experimental European and continental theatres, American drama gradually became a forum for social commentary. It came to have a sure grasp of psychological and

spiritual realities. The modern theatres experimented with diverse subjects relating to politics, economics, psychology and philosophy. Major theories concerning the nature and destiny of man, came to be embodied in plays. The philosophy of Naturalism that man's life is shaped entirely by his social and physical environment is made use of by Isben, Chekhov and Hauptmann. Brecht's characters, constantly engaged in economic warfare, dramatize the world view of Marx. Fabian-socialism, belief in progress, laissez-faire economics and Victorian morality, are some of the key subjects of the plays of Shaw. The existential belief that man is an absurd creature attempting to make sense out of the meaninglessness of life, finds expression in the plays of Ionesco, Sartre and Camus.

Non-commercial art-theatres of America, testified to the widespread conviction that a new drama should be brought into being. Maxwell Anderson's *What Price Glory?* and Stalling's *They knew What They Wanted* contain elements of satire directed against materialism and the gospel of success. *The Street Scene* by Elmer Rice is a sympathetic melodrama about life in the slums. But this kind of revolutionary theatre of social criticism, as a recognisable entity, rapidly declined and dissolved. Topicality imposes limitations even though it is, in itself and to a certain extent, a virtue. The

brightly contemporary is very often transitory and has no appeal for the future.

When the modern drama was born in America, it assumed a quality of inward search and exploratory nature. Its divergent lines of force have re-oriented themselves towards a new symbolic drama. The audiences were also prepared to abandon the safe conventionality in the lay out of the drama and showed a willingness to accept fantasy, symbolism, expressionism and other derivations from the literal. The symbolism employed by these dramatists, at times, approaches the simple and directly translatable allegory of the old morality plays.

The twentieth century has been variously described as an age of nightmare, an age of broken values, an age in which man cut off from all sources of vitality, has become rootless and disintegrated. Loss of faith in traditional values has alienated him from the world around him. Pressures of a standardised and regimented society have forced him to live at different levels of identity, resulting in tensions, which seem to threaten his very entity as a human being. This chaotic flux of life, charged with spiritual loneliness and suffering, necessitated the modern thinkers and writers to embark on a persistent quest for positives \_\_\_ the quest for meaning that would impart

some kind of order or pattern to their lives. The angst and anguish experienced by the American writers of the twentieth century which forced them to take on meaningful quests, has been vividly described by Darshan Singh Maini in his book *The Spirit of American Literature*.

The American dramatists of the twentieth century have been directly committed to the delineation of the spiritual struggle of man, his search for the positive values and his descent into the dark immensities of his own heart. The plunge into the abyss of the self as recorded by the dramatists which, is no less heroic or meaningful than the battle fought by the soldiers on the field, has effected a certain transcendental extension of the dramatic frontier into the symbolic. Thus the American drama becomes the allegoric chronicle of the human struggle for survival and prevalence, for identity and purpose, for meaning and promise.

Eugene O' Neill (1888-1953), undoubtedly is the greatest name in American drama. Certainly no other significant playwright has so much persisted in the conviction that "if drama is to achieve great excellence it must deal with mans' relation to God or if one prefers, with his relation to forces outside himself"<sup>35</sup>(Robert E. Spiller.1249).

O'Neill always believed that "the tragedy of life is what makes it worthwhile"<sup>36</sup> (*Jagdish Chander*.140) That he was keenly aware of his responsibilities as a tragic artist is evident from the following statement he made to George Jean Nathan.

"The playwright of today must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it - the death of the old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfactory new one for the surviving primitive religious instinct to find a meaning for life in, and comfort its fears of death with. It seems to me that any one trying to do big work, nowadays must have this big subject behind all the little subjects of his plays and novels or he is scribbling round the surface of things"<sup>37</sup> (*Jagdish Chander*.140).

O'Neill was deeply conscious of the predicament of man \_\_ how he was surrounded by forces that he could neither comprehend nor manipulate, how he made futile attempts to reach out to something higher than himself and the sense of anguish he endured while wandering alone in a spiritually sterile universe. Obsessed as he was with the thought of projecting the inner life and metaphysical ideas, he searched relentlessly for theatrical means which could effectively transit to the audience his personal vision. One after

another he experimented with different modes of drama. He wanted to create " a new language for the theatre"<sup>38</sup> (Mary S.David.373). In his *Bound East for Cardiff* and *Beyond the Horizon*, he introduced naturalism on the stage. He fused naturalistic details with symbolist mood, suggestiveness and images. Taking his lessons from strindberg he made use of Expressionism as well in his plays. He ransacked the repertory of the Greek drama and drew from it such conventions as the chorus, the trilogy and the asides as suited to his purpose. With their impassioned search for meaning in life, O'Neills' plays brought to the American theatre a spaciousness that was known only on the Greek stage.

Tennessee Williams wrote in the shadow of O'Neill. To the casual playgoer or reader, Williams' plays appear unpleasant. Because, he has a tragic vision that is faithful to the modern spirit of unrelieved suffering or inescapable disaster. Very effectively, he evokes an atmosphere and recreates a state of mind. He reveals the inner essence of each of his characters who are terribly disturbed. As Williams himself had confessed "..... I am a deeply disturbed person and I write about disturbed people"<sup>39</sup>(Francis Donahue.211). According to him "Great theatre is the highest and purest form of religion and should be fostered and respected because it is concerned with truth"<sup>40</sup>(Francis Donahue.212). "Williams lacked

the ability to create the clash of wills so basic to modern dramatic tension. His heroes lacked virtues as honesty, love and honour. A genuine conflict of good and evil is not to be detected in his plays even though he claimed that his plays were basically concerned with morality. William's plays are psychological tragedies, "plays in the tragic tradition" as he himself described them. The integrated tragic view of life and the inevitability of frustration and defeat also are part of the Puritan tradition to which every American is an heir. As Arthur Miller has perceptively noted once, most of the ambitious plays written by American dramatists can just be reduced to one theme: the theme of despair and frustration. Commenting upon this as inexorable human destiny Miller said, "Try as he will, the individual is doomed to frustration when once he gains a consciousness of his own identity"<sup>41</sup> (*Francis Donahue*. 218).

Since his professed dramatic intention is the revelation of the inner truth, Williams resorts to the expressionistic and other unconventional techniques. To him as to a Puritan, the everyday appearance of a thing or person is a mask to be torn aside in order to reveal its or his true character. Such unconventional devices are \_\_ the use of lighting effects, music and the symbols. His symbols bordering very near to the religious allegory, heighten the dramatic effect. The glass figurines which Laura collects

represent her own self odd, cute and fragile. The dark and narrow alley reminds one of the Death-alley. To Amanda, it represents hopeless poverty and confusion. The symbol of the rose in '*Rose Tattoo*,' is for Williams passionate earthy love. In *Summer and Smoke*, Alma regularly carries with her a box of sleeping pills, a symbol of escape. In *Orpheus Descending* the snake-skin jacket worn by Val represents his wild and independent nature. In *Glass Menagerie*, the light that falls on Laura was supposed to have a pristine quality similar to that we see in religious portraits of female saints or madonnas. Thus, an all-pervasive Puritan religiosity throbs through the plays of Tennessee Williams.

Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller are very often linked together as the twin peaks of the American theatre. But they are totally different. They are poles apart in their backgrounds, temperaments and in personality; and also in their creative output. The common source materials serve to illustrate the essential differences between them. A home is a highly ambivalent concept. For Miller, domestic relationships are a means of attaining sincerity that will enable one to live in the community of mankind. Man's social morality is his theme. The struggle to achieve human fulfilment at the expense of animal frustration places immense strain on man and it is

the social and moral effect of this strain that Miller examines in his social plays. Basically, his imagination is ethical. Whereas the plays of Williams belong to a sort of poetic and subjective theatre, wherein he deals with emotionally displaced people. People and their interior world are his concern. On more than one occasion Williams has stated his preference for this 'inner world' of his characters. "I don't deal with social problems, because they are not the problems that move me"<sup>42</sup> (*Francis Donahue*.220).

Miller is a moralist in the Anglo-American tradition who harks back to Puritanism. There has always been a type of mind in Anglo-American literature which is quick to take offence at the slightest hint of social iniquity. Passion for justice, is its distinctive characteristic mark. Dennis Welland is wholly right, when he suggests that Miller's growing up during the Depression in America is the most important factor in determining the nature of his work. It is, as he puts it, "the Depression that gave him his compassionate understanding of the insecurity of man in modern industrial civilization, his deep-rooted belief in social responsibility and the moral earnestness that has occasioned, unsympathetic and often unjust criticism in the age of the affluent society"<sup>43</sup> (*Arthur Miller*.6-7).

Miller came to maturity through the agonies of the Depression and the political turmoils of the forties, when guilt was in the air. The capitalists were accused of responsibility for the economic condition and the imperialists of responsibility for the deteriorated international situations.

Guilt is an inheritance of the Puritan culture. In Puritan theology all mankind was stained with "depravity", the guilt of the original sin through the "fall" of Adam and Eve and thus it was man who created disorder, disharmony and imperfection in God's harmonious and perfect universe with "his fall from grace".

The question of public issues and private conscience is the heart of the matter in the play of Arthur Miller. In *All My Sons* Joe Keller's dastardly and anti-social act of selling defective cylinder-heads to the Air Force is a compulsion forced upon him by his moral vulnerability.

In *The Crucible* the individual, the family, the society, the church and the state are so interlocked to present a challenging test of the protagonists' moral fibre. John Proctor's splendid fight against the theocratic divinity and Mc Carthyism of his day is a testimony of the authenticity of the individual conscience. The play is thus a peep into the "darkest Africa of our society"<sup>44</sup> (Arthur Miller.49), that brought him face

to face with evil as an active condition of life. His indictment and exposure of Mc Carthyism takes an allegorical form.

Sex is looked upon as a sin by Miller but he takes a more humane attitude towards it. Both Willy Loman and Proctor are guilty of marital infidelity but their lapses are lapses of blood than lapses of deliberate will. To many, Arthur Miller is a moralist who wrote with 'a purpose firm' and one who is pre-occupied with the theme of man's complicity with evil in himself and in the world.

Edward Albee who identified himself with the avant-garde theatre brought into focus, with a substantial theatrical force, the pointlessness, absurdity and even the 'depravity' of the human situation. The tragic gap between man's environment and inner being, his growing alienation, his failure to comprehend the fantastic complexities are presented by Albee as the spiritual malaise of man. This outstanding exponent of the avant-garde American drama of the sixties and the seventies of this century, conceives his *Zoo story* as an allegory of human isolation and the absence of contact and communication he suffers from.

A look at the history of the development of American culture and literature convinces us that the most striking and permanent influence has

all along been that of Puritanism and the inwardness of the primary values of life. Pleasure is never spontaneous to the Americans. Life is looked upon as a prolonged search for meaning by them. Belief is an inner experience. Seeking to evaluate that experience, the writers are alternately filled with enthusiasm and melancholy. As regards the stage, each age has produced its own particular kind of theatre. The modern playwright has to express the isolation of man in the Universe, the search after self-hood, the absurdity and meaninglessness of life. The very language he tries to use thwarts his efforts to express his own mind and his essential self. Hence the dramatist translates his sense of life and reality into images, visual metaphors that establish their meanings. It is in a way a going home to the directly translatable allegory of the old morality plays. These images appeal to our imagination rather than to the senses. Hawthorne described the way in which his own imagination worked when he made one of his characters say "Everything you know, has its special meaning, which to the literal meaning is what the soul is to the body"<sup>45</sup> (*F.O.Mathiessan.242*).

The Broadway audiences also were eagerly looking forward for a change. Modern American drama was impelled to move toward a richer, artistic texture. The great playwrights worked not only to resolve problems of substance or subject matter or characterisation but also to settle problems

of form and communication. O'Neill, Rice, Williams, Miller, Albee and Shepard have all contributed to the evolution of a new mode of theatrical expression. It is the ancient mode of allegory now chiselled and polished, to which the satire and the myth have contributed liberally.

There is a vast network of theatres in America, Broadway, then Off Broadway and beyond it Off-Off Broadway and off that even the various underground theatres like the Kinetic theatre, the Ray Gun theatre, the Chance and the Festival theatres. Broadway belongs to the elite. Its initial appeal is snobbish. The producer is the key-figure in the Broadway set-up. One who has, or can find the money becomes a producer in the Broadway. It is the professional playwrights who make Broadway what it is. In the entertainment market, one must consult the market first and one's own taste and intelligence second. These sleek and expensive plays, the so-called 'Broadway Successes' have their structure, habits of mind and feeling, firmly rooted in the market-ruled society.

The Off-Broadway theatre appeared to provide a bridge between Broadway and the strange theatrical world beyond, where 'Happenings' occur. The theatrical impulse, freed from all pre-occupations and traditions, takes any shape the imagination dictates. 'Happenings' are events which put simply, happen. They do not make any literary point. 'A Happening',

normally has no plot, no obvious philosophy and is materialised on an improvisatory fashion. One does not know what is going to happen next. "A modern play rarely has such an improptu basis, for plays are still first written. A Happening is generated in action by a handful of ideas or a flimsily-jotted-down-score of root directions"<sup>46</sup> (*Allan Karprove*.124).

By the mid-twentieth century, New York city's Broadway had a strangle hold on the drama market, and breaking away, Off Broadway was born in the mid-1950s. The Off Broadway theatre was a conscious revolt against the established form of commercial theatre. But it never questioned th basic Broadway assumptions about the nature of theatre. Instead, Off Broadway has tried to put back into the conventional theatre the crucial elements of theatrical taste, honesty in subject matter and technique and a willingness to experiment with new plays and different styles. Off Broadway produced plays in small theatres, before small audiences. In the main, these productions were revivals of drama classics or translations of those European plays, grouped by Martin Esslin as the "Theatre of the Absurd".

The great part of the growth of the Off-Broadway theatre came after World War II. Nearly thirty new theatres opened in the first three, post-war years, ushering in what can be considered Off Broadways' golden age. Audiences hungered for new fare after the lean war years. New European

dramatists, long cut off from American audiences, and new young American writers, who had grown up during the war, provided a supply of new materials. Off Broadway provided the answer to the countless young writers, performers and theatre-technicians as well as to the more sophisticated audience that sought an alternative to the banality of Broadway. The Broadway theatres were grouped into those of less than 199 seats and 200 to 229 seats. The geographical Off-Broadway locations were defined as lying outside the area bounded by Fifth and Ninth Avenues and between 34<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> streets.

The oldest continuing Off-Broadway venture was started by Jose Quintero and Theodore Mann of 'The circle in the Square' with a dream to create simple partnership among director, author and actor. They presented O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* and established it as the undisputed master-piece of American drama. "The Circle in the Square" also set a new standard about in women's physical appearance on the stage. The success the performance of such actresses as Geraldine Page, Salome Jens and Colleen Dewhurst destroyed the image of the commercial stereotype of "a small, pretty, neat girl in tennis clothes".

Like 'Circle in the Square', The Phoenix Theatre' too was created by a collaboration of artistic and business talents. The founders were Norris

Houghton and Edward Humbleton. 'The Broadway Musicals' which staged Brecht's *Three Penny Opera* and 'The Living Theatre' which presented plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, Synge, O'Casey and Chekhov; and 'The New York Shakespeare Festival' which popularised most of the Shakespearean plays, were new ventures in the direction of the Off-Broadway theatre.

The opening of the Off-Broadway Theatre was an economic necessity during the Depression years of the sixties. Run on shoe-string budgets these theatres were labours of love for everyone involved. In the wake of recognition and renown, some dramatists of this group turned to the more lucrative larger media. The surrender of the artists of the Off-Broadway to commercialisation necessitated a new arena for the kind of reckless and untrammelled drama. Under these circumstances the Off-Off Broadway Theatre came to be set up. Ruby Cohn remarks in her book, *New American Dramatists* that the second 'Off' actually means 'against'. She quotes the thought-provoking comment made by Christopher Bigsby on Off-Off Broadway in the same book. "This theatre is actually an assault on the notion that art is artefact produced by a unique sensibility and open to interpretation and evaluation in the conventional sense"<sup>47</sup> (*Ruby Cohn*.6). The impetus for the Off-Off Broadway came from strong personalities in two cafe's and two churches of down-town New York - Joe cino of Cafe'

Cino and Ellen Stewart of Cafe' La Mama, the Reverend Al Carminar of Judson Memorial Church and Ralph Cook of St. Marks-in-the-Bowrie. The most prolific and the longest lasting has been Ellen Stewart's Cafe' La Mama, which since its inception in 1960 has been dedicated to new writers. Among the playwrights who had their works staged in La Mama were Claude Van Italie, Julie Bovasso, Lanford Wilson and Sam Shepard. The wildest experiments of the radical companies had a liberating and expansive effect on the main stream American Theatre. Several of the strongest Off-Off Broadway companies like The La Mama, The Performance Group, the Judson Poet's Theatre, The Chelsea Theatre Centre, The Manhattan Theatre Club, The American Place theatre and The Circle Rep, stood apart from amateurism and careerism; they maintained their commitments to new plays and new production styles. The hundreds of Off-Off Broadway companies meant a many time-over multiplication of the outlets available to new play-wrights. Gerald M. Berkowitz in his book *New Broadway: Theatre Across America* has a very informative chapter on the Off-Off-Broadway and other alternatives.

Traditional Theatre-spectators viewed the new venture as a formless madness. It is an audience-oriented theatre and strictly non-commercial. Coffee houses and Churches supply the premises, heat and

light. Nobody makes a profit. Nobody gets paid. They try anything if they think it is "beautiful", "interesting", "real theatre", or a "challenge". In the first years of its activity The La Mama presented 130 to 175 new plays. In addition, La Mama Experimental Theatre Club built up a corps of actors, designers and directors. Attendance at the Off-Off Broadway is not planned months or weeks in advance. The viewers arrive at the theatre at hours like 9 or 11 P.M. They usually do not know what they are going to see. 'The Village voice' is the chief source of information regarding these performances.

The driving force behind these experiments was the desire to break down the barriers \_\_ physical, rational and emotional \_\_ between the actors and the audience. Most of these plays were played in spaces in which there was no clear distinction between playing and seating arrangement. Attempts were made to incorporate the audience into the world of the play by violating the assumed line between reality and fiction.

Sam Shepard was lucky to have arrived in New York at the right time in the midst of the cultural ferment and theatrical revolution. It was Joyce Aron, a theatrical artist and a friend of his who introduced him to Joe Chaikin and Jacques Levy, both directing at the Open Theatre and Wyn Handman founder of the American Place Theatre. These relationships were

to prove extremely fruitful to everyone concerned. Opportunity banged at Shepard's door when Michaelangelo Antonioni contacted him to write the script for the film 'Zabriski Point'. Though in itself not a success this experience made him heady with the lure of the celluloid tape.

This James Dean - like youth, who was the son of an army officer was not actually cut out for a literary career. Born in 1943 in Port Sheridan, Illinois he grew up as an army brat. He was a jack of all trades, one who had worked as a live-stock assistant, a bus boy and a waiter at Greenwich village Night Club, Village Gate. The Staff of the Village Gate were mostly unemployed actors, directors, artists and musicians. Shepard met Ralph Cook the first producer of his early plays *Cowboys* and *The Rock Garden* at The Theater Genesis. In *Cowboys* he deals with the search for the lost American hero and in *Rock Garden* the decline of the American family. It was the rave review by the 'Village Voice' critic Michael Smith who turned the tide in his favour and brought the audience to see the new drama.

Thus Shepard entered the Experimental Theatre with the ease of a man entering his own living room. The subject proper of Shepard's plays is America.

"The American dream that has been betrayed, the American hero whose quest has become perverted, the American land which has

become un productive and sterile and the American family which no more nurtures its children\_\_ these are Shepard's themes"<sup>48</sup> (*Doris Auerbach.1*).

His fellow-writers unanimously considered Sam Shepard as the most-talented new playwright since Edward Albee. Shepard won the Pulitzer Prize in 1979. What makes Shepard's work peculiarly his own is his use of language. He came into the foreground of American theatre when the written aspects of drama were being downplayed in favour of ritual, performance and the non- verbal. Shepard continued to believe in the real power of the word and brought it back into the theatre. To Shepard, words are "living incantations" and they are also "instruments for penetrating into another world". They are the means by which he can "make leaps into the unknown" and discover what Emily Disckinson called "ourselves behind ourselves concealed". His theatre is a visceral theatre . He speaks to the audience on an emotional level that goes beyond what we usually refer to as 'meaning'. Music has been an integral part of the plays of Shepard. The primary appeal of music may be equated to that of the myth "which speaks to everything at once especially the emotions"<sup>49</sup> (*Sam Shepard.55*).

Shepard is a man of divided loyalties\_\_a musician, an actor and a writer. All three careers have informed one another. Shepard was primarily

a jazz musician who played with a group called the Holy Modal Rounders. Few Shepard plays are without music. He had greater faith in the power of music to make the invisible appear. Words are too often artifices that had to do not with truths but with semblances. Most of life escapes our senses. Shepard has no desire to stage "the bland exterior" of experience. He wishes to slice through life, deal with sensate experience and the theatre to him is the place where the invisible becomes visible. His was a theatre of vision, formally structured events which developed a sense of images out of objects and people. It is in the mind that the disparate images come together and assume significance. As he said ".....the fantastic thing about theatre is that it can make something be seen that is invisible and that is where my interest in theatre is ....that is the image that I am looking for"<sup>50</sup> (*Bonnie Marranca.197*). The image was his 'survival kit'. His images have their roots in the popular culture where Cowboys, rock-stars, Shamans and mobsters figure. There is plot in his plays and action too. But more than the depiction of social circumstances and delineation of characters, his plays are disturbing journeys into the individual's sub-conscious and the symbolic and allegoric delineation of the fractured souls and their yearnings for a set of values. The supreme theme central to his work, is the conviction that America's salvation lies in the appreciative reintegration with the highest values of its past.

# ALLEGORY AS A LITERARY MODE

Lalitha.P.R “Allegory in the plays of sam shepard ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter III

### ALLEGORY AS A LITERARY MODE

An acknowledged fact of literary history is that each country, nation or race provides its own art uniquely expressive of its will. The *Sui generis* character of each literature is predicated on the urgencies and contingencies located in the spiritual and moral life of its people. In this sense, the American writings have emerged as a profoundly sensitive seismograph of American life and lore of its cultural compulsions and contradictions. Idealism and pragmatism constitute the spiritual basis and moral health of the American nation and a continual "unsleeping dialogue" between the ideal and the real has become the archetypal strain in American imagination. "The idea of the New World as the Biblical land of promise has remained, in one guise or another, the most enduring theme in American art and literature " <sup>51</sup> (Darshan Sing Maini.2). The earliest settlers happened to be Protestants with a distinctly Calvinistic world view. And naturally, the American imagination remained close to the value system stemming from

the Calvinistic canons of pre-destination According to Calvinism Man's salvation rests with God, It is Gods' "Grace" and "Election". God's ways are devious. Men only have to work hard and pray. Basically, Puritanism is a conservative ethic, an ethic of work and rigour and righteousness. The logical outcome of these Protestant values, is affluence.

On close examination, one can find that beneath all the materialistic facade of life in America, there persists a strong and visible undercurrent of the voyaging spirit, or of the questing self, with the dark intensity of a religious commitment. The American puritan conscience was, often resonant enough to create moral beauty and was concerned with sin and salvation. However, side by side with this spiritual affirmation, a saner and more pondered view of wealth also has drawn its sanction and energy from Protestantism. The pursuit of money was a religious vocation, in an extended sense; and the creation of wealth through work and commitment was at bottom a spiritual activity. "Somewhere in our mental constitution" says Trilling "is the demand for life as pure spirit"<sup>52</sup>(*Lionell Trilling*.90). Thus, the strong religious base of American life and thought is to be underscored. In literature this religious sense is often expressed through the mode of allegory.

“The origins of allegory,” as stated by John Mac Queen, “are philosophic and theological rather than literary”<sup>53</sup> (*John Mac Queen.1*). The Christian community had a sense of history as purposeful allegory. The Jews in sixth century B.C had considered themselves to be the chosen people, through whom the divine purpose would operate in history. M.H. Abrams describes allegory as

“ a narrative fiction in which the agents and actions and sometimes, the setting as well, are contrived to make coherent sense on the literal or primary level of signification and at the same time to signify a second correlated order of agents, concepts and events”<sup>54</sup> ( *M.H. Abrams.4*)

Mainly, two types of allegory are easily distinguished \_\_political allegory and allegory of ideas. Dryden’s “Absalom and Achitophel” (1681) is an allegorisation of the political crisis in the contemporary England of Dryden. In this work King David represents Charles II and Absalom represents his natural son the Duke of Monmouth. The second type, is the allegory of ideas in which the literal characters represent abstract concepts, and the plot usually, exemplifies a doctrine or thesis. Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* allegorizes the Christian doctrine of salvation, by telling how the

character named Christian flees the city of destruction and makes his way laboriously to the celestial city, encountering on his way characters called Faithful, Hopeful and the Giant Despair and passes through places like the Slough of Despond, the valley of the Shadow of Death and Vanity Fair. *Pilgrim's Progress* is a work in which the allegory of ideas, is sustained throughout.

Allegory, as such, is a narrative strategy which may be employed in any literary genre. The *Pilgrim's Progress* is a moral and religious allegory in a prose narrative. Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96) fuses the moral, religious, historical and political allegory in a verse romance. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the voyages to Laputa and Lagado (1726), is an allegorical satire mainly directed against philosophical and scientific pedantry. Sustained allegory has been written in all literary periods and this method of writing, invariably, contained an element of didacticism.

Various literary narratives like the fable, the parable and the exemplum can also be classified as allegories as they describe a coherent set of circumstances which signify a second order of correlated meanings. A fable is a narrative in prose or verse that exemplifies an abstract moral thesis or principle of human behaviour. Usually, in its conclusion the moral is stated either by one character or by the narrator himself in the form of an epigram.

A parable, also, is a short narrative about human beings. The narrator brings home to his audience a general thesis or lesson, with the help of a tacit analogy or parallel. The parable is one of the favourite devices used in the Biblical narrative as a powerful didactic mode endowed with "literary beauty" and "instructive power". Instead of the mode of abstract reasoning the handling of this literary vehicle produced desirable consequences: it helped to win ready attention, stimulated the listener's aesthetic senses and thus created an ultimate appeal to the intellect. The daily life of the ordinary peasants and fishermen in its original freshness got reflected in the parables. The lilies, the sparrows, the Shepards, all had their prominent places in the narrative. But these aesthetically activating elements were on most occasions, pointers to the spiritual reality of God and divine life.

The general notion about the Biblical use of the parable is that it aimed at a simplified version of the assumed heavenly truths through direct presentation in the ordinary language of the people. The attempt in the Biblical narrative is to give instruction through illustration. The Gospels of Mathew and Mark give evidence to the fact that their narrative is purposefully devised to effect a powerful, quick and lasting impact on the readers through parables.

The political milieu of the time when Biblical narrative got shaped might have demanded the garb of parabolism, partly making truth plain and partly shrouding it in mystery. The Jews who longed for a political emancipator would be shocked to despair, if they suddenly realized the Messiah to have born only to preach of a spiritual kingdom. Hence there was an urgent need to conceal his message by an outer wrapping. There is plainness and obscurity simultaneously in their particular parabolic device. Obscurity is purposefully created to evade opposition and protect one's message against immediate censorship. The parable thus seemed to be a safer and more effective method of presentation. The content was communicated only to those within the cultural codes. The parable wielded a mechanism of revealing and not revealing the truth simultaneously.

An exemplum, like the parable and the sermon is moralistic. It was a popular device in the Middle Ages. 'The Pardoners tale' is an exemplum based on the theme "Greed is the root of all evil". Three drunken revellers set out to find Death and find a Heap of gold instead. Each attempts to gain sole possession of the treasure and in the effort everyone gets killed.

Allegory has always had the potential to become an instrument of satire, even political satire. It is the more effective for the imaginative vigour

of the image in which it is embodied. The generalities of allegory acquire power over the moral sense and imagination. The peculiarities of the satire equally acquire relevance when they are seen in terms of a system of moral ideas. Allegory and satire are intimately connected. Very often one gains a better understanding of an allegory by considering it as a satire. William Blake has created many examples to demonstrate the possibilities of the coexistence of allegory and satire. The poems in the Experience section are specifically capable of erasing the distinction between allegory and satire.

*I wandered Thro' each chartered street  
Near where the chartered Thames does flow  
And mark in face I meet  
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.*

London here is both the allegory of a state of mind and an actual city whose way of life totally offended Blake's religious principle.

Most of the western and eastern religions have found their most perfect expressions in myth—a narrative, a series of narratives—which serves to explain those universal facts which most intimately affect the believer, facts such as times, seasons, crops, truths, tribes, cities, nations, birth, marriage, death, moral laws, the sense of inadequacy and fashion. These myths were transmitted orally at first, then in rituals and at a later stage by way of written word. Often they are mysteries, the interpretation

of which is revealed only to a priesthood. Such worthwhile narratives contained the Kernal of their vital meaning concealed beneath a shell of fiction and often improbable story. The shell of classical poetry consisted of myth about gods. The Kernal was the allegorical meaning which underlay the shell. The allegoric device, as we have seen is eclectic by nature. It trespasses into numerous literary expressions like the simile, metaphor, parable, synecdoche, metonymy, fable and proverb. Used as a trope, an incidental rhetoric device or ornament, allegory expresses something savoury under the veil of its narrative.

In the classical world of Greece and Rome, the myth of Demeter and Persephone or Ceres and Proserpine, respectively, began as an allegorical explanation of the process of sowing and harvesting corn. By an almost inevitable extension, it became an allegory of human immortality or perhaps rebirth after death.

A later myth which was central to the mystic and philosophic, orphic cult in classical Greece is that of the search through the under world by the musician Orpheus for his wife Eurydice. The search in the earlier versions was successful, but in later versions Orpheus failed, when at the very instant of success he glanced backward. Orpheus and his music represents the higher intellectual and redemptive powers of the human soul. Whereas Eurydice

represents, the lower and more appetitive power, which are particularly subject to evil and death. The sufferings of Orpheus represent the sacrifices necessary if the soul is to redeem the lower self which it loves and without which it cannot find salvation. This emphasis on redemption or salvation made it easy for the theologians, at a later date, to treat the myth as an allegory of the Christian notion of redemption.

Under the Orphic influence, the allegorical journey through the underworld came to be stressed as an essential part of the classical myths. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas arrives in Italy, stained with his passionate involvement with Dido at Carthage. To obtain purification and enable him to carry out the divine purpose of founding Rome, it is necessary that he should make the descent into Hades and return purified. The descent of Aeneas is an allegory of the experience of the dark night of the soul, which inevitably precedes the dawn of success.

Plato is also an effective founder of many aspects of the allegorical tradition. As a philosopher, he was aware of the limitations of human reason and knowledge. As a consequence, many of his dialogues include, "myths, allegorical narratives or developed metaphors which serve to image truth beyond the reach of the discursive intellect.

Throughout the ancient world, the allegorical mode was the one most commonly advanced form of poetic narrative. Homer, Virgil, Ovid and Statius were all writers who had a palpable allegorical design in whatever they had written. As Gilbert Murray remarked, "All Hellenistic philosophy from the first stoic onward is permeated by allegory". To the ancient Greeks the whole material world is only a great myth, a thing whose value lies not in itself but in its spiritual meaning<sup>55</sup> (Mac Queen.13).

Boccaccio called such connected utterance "a fable" which reveals its author's purpose only when the shell of fiction has been removed. The fables formed a four-fold species to him. The first category in which brute beasts or even inanimate objects are made to represent human situations and literal truth. A typical author of this category is Aesop. The second species mingles the fabulous with truth. The most ancient poets whose task it was to cloak with fiction, divine and human affairs alike, invented the legends. According to such a legend the sailor Acastos and his comrades were turned into fish for manoeuvring to kidnap Bacchus.

The third species resembles a historical fact rather than any fable. Homer in his *Odyssey* writes about how Ulysses was tethered to the mast of the ship lest he should succumb to the song of the Sirens. Even if the incident has no historical basis, it is still probable or possible.

The fourth species is old women's tales. They possess absolutely no surface of hidden meaning.

Tracing the origin and development of allegory in his book, Mac Queene states that, in the Roman context, Quintilian understands the word allegory in a broader sense. Allegory, he observed, presents either one thing in words and another thing in meaning or else something absolutely opposed to the meaning of the words. Under the first category he discusses the use of metaphor, simile and riddle in a way which bears a direct relation to the modern use of the term "allegory". Under the second, he discusses figures which produce the same effect by an element of irony, or of sarcasm or contradiction.

Dante makes his statement of the theory of allegory in the second tractate of his "Convivio". According to him, writings can be understood and ought to be expounded in four senses. The first is called the 'literal' which does not go beyond the strict limits of the letter. The second is named 'the allegorical' by him, where a truth is hidden under "a beautiful lie". In the story of Ovid, Orpheus with his lyre made the beasts tame and made the trees and stones move towards him. That is to say that the wiseman by the instrument of his voice makes cruel beasts grow mild and humble. The third sense is called 'moral'. In the Gospel, when Christ ascended the Mount

to be transfigured, he took with himself, only three apostles out of the twelve, morally signifying that for the most secret affairs we ought to have few companions. Dante terms the fourth sense anagogic ie above the senses. This occurs when a writing is spiritually expounded. Classical myth and the Bible furnished Dante's requirements of "truth hidden under a beautiful fiction," when he wrote *Convivio* and *The Divina Comedia*. Purgatorio II gives a picturesque description of the arrival of the ship of the redeemed souls at the foot of Mt. Purgatory. Here, Dante makes ample allegorical use of the Biblical text.

Dante's use of the Biblical allegory is exemplified thus by Mac Queen in his book *Allegory*:

"The redeemed souls after death compared themselves to the Israelites after their departure from Egypt, typologically they celebrate their redemption through Christ, tropologically their conversion from the sorrow and misery of sin to the state of grace; anagogically, their passage as sanctified souls from the bondage of corruption of their world to the liberty of everlasting glory"<sup>56</sup>  
(*Mac Queen.55*).

In the Middle Ages when the allegorical writings dominated

literature, the emphasis tended to move from the external to the internal. The allegoric tradition which persisted in the Middle Ages passed on to the Renaissance period. The abstract plot receives body as it were from the parallel historical and tropological narrative. When the objective was salvation, the dominant image in the narrative device became a pilgrimage \_\_the pilgrim's progress from this world to that which is to come\_\_ as John Bunyan puts it. When arrived at a restricted courtly audience, the emphasis fell on the knightly quest.

Allegory, as defined by Harry shaw in his *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, "is a method of representation in which a person, abstract idea or even stands for itself and for something else"<sup>57</sup> (*Harry Shaw*.12). The author intends characters and their actions to be understood in terms other than surface appearances and meanings. The sub-surface or extended meanings involve moral or spiritual concepts more significant than the actual narrative itself.

Forms of such two-level narratives are the parables in which a story is told primarily to express a religious truth, and a fable in which animals by their speech and actions reveal supposed truths about mankind. Symbolic fictional figures and actions are used to convey truths and gneralisations about human condition or experience. Like the metaphor, allegory also

expresses spiritual, psychological or abstract intellectual concepts in terms of material and concrete objects. By assigning to each feature of a text a hidden symbolic or mystical meaning beyond the primary meaning that words convey in their literal sense, the allegorical interpretation seeks to make that text more comprehensive, acceptable and relevant to the present. Thus in the fourteenth century poem, *Piers Plowman*, when the author describes himself to be afraid to bell the cat he actually states his views on the House of Commons' unsuccessful attempt to curb John of Gaunt's depredations. In "*Absalom and Achitohel*" Dryden reveals under scriptural disguise, the characters of politicians involved in an attempt to alter the method of succession to the English throne. Allegory both conceals and reveals. When an author ventures into political allegory he may protect himself by the element of disguise and at the same time make satirical revelations through the implied comparison. several of these methods are combined by George Orwell in his *Animal Farm* (1945), which under the guise of fable about domestic animals who take over a farm from their human oppressor, expresses the author's disillusionment with the outcome of the Bolschevik Revolution and shows how one tyrannical system of Government in Russia was merely replaced by another. Perhaps the most original use of allegory in the twentieth century is to be found in the works

of Franz Kafka whose enigmatic fantasies about the predicament of the individual is an incomprehensible situation, are not susceptible to any precise interpretation. He allows them various simultaneous possibilities of explanation. *The Trial* and *The Castle* are typical examples in this respect. These novels are at once satires on status-quo and authority. They are also philosophical and psychological allegories.

The allegorical method as developed in the post-Biblical times, allowed an interpreter great latitude for subjective speculation. It is marked by a superficial simplicity and straight forwardness. The allegory, as has already been stated, is eclectic by nature, acting at once as a sign, symbol, image, myth and fable. Generally, it is transparent. But more often than not, it hangs in the horizon of the mind with an open-endedness or inconclusiveness, as "there is plainness and obscurity side by side in this device".<sup>58</sup> (*Miami Raphael.7*). Human life provides the plot for allegory. It denotes a simple meaning but connotes grave truth or wisdom. The form and the content are the two inseparable units of any work of art especially any literary work. Out of the fusion of the two emerges a quality which is neither form nor content but a by-product of the fusion. John Crowe Ransom called this extra- quality "texture" and the fusion which it produces is "structure". Meaning lies embedded in the structure of a work of art and

neither of them exists without the other. In the climate of New criticism even though the critics treat a literary work only as 'a verbal artifact' or as an autonomous entity free of any independent and articulated system of thought, Dan Otto Via argues that "all literature contains inherently even though implicitly and indirectly a thought dimension"<sup>59</sup> (*Dan Otto Via*.71).

In modern literature the allegory is re-incarnated into a new form. While it has retained all the aesthetic elements like the imagery, metaphor, simile and the like, it has shed its overt pedagogic overtones. At the same time it upholds its intellectual and aesthetic aspirations. It provides aesthetic delight. The narrative, the descriptive and the dramatic elements which the mode of allegory contains are not mere embellishments. The perfect fusion of thought and feeling insisted upon by T.S. Eliot while defining the concept of the unified sensibility, is what is aimed at in an allegory too. Going beyond 'the statement'\_\_the explicit meaning\_\_the reader has to get at the real sense. Employing a deceptively simple style, it demands both denotative and connotative comprehension from the reader. The form of a literary work is primarily a structure of meanings. Thus an artistic creation is a "reconciliation of diverse impulses", statement and suggestion, simplicity and subtlety, denotation and connotation. As Cleanth Brooks argues "there is a sense in which paradox is the language appropriate and

inevitable to poetry"<sup>60</sup> (*David Lodge*.292). The basis of poetic expression is irony or paradox because "what it says is different in kind or degree from "what it means". In discursive writing what is said tends to approximate ideally to become identified with what is meant.

A work of literary art contains a variety or sequence of meanings. Interpretation is not a simple one-level activity. Words represent an image or memory, representing a sense experience. As Schlovsky, the Russian Formalist, has pointed out, "Art is thinking in images". Whenever we read, we find our attention moving in two directions simultaneously. One direction is outward or centrifugal. We move from the individual words to the things they mean, the conventional association between words and their meaning. The other direction is inward or centripetal, in which we try to develop from the words a sense of the larger verbal pattern they make. In that case, the verbal pattern becomes a symbol or sign. In all literary verbal structures the final direction of meaning is inward and standards of outward meanings are secondary. Such literary structures of inward meaning are self-contained verbal patterns having to do with the realm of pleasure, beauty and interest. The word "signified" shows that the literal meaning is the simplest kind. It is in the second order semeiotic system of signification, ie in the plane of denotation, the language comes to mean something other

than what is said. This is the concept or the idea which may be called a literary image. Formal criticism begins with an examination of the imagery of a work of art and attaching of ideas to the structure of the imagery. We have actual allegory when a poet explicitly indicates the relationship of his images to examples and precepts. A writer is being allegorical whenever it is clear that he is saying "by this I also (*allos*) mean that".

Saussure the structuralist had insisted that meaning is always the result of a division or difference. Derrida the post-structuralist goes one step further and speaks of deferring. Meaning, according to him is not only a matter of difference (which is spatial) but also deferment which consists in a postponement (which is temporal). Thus the signifier is divided from the signified and the sign becomes a matter of what it is not. Its meaning is always absent from it, which only means it cannot be fixed. A word has several meanings and each meaning becomes a signifier which in its turn leads to more signifiers, thus opening up an unbounded space for the play of signification. According to Paul de Man too, literature is not "a definite unit of referential meaning that can be decoded without leaving a residue. "Its code is unusually conspicuous, complex and enigmatic".

Works of literature move in time and spread out in images. Allegory is translation of ideas into images. Symbols are substitute images. T.S. Eliot's

“Objective correlative” is a kind of image that sets up an inward focus of emotion and substitutes itself for an idea. In that sense, all commentary is allegorical interpretation, an attaching of ideas to the structure of poetic imagery. Richard Blackmur calls allegory “ the highest form of putative imagination” because it objectifies the realm of possibilities. Allegory, as pointed out by C.S. Lewis in *The Allegory of Love*, is “a mode of expression”<sup>61</sup>. It is analytic. As Northrop Frye says it is in allegory that the writer “explicitly indicates the relationship of his images to examples and percepts”<sup>62</sup> Good allegory never tells in so many words what the images mean. Images are the products of imagination and allegory gives us insight into the life processes of those images. The existence of the material or visible aspect \_\_ the things that are accessible to senses \_\_ leads to the existence of non-visible, through the labyrinth of ambiguity, guided by the lightning flashes of linguistic implications. Allegory, thus is an extended metaphor which very often serves as a mirror of the fallen condition of human being in a Biblical sense. Classical theorists linked allegory with ironia. The writer is ironic at his own expense and also at the expense of the blundering mankind. Irony and allegory are methods of self- correction. Hence, didacticism is a special kind of response that allegory exacts from its readers. The most satisfying and interesting allegory is that which is ingenious in

contriving clues that will lead the reader to the very core of the meaning and allow his resourcefulness its full scope. Every work of imagination presents the reader with a vision, not the personal vision of the writer, but a far greater impersonal vision of a decisive act of spiritual freedom. A work of art communicates with a group of universal symbols, which are images of things common to all men and "therefore have a communicable power which is potentially unlimited". These images which include food and drink, the quest or journey, light and darkness percolate into the stream of writing. Writing is not merely a deliberate or voluntary act of consciousness. It includes processes which are sub conscious or pre-conscious, half-conscious or unconscious as well. This emphasis on the impersonal content has been developed by Jung and his school where communicability of archetypes is accounted for by a theory of the collective unconscious.

The "mental space" of the work of art, where imagination inhabits, where all artificial boundaries collapse, has thus, historical, metaphysical, visionary and mythical dimensions. Most writers on the subject of allegory have been inspired by fairy characters in poems like the *Fairie Queene*. For Frye Fairy, "land is a world of moral realisation".<sup>63</sup> (*Northrop Frye*.118) For Roche, it is the ideal world of the highest, most virtuous human nature. All these descriptions point to a state of ideality, the realisation of the

possibilities inherent in human nature and history. The fairyland is a part of vision of man's life as an effort to reconstruct and anticipate his true heavenly home.

It has been made somewhat clear

“that allegory never produces a “definitive” much less a “perfect” text. It is always pointing toward a goal that lies beyond it. In the process while it encourages the readers to aspire toward some world of perfect fulfilment, it reminds them of the limited world of which they are a part”<sup>64</sup> (*Sankaran Ravindran.137*).

Allegory becomes pertinent when we consider the kind of commerce that can exist between the limited material resources and the impalpable truth apprehended by imagination. It is the open endedness that is built into allegory formally and theoretically that invites the readers to correlate what it “unfolds” with certain facts and realities. The fusion of the complimentary and the contradictory elements is what makes it an effective device for evasive presentation of the subject matter. As the befitting vehicle for subtle expression, it is the most suitable mode for the prophets, poets and playwrights living in a skeptical world of shifting values.

# ALLEGORY AS SATIRE : SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND PERSONAL

Lalitha.P.R “Allegory in the plays of sam shepard ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter IV

### ALLEGORY AS SATIRE : SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND PERSONAL

“Satire,” says Ian Jack, “is born of the instinct to protest; it is protest become art”<sup>65</sup> (*Arthur Pollard*.7). Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary defined satire as a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured. Dryden and Defoe went farther, one claiming that ‘the end of satire is “the amendment of vices” and the other that “the end of ‘satyr’ is reformation”. The satirist is nearly always a man who is deeply sensitive to the gap between what might be and what is. Much of the world’s satire is the result of a powerful and even righteous indignation and is didactic in its objective. The satirist has a responsibility to truth and justice although satire is not always enlisted in the cause of truth and virtue.

Satire is one of the oldest literary modes. The fact that satire of some kind or other existed in literature from very early days and that it continues to exist shows that it is a natural form of perennial interest. Critics make a broad division between formal or direct satire and indirect satire.

In formal satire the satiric voice speaks out in the first person. Two types of satires are commonly distinguished, taking their names from the great Roman satirists Horace and Juvenal. The types are defined by the character of the person whom the author presents as the first person satiric speaker and also by the attitude and tone that such a persona manifests toward the subject matter and the readers of the work.

As is well known, in Horatian satire, the character of the speaker as manifested, is that of an urbane witty and tolerant man of the world who is moved to amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly, pretentiousness and hypocrisy. His aim as Horace himself described was to "to laugh people out of their vices and follies".

In Juvenalian satire, the character of the speaker is that of a moralist who uses a dignified and public style of utterance to decry modes of vice and error. The satirist evokes in the mind of readers contempt, moral indignation or an unillusioned sadness at the aberrations of humanity. Dr. Johnson's "London" and "The vanity of Human wishes" are distinguished instances of Juvenalian satire.

Indirect satire is cast in some literary form other than that of direct address to the reader. The most common indirect form is that of a fictional

narrative in which the objects of the satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions obnoxious by what they think, say and do. One type of such indirect satire is called Menippean satire because it was developed by a cynic philosopher of Greece, Menippus. It is some times called the Varronian satire, after a Roman imitator Varro. It should be noted that any narrative or other literary vehicle can be adopted to the purposes of indirect satire. The first satirist we know about, Archilochus, who lived in the seventh century B.C, was a Greek poet. Aristophanes, who practised the satirical mode in Rome, was a dramatist. His play *Lysistrata* launched a vigorous attack on the folly of war. The Roman poets Horace and Juvenal satirised city life and the vices and dangers of imperial Rome. This kind of denunciation and exposure of follies, excesses and vices is the typical Juvenalian tone. "Proper satire is distinguished by the generality of reflections...."<sup>66</sup>(Arthur Pollard.3) because the satirist who is a guardian of ideals considers that the true end of satire is the amendment of vices. Juvenal in his "Satire III" indulges in scathing criticism of Rome, which he puts in the mouth of a poor, decent citizen who can endure no more of the corruption. This is how the poet distances himself from his own feelings. "A true satirist", as Ashley Brown remarks, "tries to get at his target indirectly"<sup>67</sup>(Ashley Brown.3). Satire has been described in *A Glossary of*

*Literary Terms* "as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn or indignation"<sup>68</sup> (M.H.Abrams.187) satire uses laughter as a weapon against a butt. The butt may be an individual or a type of person, a class, or institution, a nation or even the whole human race as in the case of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. As Alexander Pope remarked, those who are ashamed of nothing else, are so of being ridiculous.

Good satire has been written in every age, though the impulse to satirise is a more powerful force in our culture today. John Dryden "*Absalom and Achitophel*" turns Old Testament history into a satiric allegory on the Restoration Political manoeuverings in England. Achitophel is the ambitious, unscrupulous demagogue of any age or country, Zimri is the epitome of all the brilliantly versatile amateurs whose gifts are never applied to any wise, stable or useful purpose. As Arthur Pollard remarks, "In God-like Davids' representation of Charles II, Dryden was able at once to exalt the King by comparison to the lofty messianic monarch of Old Testament days"<sup>69</sup> (Arthur Pollard.39).

Pope's "*Rape of the Lock*" satirises the superficialities of an aristocratic society. The quarrel that arose from the young Lord Peter

snipping off a lock of Arabella Fermor's hair, had estranged the two families. The families had exaggerated the matter, so Pope exaggerated it still more. The word "rape" in the title stresses the ridiculous exaggeration of the incident. Without distinction of importance, the loss of chastity is placed beside the cracking of an ornament and the staining of a dress. The distorted values of a whole society are exposed. Pope deals with a topic that is central in human experience. "*The Rape of the Lock*" is flippant in its tone, but it is fundamentally, a poem about values, particularly, values regarding chastity.

Satire is essentially a social mode and is always conscious of the difference between what things are and what they ought to be.

Swift's *Gullivers Travels* which is a fascinating tale of travels in wonderland, is also a powerful satire on man and human institutions. Such are the elements of art that Swift infuses into his work that it calls forth a world of allusions. In the first part, Gulliver, a surgeon on a Merchant ship, relates his ship-wreck on the island on Lilliput, where the inhabitants are only six inches tall.

In the Second part, Gulliver is accidentally left ashore Brobdingnag, where the inhabitants are as tall as steeples. The third part is occupied with a visit of Gulliver to the flying island of Laputa, its capital Lagado and its

neighbouring continent. In Laputa Gulliver finds the wise-men so wrapped up in their speculations as to render them utter dotards in practical affairs. In part IV, the readers are introduced into the country of Huyhnhnms where the horses are endowed with "reason". The simplicity and virtues of the horses are contrasted with the disgusting brutality of the yahoos, beasts in the shape of men. The controversy between the Big-Endian and the Little-Endians as to which side of the egg should be broken first, parodies the nature of the religious quarrels between the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans. Gulliver undauntingly criticises the Brobdingnagian institutions and practices as the "miserable effects of a confined education". The "Yahoos" are the personification of the bestiality in human nature, which Swift condemns and contrasts against the humanity of the horses.

*Gullivers' Travels* is a social satire. It throws light upon the smallness of the means, the vanity of the motives, the illusion of the catchwords through which kings retain their thrones. Swift dissects not merely the political life of his time but the system of monarchy itself, the courts and courtiers, the debating assemblies, and the struggles of religious factions. He carries us from the country of the dwarfs to that of the giants. The fancy vanishes revealing to us the despicable parody of human reality, littleness and miseries. Animal life supplies us with figures of reasonable beings.

Swift is intellectually hostile to what exists and the honest expression of this hostility is the social criticism offered by him in the allegorical mode. In many of Blake's poems too allegory and satire are present together, but the distinction fades into imperceptibility.

*I wander thro' each charter'd street  
Near where the chartered Thames does flow  
And mark in every face I meet  
Mark of weakness, marks of woe<sup>70</sup> (Geoffrey Keynes 558)*

'London' here is both the allegory of a state of mind and an actual city whose way of life totally offended Blake's religious principles.

Later Jane Austen with the very titles of her novels, like *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*, almost recall the personification of abstract qualities in the allegorical interludes of the sixteenth century. She combines allegory and satire creatively together to give a new realistic propensity to her domestic themes. The characters proper to conventional allegory are personifications; they are impulses, moods, attitudes, virtues and vices. The satirical impulse has been the motivating force behind some of the best known works of the twentieth century. Aldous Huxley's, *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Animal Farm* continue this tradition. *Animal Farm* is a beast-fable adapted for modern political satire. Orwell proceeds from the revolution of farm animals against

their human master through an idealistic phase of egalitarianism to the usurpation of power by the pigs, which ultimately ends up in the dictatorship of one of them. Stage by stage, there are parallels with the history of Soviet Russia. Orwell makes *Animal Farm* more than an incidental satire. The novel grows into a powerful blast against political tyranny, based on the subversion of idealism anywhere at any time. Orwell restores allegory to its rightful place in literature. In *Animal Farm* the surface animal - story casts an aura of satire as it draws parallels from the socio-political scenario of Russia. The major events and personages of the Russian history from 1913 to 1943, the war of intervention, the New Economic Plan, the First Five Year Plan, the expulsion of Trotsky, the seizing of supreme political power by Stalin, the Great Purge Trials, the Hitler - Stalin pact and the invasion of Germany are all allusively unfolded.

A similar beast-fable which turns out, to be a satiric allegory is Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. It depicts how the whole population of a town is changed into rhinoceroses. This is the author's equivalent of the various forms of collective hysteria.

*The Wasteland* by T.S. Eliot, also may be considered a verse satire directed against what Eliot perceives as the spiritual dearth in the twentieth century life. It is a powerful allegory of the degeneracy of human nature, in

particular with regard to the experience of sex and nature of love. W.H. Auden also joined this fold by writing excellent satirical poems in which he allegorised the collapse of civilized standards. '*The Unknown Citizen*' evinces his concern for the state of an individual in the modern mass society. Authoritarian governments were rising to power in his days and they promoted fascism of sorts. A complete loss of identity, a total submission to the dictates of the state, absolute conformism, readiness to accept all forms of propaganda without questioning are virtues expected of an ideal citizen in those nations. Auden, in his poem, raises his voice against such meek submission to the call to conform.

The same morality structure, contributed by allegory, with its frequent satiric and realistic undertones, is a living presence in American literature. The early colonial writers did not look upon life as an artistic affair, it was sober duty for them. In the seventeenth century, the pulpit was the forum for learned exposition of religion, ethics, science and politics. Religious opposition to theatrical performances on moral ground, was widespread. But gradually American literature assumed responsibility and seriousness. Since about 1760 the most conspicuous tendencies of realism, social satire and social protest\_\_commonly called "continental sophistication" \_\_came to be noticed in all the various forms of American

literature. Drama being a visual medium, became the most expressive of this revolutionary spirit. In 1760s and 1770s voices of indignation were heard in American drama. Satire often arises from an immediate occasion, the indignation a writer feels in confronting a folly. Mrs Mercy Warren's biting propaganda plays like *The Group*, *The Blockhead* and others satirised the Tories and made fun of General Burgoyne's red-coats, calling for a complete rout of the British forces. Dion Boccicault presented his play *Octoroon* in 1859 which squarely attacked the practice of slavery. At the turn of the nineteenth century Clyde Fitch brought out the play *The City*, in which he exposed and condemned corruption in the lives of the public officials.

In 1910 Edward Sheldon came to the fore with a "shocker", *The Nigger* with which he meant to touch the conscience of the social hypocrites. The play was about an "ambitious southern politician who on the eve of his success learns that he has Negro-blood in his veins; (to him) a discovery that spells disaster"<sup>71</sup> (*Jean Gould*.5). Party Boss -rule in Politics is the theme of *The Boss*. The dramatists who indulged in active social criticism took upon themselves the didactic mission of awakening the public into an awareness of moral justice. Such plays became theatrical projections of moral consciousness.

In the early twentieth century, Eugene O'Neill with his avowed aloofness from social questions turned the search light into the predicament of man surrounded by forces that "he could neither comprehend nor manipulate". He saw "the pursuit of material success as a threat to human dignity that frustrates creative joy in life for life's sake, renders it abortive and converts man into a Mephistophiles mocking himself in order to feel alive"<sup>72</sup>(*Jagadish Chandra*.132). O'Neill condemns outright machine-worship and Mammon \_\_ worship which are equally destructive of the Life-force.

Arthur Miller's plays are sometimes listed as "social dramas". They too deal with issues affecting contemporary society. Growing up in America during the years of Depression, Miller found the socio-political reality impinging with great force upon his imagination. Miller's *All My Sons* is a powerful indictment of Joe Keller's anti-social act of selling defective cylinder heads to the Air Force during the war, a compulsion forced upon him by the irrational laws of a jungle economy as by his own moral vulnerability. Chris, his younger son realises the full horror of the "tainted money". In *Death of a Salesman*, Miller portrays the world of big business, big money and success. Willie Loman ends up as a victim of this world. He had been a travelling salesman for the Wagner company for thirty four years. Now he is old, cannot travel far, can no longer trust himself to drive

a car and so wants a placement in the New York office of the company. Young Howard, the present manager, turns down the request and asks him to go on long leave. Loman's family is badly in need of money. Willie Loman commits suicide in a cleverly engineered car-crash, in order to leave his family the insurance money. The way of life in the business world is so heartless that it can make a man obsolete just as it does a piece of machinery.

In his most controversial play *The Crucible*, Miller protest vehemently against the modern witch-hunt of Mc Carthyism. The forces of reaction in the form of The House Committee on Un American Activities began to repress the voices of social progress and social protest in the thirties and forties. Those who supported the much-needed social and political reforms were branded as revolutionaries and were persecuted. Arthur Miller was the first to speak up in protest against the modern witch-hunt, the hunt for the communists, engineered by Joe Mc Carthy, the young Wisconsin Senator. Miller believed that drama "is the art of the present tense". The play is concerned with the peculiar, social and political condition of America in the forties of the twentieth century, no doubt. But while drawing the parallel between the Salem Witch trials of the 1692 and the governmental investigations of illegal subversion in the country in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Miller had a greater moral concern in his mind as

he expressed in the 'Introduction' to his *Collected Plays*,<sup>73</sup> (Arthur Miller.47)  
 "I saw accepted the notion that conscience was no longer a private matter,  
 but one of state administration . I saw men handing conscience to other men  
 and thanking other men for the opportunity of doing so...." All along we can  
 find the angry puritan along the Hawthorne - Melville line abiding by Miller.

American drama, as we have seen, has developed "a broad social awareness". It has become a prime historical document that helps us to say something authentically about the age and the events. It has some of its definitive scenes which sum up man and his environments.

Juvenal felt that his age was so bad that it was difficult not to write satire. The same sort of compulsion is felt by all satirical writers. Satire always has a victim, it always criticizes. The satirist must at any rate convince his readers or audience that he means what he says. His role is that of a public benefactor, persuading the reader or the spectator to understand the real situation and take a stance. He convinces them that the underlying attitude of his has a permanent significance, transcending the ephemeral circumstances. In a satirical play, the spectacle on the stage is only a sign that leads to a greater speculation. Allegory should find its place here for it serves as a link between the spectacle and the speculation.

Sam Shepard who has been hailed as an all-American playwright, writing for a chosen people as it were, "digs at the roots of the sickness today"<sup>74</sup>(*O' Neill*.1246) in America, as he feels it. Shepard's subject proper is America. His dramatic output, as David J. DeRose points out, "is a satiric allegory of his exploded vision of reality, society and the self"<sup>75</sup>(*David J. De Rose*.4). This Chronicler of the society gives us a meaningful statement about the post - modern America where things are falling apart. He illuminates the social and cultural politics of the country even as he reveals his own highly emotional response to life. At his worst, he mirrors American self-indulgence and immaturity. Shepard is a true man of the theatre; he does not see life as material for drama, he sees life as drama. Taken broadly, politics deals with the good life in human community as the adjustment between the personal and the social and of the desires and realities. In that sense, Shepard's plays are wholly political for they deal with values and authenticity. The subject of Sam Shepard is the sense of his own being in a particular place, at a particular time. Being a product of Post World War II era, and the now romanticised Eisenhower years, Shepard too came under the sway of the Hollywood dream-machine that was busy generating images of a victorious post-war America of heroic proportions and bigger than life stars and adventures. Frederic Jameson in

one of his essays on Post-modernism describes a world very much like the one in which Shepard grew up.

“At some point following World War II, a new kind of society began to emerge.... New types of consumption, planned obsolescence and even more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes, the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society, the replacement of the old tension between city and country, centre and province by the suburb and the universal standardisation, the growth of the great net-work of super highways and the arrival of the automobile culture — these are some of the features which would seem to mark a radical break with that older pre-war society”<sup>76</sup> (*Frederic Jameson.224-255*).

The immediate world of Shepard is that of youth culture of his contemporaries. It has in it the western deserts, Cowboys, Hopi Indians, the Car Culture, a kind of, “junk magic” the seductive power and the tinsel of Hollywood and the heavy metal of rock-n-roll. The industrial boom and along with that the transportation facilities broke like a tidal wave over a previously rural life style. It is not merely this change in the socio-economic

scenario that is significant to Shepard but the trauma caused by the destruction of the traditional agrarian way of life and the loss of the farmers' sense of attachment to the land. Shepard's play *Curse of the Starving Class*, depicts how a rural family is hustled out of their valuable property. *Operation Sidewinder*, exemplifies the lack of alignment between the technologically advanced man and his primitive environment. In the 1970s when the American war with Vietnam was still raging and the Water Gate scandal very much alive in the political circles, Shepard moved to London with bag and baggage and his family, in the hope of re-structuring himself into a rock-and-roll star. The dream did not materialise, but the trip resulted in two important plays *The Tooth of Crime* and *Action*, of which the former is about two Rock Stars. Back at home the relentless experimenter re-invented himself as a family playwright by writing *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child*. The Pulitzer prize winning play, *Buried Child* placed Shepard in the American Canon mainstream of drama. In a world that looks unfixed, the family is the source of pain and consolation alike. As Samuel G. Freedman has noted, "the measure of achievement in American drama has been a writer's ability to place a vivid family portrait within a larger social frame"<sup>77</sup> (Samuel G. Freedman.1). In 1991, during the Gulf war Shepard staged *States of Shock* which has been described by critics as a "fierce

anti-war play". It reveals how America continues to crack open along the fault line of violence.

Shepard's expressive Theatre embodies American themes of vigorous power and mystery; the quarrel with paternal authority, the loss of the land and the fall from Edenic possibility into an iron city, the transgressions and impingements on the artist by the interests of commercial greed. His is a world that is unhinged, chaotic, a world where the inhabitants have become suddenly strangers, a world where a multi-million dollar computer is created to achieve the ends once established through communal rituals; a world where one feels "worse than being homeless". It is this personal trauma of post-modern anxiety, despair and anguish reworked in the context of a society that insists on its victories that we find in the plays of Sam Shepard.

Shepard once said that he was not interested in the "American social scene at all"<sup>78</sup> (*Amy Lippman*.9) and that he does not have any "political theories". But as Frank Rich has remarked, Shepard does not consider it "unfair" to read a political or social meaning into his plays, but finds it only an incomplete, a partial way of looking at the play, if it is reduced to only one of these meanings. Because beyond the political or social meaning, he strives to reach "an emotional territory" with a much wider dimension.

In plays such as *Angel City*, *The Tooth of Crime*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *La Turista*, *Operation Sidewinder*, *Fool for Love* and *States of Shock* Shepard holds the mirror upto the society, wherein is reflected the varied aspects of disintegration . He has no neatly tied solution for any of these social problems; he wants the audience to think and act. That is why he is calling for an intellectually involved audience. In an interview, on being asked what effect he would like his plays to have on the audience, Shepard said that he hoped “ to transform the emotions of the people watching”. He added “ people come into the theatre....expecting something to happen and then hopefully when they walk out of the theatre the chemistry is changed”<sup>79</sup> (*Kenneth Chubb.202*).

Shepard’s dramatic vision, especially in the plays written during the seventies, dwells on the actual contemporary society. *Angel City* is a spectacular satire on the film industry. The historicity of the play involves Hollywood and American big business. *Angel City* as the name implies is set in Los Angeles or atleast a mythical version of a part of the city Hollywood. *Angel City* (1976) represents the culmination of the first decade of Sam Shepard’s career as a dramatist. The theme in *Angel City* is “power”, - power played against the background of movies and their compelling hold on our imaginations and lives. The play speaks about the allure and

promise of the films to bring meaning into drab lives. The play highlights also the destructive danger that living in dream - machines brings to the individual viewer, the artist and the society.

Set in a culver city studio, the play has in it a motley bunch of characters desperately trying to invent an idea for a disaster movie, powerful enough to stimulate the jaded sensibilities of the public and to distract them from the man - made urban catastrophes which they inhabit. *The Angel City* is peopled with tyrannical producers, hopeful actresses, exploited artists, script-writers, musicians and studio bosses who manipulate the dreams of the multitude.

Rabbit Brown, the mystical writer, a collage figure with his tennis shoes and an Indian Medicine bundle, has been called from his Northern Californian home and pressed into service to save the faltering horror film. Wheeler, the producer who has been transformed into a "raging maniac" urges him to create a film capable of galvanising the beleaguered and jaded masses into apocalyptic frenzy. He orders Rabbit to "...create mass hypnosis, suicide, auto destruction"<sup>80</sup> (*Angel City*.16).

The characters of *Angel City* are all confined in one place. It is the one-dimensional universe which contains the locus of desire. All the

characters have fantasies which are in one way or another structured by movies. Wheeler desires his ultimate immortality conferred by the charismatic image of film. Rabbit is "ravenous for power", the power of the "vision of a celluloid tape" Tympani, the Shaman of music and rhythm, is at work "to create an original rhythm guaranteed to produce certain trance-like states in masses of people". He is on a fantastic experiment to invent "a never-before - heard- before rhythm which will drive men crazy"<sup>81</sup>(*Angel City*.22). Miss Scoons seems to be the most susceptible to the spell of the films. She has been mesmerised by her own pipe-dreams of stardom. Lanx secretly wishes to be a famous boxer, much sought after by the media for on -screen interviews. Everyone learns by and by that there is no escape from the deception of the Hollywood desiring machine. As Tympani puts it to Rabbit "They feed off your hunger. They'll keep you jumping at carrot and you will keep jumping. And you'll keep thinking you're not jumping all the time you are jumping" (*Angel City* .17). And yet the characters have chosen to stay back in the *Angel City* because the city offers them refuge and protection from the threatening world outside. Protection in *Angel City* is provided by the power of money. Miss Scoons has set forth the equation that guides the lives of all characters in the play: "Money equals power, equals protection, equals eternal life." According to

her, the ambition behind the urge to create also is basically the ambition for power. The billion dollar industry has its lure and power, and the large black chair placed centre-stage is the huge seat of power. As in Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* in which everyone is transformed into rhinoceroses, in *Angel City* the city is turning everyone into reptiles. As David J. De Rose has noted "Angel City is plagued by the lure of wealth, power and material comforts which turns its citizen into reptilian monsters so that they may protect their position, their money, their exclusive life-styles"<sup>82</sup>(David J. De Rose.83). Rabbit and Tympani, the two Shaman-like artists, also finally trade their creative energy for the commercial potential of a Vampire art and a consumerist culture. The green slime that oozes from Rabbit and Wheeler and spreads over the stage at the end of the play, has become at once the metaphor for the standard horror movie material and the pervading influence of the movies in our life and imagination.

Innocent, naive and eager individuals like Miss Scoons, most easily fall victims to the illusions generated by the film industry. The alienating effect that films can have on our perception of reality is best expressed by Scoons. "I look at the screen and I am the screen. I am not me. I don't know who I am. I look at the movie and I am the movie. I am the star in the movie for days I am the star and not me..." (*Angel City*.21) Even a dedicated artist

like Rabbit cannot stay immune to the seductive dreams woven by the film industry. There is another reason why he is lured of the celluloid tape. It tells "a story to millions of people" and influences masses of people. Any force that influences masses of people " effecting their dreams, actions.... replacing religion, politics, art...." should be considered as a real source of power. And Rabbit is unashamedly enamoured of power. Thus *Angel City* is an allegory of the modern filmic civilization of America, in which every one is a prisoner against his will.

The stage-world of Sam Shepard is shaped out of the American cultural and pop-cultural expectations of the audience and the myth and mystique that Shepard himself is as an artist. His plays are a constant mirror of his own aspirations and indulgences as an artist and an individual. Rabbit is a self-portrait on Shepard's part\_\_the counter cultural writer torn between art and ambition. Tympani is a secondary self-protrait of the dramatist. He is a percussionist hired to create an original rhythm " guaranteed to produce certain trance-states in masses of people" (*Angel City* .22). Shepard like Tennessee Williams, very often transforms moments of personal experience so as to provide them a local habitation in his plays. Tympani's unusual occupation with the rhythm recalls his own experience as a drummer with the Holy Modal Rounders in the sixties. "I looked straight down at' my hands

and I saw somebody playing the pattern. It was not me but a different body”  
(*Angel City*-22).

*The Tooth of Crime* is another allegorical play in which the satirical thrust is shifted over to the society. Shepard unveils before us a society where “crude power is glamourised”. The play is an ambitious stage-metaphor wherein he draws together various strands of American life to produce an image of insensate brutality. It is about an ageing Elvis Presley model Rock-star, a garrulous fellow of the Old West called Hoss whose position as master of the game is threatened by Crow, a young “gipsy” renegade who ignores the code and depends on his own ruthlessness and bravado to stay alive. Hoss is approaching middle-age and he fears growing in a society that discards the artist when a new fad comes along. He feels that his supremacy is slipping away. “I feel so trapped. so fucking unsure. Everything is a mystery. I had it all in the palm of my hand. The gold, the silver, I knew, I was sure. How could it slip away like that?”<sup>83</sup> (*The Tooth of Crime* .227).

Hoss is aware of the vulnerability of an older order and the inevitability of being replaced. He has been working within a “code”, a code which gives meaning to his action. But now he lives in a time when “the

code's going down the tube". The heroic man with a code of honour has been corrupted by money, drugs and power. Crow represents pure anarchy and his chief weapon is his plasticity, his ability to change his stylistic form. Hoss and Crow are destined to fight for domination of their world. The great star-war is set up like a boxing match. The climacteric dual is fought with words, backed some of the time, by music. "*The Tooth of Crime* is a play in two acts. Act One is about the complex drama of waiting for the showdown, the confrontation. Act Two leads up to the show-down itself. The meeting between Hoss and Crow is a conflict of idioms"<sup>84</sup> (*Irving Wardle.11*).

Act Two is a prolonged verbal encounter in which the old veteran is outmanoeuvred, some times by the fresh vigour of his adversary, his desperate confidence, his slight regard for the code and sometimes by the impropriety of the referee. Hoss kills the referee in a fit of rage and is momentarily unnerved by his rash, code-defying crime. As a final gesture he yields to the bargain and surrenders his hegemony, his "turf" to Crow, with an appeal that Crow should teach him "how to be a man" to face his altered state and cope with his loneliness. However, Hoss fails to learn how to be a "totally lethal human"<sup>85</sup> (*Sam Shepard.217*) and prefers to

commit one final act of integrity by shooting off a gun in his mouth. Hoss yields to a necessity which is powerful.

The world that Hoss and Crow inhabit is made up of a "bare stage except for an evil looking chair... something like the Egyptian Pharaoh's throne"<sup>86</sup> (*Sam Shepard*.205) The Chair is the symbol of power of supremacy. Hoss and Crow are archetypal characters, contending brothers, rival race-car drivers, rock stars who are one and two on the charts, opposing candidates for public office, or "any pair in American life in a savage state of aggressive competition"<sup>87</sup> (*William Herman*.30). In Alaska and Greenland all disputes, except murder, are settled by a song duel even today.

The play which Shepard describes as the "talking opera", allegorizes the decadent world of rock-music in the 70s in America; the reality behind the exterior of the rock-business. The world of rock-music is organised like crime syndicates. The rock-stars represented by Hoss and Crow are fighting for control over Las Vegas, the symbol of crime and fantasy in America. Competition is at the heart of this business; it is the competition to fight, to get to the top and stay there. In Hoss, Shepard finds an artist whose work is an expression of his deepest self and also the expression of the inner being of the American people. Hoss is thus, a throw back upon the glory that is

authentic America, which has a code, a style, "the presence of something real behind"<sup>88</sup> (*David J. De Rose*.55) Shepard associates Crow with the man of the future, who is disconnected and unsympathetic to the out-moded conventions. He has no style of his own, no codes, he holds no liaison to history but proficiently mimics the values of the old to suit his purpose. He is the representative of the post-modern America, the fallen America. Shepard, probably, believes that these two characters together might usher in a new kind of American culture.

In *The Unseen Hand*, once again Shepard trains his guns against political power with its institutional coercion and mind control. Willie comes from Nogoland where "slaves work day and night" under constant guard by the soldiers of the "Raven Cult". He arrives in Azusa (Everything from A to Z in the U.S.A) in order to enlist the aid of a 120 year old gun fighter, Blue Morphan and two of his long dead brothers, Cisco and Sycamore (who were brought back to life later by Willie) in freeing his people from "the sorcerers of the High Commission". In the contemporary technological society the ruling forces have their hidden mind-controlling techniques. Willie's people in Nogoland, are implanted with an unseen hand that creates an excruciating spasm whenever their thought transcend those of the magicians. Nogoland is the distant galaxy from which both Willie and

America have come. The black hand print burnt into the top of Willie's skull is emblematic of the omniscient power's control, it is an image of socio-political oppression. It is Willie's ritualistic incantation of Kid's speech recited backward that frees the people from the unseen hand. The solution sounds like a fairy-tale but all the same, it also suggests the deconstruction of authority by reversing their language. With Shepard, language has always been the weapon to fight, to protect and also to explode.

*States of Shock*, which marked the return of the playwright to the theatre after a six-year silence in the wake of the production of *A Lie of the Mind*, is a play with a great historicity. It is a comment on a specific moment in American history. The play is an overtly political response to the American governments' military invasion of Iraq in February 1991, and the very complacent reaction of the American public to that invasion.

*States of Shock*, on its most obvious level, is a confrontation between a father figure and a disinherited son, two figures who take on both socio-political dimensions and mythic proportions. The father known only as "Colonel" in the play is an archetypal military man who glorifies war. Stubbs, the disabled veteran of an unidentified war, is a Christ-like martyr who survived a direct hit from an incoming artillery and is now bound to a wheel-chair decorated with small American flags. Stubbs may or may not

be Colonel's son. Colonel insists that his son died heroically in combat. Stubbs, the Colonel says, is his son's best friend who was severely wounded while unsuccessfully trying to save the life of his son. Colonel has apparently kidnapped Stubbs from a hospital and has brought him to the restaurant to commemorate his son on his first death anniversary. While Colonel claims that Stubbs is a war hero he has a very different story to tell. Stubbs cautiously suggests that he is Colonel's son and that he was struck by a missile when he was running away from battle. Stubbs is denied his identity because his father does not acknowledge his kinship. He was lured into the battle by the patriarchal myths that guided him. Now, having been left physically "mutilated, emotionally and spiritually demented" and literally impotent, he has all his romanticised illusions about war removed from his mind. His words sound like pure irony as he tells the white couple he meets in the family restaurant. "The middle of me is all dead. The core. I'm eighty percent mutilated. The part of me that goes on living has no memory of the parts that are all dead. They've been separated for all time. They'll never have a partner. You're lucky to have a partner"<sup>89</sup>(*States of Shock*.13). Through Stubbs, Shepard projects "the pity of war, the pity war distilled" According to David J. De Rose, "Stubbs is the image of inglorious war and its brutal aftermath, known to Shepard's generation"<sup>90</sup>(*David J. De Rose*.135). As

Stubbs wheels himself to the edge of the stage, pulling up his shirt and baring his chest to thrust the wound in the faces of the audiences, the trauma and betrayal of the war experience tear through their consciousness.

The conflict between Colonel and Stubbs begins in the restaurant when the Colonel asks him to re-enact the battle scene in which his son was killed. Stubbs can no longer stand the foolery. He realises desperately that he has been robbed of everything that makes life worth-living. To his dismay he is convinced that he does not embody Colonel's picture of a war-hero. To prove that he is a man and worthy to be Colonel's son, Stubbs starts flirting with the waitress Glory Bee and finally feels that his "thing" is coming back. He regains his manhood with the "help" or rather "use" of a woman. This gives him confidence which enables him to get a greater mileage in the conflict with Colonel. Colonel also realises his losing hold upon Stubbs.

The physical show-down witnessed by the elderly couple described as "Cadavers" by Shepard has its special social significance. The White Man and the White woman have been introduced as the emissaries of the middle class, the mute, inspired representatives of the establishment. They are people who very seldom notice anything that is not directly related to them.

The woman repeatedly complains about the inadequate service in the restaurant. One of the few times she seems to notice what is going around her is when Colonel slaps Stubbs across the face. She encourages him and says "Give it to him! You should have done that when he was just a little boy. All of this could have been avoided"<sup>91</sup> (*States of Shock*.25). The White Man who is evidently used to the sadistic spells of his wife does not react. He seems to be under her control. It is an irony that Colonel who is a man of war through and through and who personifies the male American legacy should be so subservient before his wife.

Glory Bee, the Black waitress, is treated in a highly symbolic fashion. Her name reflects her belief in America as the land of Promise, while her status, as a member of the serving class, as a woman, and as a person of colour, confirms the subservient role that such marginalised groups must play in the power-games of authoritarian white men like Colonel. "It is Glory Bee, image of America's powerless majority, who must wait on Colonel and Stubbs who must clean up when they make their boyish messes and who must become the sexual object, for whom and over whom they eventually fight"<sup>92</sup> (*David J. De Rose*. 150) .

Jack Kroll, the theatre-critic calls the play, "a political passion badly needed in American Theatre"<sup>93</sup> (*Susan Willadt*. XXXVI). *States of Shock* was

written with the earnest conviction that stage is still an effective platform for political dissent and mobilisation of public opinion. But Shepard does not provide a resolution at the end. According to him "it's a cheap trick to resolve things, totally a complete lie to make resolutions"<sup>94</sup>(*Amy Lippmann*.11). At the end of the play, the two protagonists Colonel and Stubbs, stand frozen in a position of eternal confrontation and hostility and readiness for violence, as Lee and Austin in *True West*.

*Angel City, The Tooth of Crime, The Unseen Hand* and *States of Shock* evince Shepard's highly emotional response to the power-game prevailing in American politics. Shepard further allegorizes themes like decay and disintegration in the family and society, the son's struggle to discover his authentic origin and heritage, the artists' isolation in a commercial culture, the self-made man and the horrors of solipsism\_\_the list extends itself.

As Gary Grant has pointed out, much of Shepard's social satire has his personal experiences as the spring-board for his creative art. His plays are rooted in the "surface" experiences of his own life. The smells, the sights and the objects in places where he has lived haunt his plays and they get transformed into the collective objects of American culture. He creates a sense of mystery out of the actual and a sense of an alien environment out of a familiar one. In a short manifesto called *Shepard's*

*Notebook*, kept along with the Boston University special collections, Shepard has noted,

“A play must be a metaphor. A play must reveal itself. A play must be revelation. A revelation must be realized. A realization must be realized by the emotions. The emotion must be moved. The intellect must realize that the emotions are moved. The movement must be toward something higher.....”

Certainly, Shepard had a palpable design in his plays, which act as metaphors and images transform his own consciousness. The plays, from the earliest to the most recent ones, show an evolution from a single-point perspective on the self to a multiple perspective which includes his relationships to the land, his heritage, and his personal relationships. They tend to be an observation of the self in relation to a specific sense of place, time and the cultural history. It is an act of remembering and relating of events, thus forging a new alliance between himself and the world in which he lives. *Curse of the Starving Class* relates to his teenage years in Southern California and moments of separation from his family. Like Eugene O'Neill he remained an “eternal son” and was obsessed with familial relations. *Buried Child* relates to his earliest memories in Illinois. *True West* is about his experiences in the suburbs of Hollywood. *Fool for Love* chronicles his

desire for and rejection of relationship with women. But these plays do mean more than what has been stated above. This is exactly the nature of confessional literature, an attempt to heal a basic breach between the self and the others. In other words, it is the transformation of the personal into the universal, primarily relating it to the social reality of the present. What he speaks about himself is as much true about the society in which he lived.

In the five full length plays written between 1978 and 1985, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child*, *True West*, *Fool for Love* and *A Lie of the Mind*\_\_ Shepard breaks into the uncharted territory of his family history. Bits and pieces of his family story make up the raw-material for the majority of his plays. He is reported to have said recently "What doesn't have to do with family? we all come out of each other\_\_every one is born out of a mother and father and you go on to be a father. It's an endless cycle"<sup>95</sup> (*Henry Schevey*.18).

Born on an army base in Fort Sheridan, Shepard was actually nicknamed Steve to distinguish him from his father. Shepard's recollection of his name in *Motel Chronicles* indicates a revealing: "My name came down through seven generations of men with the same name as the father..." Shepard was named Samuel Steve Rogers Shepard. He chose to drop the

Rogers part of it to become Sam Shepard. Thus the dramatist "murdered" his father and cut himself off from seven generations of Rogers males. The relationship between the father and the son was always filled with conflict and the feeling of perpetual abandonment. Shepard's father was a pilot in the Army Air Corps in Italy. On his return from Combat, wounded and apparently disturbed emotionally, Shepard's father became an alcoholic. He left for a solitary life in the desert. Despite his son's increasing popularity and fame, the father remained an enigmatic and reclusive figure living in the desert. *The Rock Garden*, one of his early plays, which addresses issues of domestic life like alienation of youth in an average American family, has his own home and his parents as the background. In the first scene, the play depicts a boy and a girl drinking milk at the dinner table. Their father seated at the table is immersed in a Magazine and pays no attention to the children. In the second scene their mother lies upstage with several blankets covering her. She speaks obsessively about the Man, her husband and the absent father of the opening scene. She describes how he used to pick mushrooms in the forest, his attempts to build a tree-house and his isolation from the rest of the family. In a later scene the boy and the Man sit together in their underwear, the Man on a couch and the Boy in a rocking chair. They do not communicate. The boy never turns to address the Man, he delivers all his

lines into the air. The Man does most of the speaking. His speech is punctuated all along with “you know”?, “you know what I mean” — interrogations meant for establishing communication. The boy nods off to sleep from boredom and now and then falls off from the rocking chair. The boy never responds to his father’s questions, but suddenly explodes into a graphic cataloging of sexual pleasures, which begins “when I came it is like a river”. The boy also punctuates his speech with “you know”. Now the refrain takes on a calculated edge. Eventually, the Man falls off his coach. None of the four characters communicate anything in the play. The play, as Henry Schevey has noted, “is a simple dramatization of adolescent rebellion”.<sup>96</sup>(*Henry Schevey*.XXXVI). The visual image of the man falling off his coach, at the end of the play, manifests the enormous distance between the personal experience of two people living under the same roof as aliens. The boy’s dark world of sexuality has the power to shake the world of the Man he has built around himself. Like O’Neill, Shepard moves past his own family situation to view alienation as a global phenomenon.

In *Curse of the Starving Class* Shepard raises one of his personal and private pre-occupations to the universal level. Father Weston is a character closely fashioned on Shepard’s father. Set on a dried up artichoke farm in California, *Curse of the Starving Class* transcends Shepard’s personal history

with a broader vision of an America, destitute and damp with blood guilt. Emma, the mother in the play says, "So, no one is starving, we don't belong to the starving class". Shepard 's family was deprived of spiritual nourishment though they never had to go without food. The play opens with the family's teenage son Wesley Cleaning up the pieces of a broken-door. The previous night, in an intoxicated rage Weston had battered down the door with his body. Weston's violent attack upon his own home is both literal and symbolic, an action signifying the destruction of the protective circle of the family. The home has been left exposed by the dissolution of the family and the estrangement of the father and the mother. Strangers who plan to buy the house appear in the scene as a result of Weston's and Ella's individual attempts to sell the house and farm, without the knowledge of the other. The play is about the sudden invasion of a small southern California farming community by the suburban sprawl of housing developments and super highways, the industrial boom, literally wiping out the tiny farming communities and their way of life. Ella dreams of going to Europe, Emma the Tom-boyish daughter wants to become a car-mechanic, Wesley plans an avacado business. It was in such a society Shepard grew up where the rural life-style was made to look obsolete by the "Zombie invasion". The word "curse" in the title refers to the impersonal invasion

of the un-controllable socio-economic forces into the family unit. Literally speaking, it refers to the terrifying violation of a drunken father who smashes down the front door in a drunken fit, leaving the family vulnerable even to further violation. The central image of the play is hunger - the spiritual starvation which destroys the family despite the efforts of the son to hold it together. Wesley builds a new door, an act symbolic of his desire to keep the home and the family intact. The destruction of the family is linked to the social devastation. Wesley tells his sister Emma-

There will be bull dozers crashing through the orchard. There will be giant steel bulls crashing through the walls. There will be foremen with their sleeves rolled up and blue prints under their arms. There will be steel girders spanning acres of land. Cement pilings ----- . A zombie city ! Right here ! Right where we are living now<sup>97</sup> (*Curse of the Starving Class*.83).

Like the eagle holding the cat in its talons in mid-air -an extraordinary event in the story narrated by Ella and Wesley, Shepards' vision in the play is of an endless cycle of destruction in which no one survives. The starving class succumbs to its own hope for an impossible future. The play is forewarning giver to the American society about the disaster to which it is heading after the elimination of the small farming communities.

*Curse of the Starving Class* is an autobiographical play that reminds one of Tennessee Williams or William Inge. It is about an impoverished Southern California ranching family on the verge of ruin and also about the impoverishment that has engulfed the entire nation.

In 1978 when he began to write a string of family plays, he had in his mind a fund of experiences and memories of a particular kind related to his family. As David J. De Rose records in his book on Sam Shepard, sometime in 1968 Shepard had travelled to Los Angeles in connection with the recording of a musical Album with Holy Modal Rounders. Like Vince the long-lost son in *Buried Child* he stopped in Illinois to visit his grandparents. He then moved on to the south-west where he found his father living alone in the desert. Between them, they fought bitterly. In the family plays which began with *Curse of The Starving Class* (1978), through *Buried Child* (1979), *True West* (1981), *A Fool for Love* (1983) and *A Lie of the Mind* (1985) "the autobiographical presence of a young man haunted by unresolved ties to family, father and personal heritage"<sup>98</sup> (David J. DeRose.91) is clearly evident.

*Buried Child* subscribes to many of the events in the life of Shepard. In *Motel Chronicles* he has recorded his trip to Illinois to visit his grandparents after the silence of more than six years. The farm looks abandoned

and has not produced a crop of corn since 1935. Grandpa, who is senile and debilitated, is a skeleton sitting in the hole of his sofa wrapped in coqueted blankets facing the T.V. Very clear parallels are drawn between Dodge in *Buried Child* and his own grand-father who did not recognise him at the first instant of his visit. In *Buried Child*, Vince comes to visit his Parental home , along with his girl friend Shelley . Nobody in the household recognises Vince. The Dodge-Halie couple has three sons \_\_Ansel, Bradley and Tilden. Ansel is dead. Bradley is maimed and Tilden is reduced to a state of child-like dependency. It is suggested in the play that Tilden is actually Vince's father. It is also suggested that the 'buried child' was the result of an incestuous relationship between Tilden and his mother. It is also derived from the play that it is Dodge who drowned the baby and buried it in the backyard. There is a similarity between the attitude of Dodge to 'the buried child and to Vince. "You are no son of mine"<sup>99</sup> (*Buried Child*.97) stated Dodge categorically to Vince. Regarding the buried child he says, "...we could not allow that to grow up in the middle of our lives"<sup>100</sup> (*Buried Child*.124). That was the family secret. It was so secret in fact that everybody was convinced that it never happened. The family's refusal to recognise Vince is part of a deeper failure on their part to acknowledge him as one of their own.

Vince leaves, having suffered the pain of being a stranger in his own home. On the wind shield of his car he examines his face and discovers its unique connectedness with his fore fathers. His face became his father's face. Vince finds his father, his family and his personal heritage within himself. Against his will and without his knowing it, they have inhabited his body. Vince returns to the house of his forefathers with a determination to claim his inheritance. He struts along exacting his revenge and claim of ownership and amidst his actions he learns that Dodge is dead. With Dodge's death, Vince becomes the self-declared head of the family. "He lies down on the sofa, arms folded behind his head, staring at the ceiling...." (*Buried Child* .132) The position of his body suggests death, not life. Yet he cannot run away from his heritage, it is his inescapable destiny. Biological roots, sometimes appear to be entrapping and even destructive. Yet the individual is drawn to them instinctively.

Set in the mid-west of Shepard's birth, *Buried Child* is a successful effort to retell his family history, from the lost farm of his grand parents, through his father's mysterious abandonment, down to his own attempts to become reconciled to his own past. On a broader perspective, the familiar disintegration depicted in *Buried Child* suggests the deterioration of the American family in general. Here again the personal and the autobiographical incidence gains an allegorical mileage.

*Buried Child* may also be described as “the epitaph for the American family as an institution”<sup>101</sup> (Doris Auerbach.53). The family depicted in the play is a black-hole where every member is held in a deadly grip. It is a ghostly place where everyone has to encounter a skeleton in the cupboard. Vince, the youngest member of the family had severed all connections with his family long since. He had been living the “debauched life of the artist” in the big city. The family atmosphere is stifling. The essential element of love is missing in the most endeared institution. It is a savage world of violence and dominance.

It signifies the betrayal of the cherished American dream of peace, harmony, wealth and supremacy. Shelley is the innocent and the untainted among the whole lot of characters to whom the “buried secret” is revealed. It is to her the secret holds the greatest threat too.

Vince represents the archetypal questing hero, searching for his heritage and seeking to carry out his destiny. He embodies in him drive, earnestness, ambition and adventurousness—the great virtues we associate with the typical American. Vince also belongs to the tradition of violence. His act of violence at the end of the play, makes him a true descendent of Dodge who nurtures the same tradition. The putrifying body of the baby is the symbol, the physical manifestation of the decay of the family.

Nobody at home recognises Vince on his arrival. Dodge says, "you are no son of mine". But somewhere in the memory of Tilden a bell rings. He recognises something about Vince. "I thought I saw a face inside the face". Probably, it was the face of the child before it was killed. It is the face of the American eager for filfilment. Tilden, purified by suffering redeems himself. He lives the maternity principle and nurtures the child. As Dodge said, "He'd walk all night out in the pasture with it. Talking to it. Singing to it. Used to hear him singing to it"<sup>102</sup>(*Buried Child*.124). The one who has nurtured the child is the one who will make the earth fruitful again. Purified by suffering he is the first to notice the vegetables growing in the backyard. Tilden is the symbol of the promise of and hope for a revitalised America for in the play he is the only one who nurtures the children. Shepard suggests that returning to the American dream of bountiful Eden is possible only when the crimes of the past are acknowledged and atoned for.

*A Fool for Love* is another family play, Shepard has written, with autobiographical strain and allegorical implications. He had been separated from his wife, O'Lan and had gone to live with Jessica Lange when the play was written. *A Fool for Love* is the story of a woman who is tied to a man who proves to be unfaithful to her. But for the presence of an old Man in the play, it could have been described as a play about a love-triangle.

Nevertheless, the Old Man exists only in the minds of May and Eddie the main characters.

May and Eddie are lovers. They have been going steady for sixteen years, since High school. But Eddie, periodically obsessed with fantasies about other women, keeps leaving her only to return and claim her again. It is after such a break-up when he came to see her that they began a low-level argument over "the countess" with whom Eddie is supposed to have an affair. May, maddened with jealousy, shouts, "I am gonna kill her and then I am gonna kill you"<sup>103</sup> (*Fool for Love*.23). Eddie is trying to pacify her. He is now prepared to take her back. He has everything worked out for a peaceful life with her, "a piece of ground up in Wyoming" for example. May rebels and frees herself. She moves out to a town in Mojave desert, where she finds for herself a job as a cook. She is too proud to accept any compromise. May draws a clear parallel with O'Lan, when in the final scene she is quietly packing up her suitcase, her face redolent with a sense of resignation, strength, pride and dignity. She has to choose another path because as she says to Eddie, he "suckered me into some dumb little fantasy and then dropped me like a hot rock". Now she feels that her love for Martin is stronger. She is divided in her love.

The Old Man who is sitting on a rocker, is the presiding genius of the play, pointing to an imaginary picture on the wall, whom he calls Barbara Mandiff he reminisces

“That’s the woman of my dreams. That is who that is. And she is mine. She is all mine. Forever”.

He continues, “Well, now see, now that’s the difference right there. That is, I am actually married to Barbara. Mandrell in my mind. Can you understand that?”

Eddie: Sure.

The Old Man: Good I am glad we have an understanding”<sup>104</sup> (*Fool for Love*. 27).

Probably, the Old Man is making an attempt to force the audience into a cheaper notion of the meaning of human passion. It is the power of imagination, fantasy, that creates something more lasting and true than what may be real. The kind of love generated and sustained by fantasy is juxtaposed with the kind that is too mundane, and self-defeating like the love of Eddie and May.

Shepard’s inner unresolved conflict with his father continues to surface forth in *A Fool for Love* when he has to deal with a father-figure.

Having excited the passion between Eddie and May, the Old Man mercilessly explodes their emotional world, by revealing an Ibsen-like secret that Eddie and May are brother and sister. The details of his bigamous relations with their respective mothers follow. The father abandons the children, typically refusing to accept any responsibility for their incestuous passion.

*A Fool for Love* reveals love in all its complexities, its betrayals, its jealous competitions, anguishing ordeals no less than its victories. *Fool for Love* is the celebration of passion which has little to do with the rational world. As its epigraph observes "The proper response to love is to accept it..."<sup>105</sup> (C.W.E. Bigsby.248).

The Old Man is a victim of love and also the cause of suffering to those who gave their love to him. To Shepard also love has been the source of pain and absurdity. It has also been his path to transcendence. *A Fool for Love* as his *A Lie of the Mind* is concerned with the relationship of men and women in America, something that Shepard once described to a British journalist as "terrible and impossible".

*True West* focusses on the relationship of two brothers, Ivy League Austin and the "ne'er-do-well" Lee. They compete in composing a movie

scenario about the true west. The play has its familial and social resonances. Austin lives "up north" with his family. He has come to the South to "develop" a film script for the Hollywood producer, Saul Kimmer. The house belongs to his 'Mom' and Austin is taking care of her plants. She is in Alaska on vacation. Austin is in his mid-thirties and neatly dressed. He has rather a frail physique and a full head of hair. Lee looks ten years older Balding, Scruffy, he looks like a bum. The brothers are not merely physical but psychological opposites. At first Austin tries to be patient with Lee's intrusion, but as his brother's attitude becomes increasingly sarcastic and aggressive, Austin becomes frustrated.

Lee resents Austin's achievements and way of life : his Ivy League Diploma, his middle-class status, his job as a writer. The tension and the conflict that had developed earlier become worse now. Lee takes over the kitchen first. His demanding presence destroys Austin's concentration. Lee then forces Austin to loan him his car. Austin knows that Lee is a petty thief and intends to use it to rob "Mom's" neighbours. But the worst shock was when Lee breaks in on Austin's conference with Saul Kimmer and badgers Kimmer into agreeing to consider an idea Lee himself has for a "true-to life western". Austin becomes desperate because his sense of self, his own convictions and the very concept of reality are turned upside-down in no

time. Lee's world is unfixed as well. He wants to capture Austin's ability to fit into the urban society and get paid for "dreaming"

A personality transference takes place in the two characters. Both brothers want to destroy or steal a part of the other that each alternately idealises and disparages. Lee becomes a screen writer trying to concentrate at the type-writer. Austin, after Kimmer confirms that his project has been cancelled, gets roaring drunk threatens to "make a little tour through Mom's neighbourhood" perhaps committing bigger crimes than Lee "ever dreamt of." Mom, and the old man are contrasted individuals. Mom led a conventional suburban life while the old man who was a drunkard lived precariously down south." His identification with Lee is as obvious as Austin's with Mom"<sup>106</sup> (*William Kleb.67*).

The last scene opens later that morning with Austin (who has submitted willingly to the power and authority of lee) trying to take down Lee's chaotic dialogue on paper. Lee stalks back and forth in the kitchen shouting and complaining. Just at that moment Mom enters. Alaska was unsettling and she returned. At home, it is even more unsettling . In a daze she walks through the littered Kitchen and inspects the dead plants. The effect is chilling, the brothers react like kids about to be spunked. With a

paper-bag full of Mom's antique plates Lee heads for the door alone. Suddenly Austin grabs the telephone cord and strangles Lee from behind with the phone-cord around his neck, shouting " I can kill him, easily kill him, Right now, Right here"<sup>107</sup> (*True West*. 58).

To the Mom it is worse than being homeless. She walks out of the kitchen and decides to check into a motel. The brothers continue to fight and they square off like wrestlers, as the curtain falls.

"As the rational, self-controlled Austin crumbles, the realistic surface of the play peels away. Henceforth objects become symbols, characters, archetype actions allegories"<sup>108</sup> (*William Kleb*.120) writes William Kleb. *True West* is Sam Shepard's most subjective and most personal play which lends itself to an immediate autobiographical and confessional reading. Yet it attains a higher level of signification. Sam Shepard was raised in a small farm in Southern California. His mother still lives in a suburb near Pasadena. Sam Shepard's father remains obscure, as Ellen Oumano testifies in her book *Sam Shepard*. His father has many things in common with the Old Man in the play. He is drunken, irresponsible, violent, leading a vagrant life in south-west. Austin's ludicrous description of his patriarch as a toothless, drunken beggar staggering from one bar to another and

searching for the doggie bag of chop suey that contains his false teeth, is a true story, true of Sam Shepard's father.

Austin resembles Shepard in his physical appearance in his literary achievements and in his social status. Shepard lives up north in a suburb of San Francisco for the Pulitzer prize presumably brought him safely into the upper-middle class. In the past like Austin, Sam Shepard also had undergone several abortive, distasteful experiences as a fledgling screen-writer.

Shepard has no brother. Lee is also just as clearly based on Sam Shepard himself as is Austin "I've just divided one person into two"<sup>109</sup> (*David J. De Rose*.109) said Shepard in an interview. Austin says, "He (Saul Kimmer) things we're the same person"<sup>110</sup> (*True West*.36). As C.G. Jung has stated, "We have a sinister and frightful brother, our own flesh and blood counterpart, who holds and maliciously hoardes everything that we would so willingly hide under the table"<sup>111</sup> (*C.G. Jung*.38).

All circumstances of Shepard's life have had to do with the flux-like, the temporary, the divisions and separations. Parental divorce, a constantly shifting home, a life-style that let him in and out of personal relationships have all gone into the shaping of his perceptions. Fragmentation becomes a fact of his social relations. It is hardly surprising

that he is generalising his experience as a social fact. In an interview in 1988 Shepard confessed,

What is most frightening to me right now is this enstrangement from life...we're this incredible global race of strangers...people live together with somebody else, split, have kids\_\_split. Then the kids never see each other. It is absolutely frightening\_\_this incessant enstrangement (Sessume Interview Magazine).

The last theatrical image in the play, the image of the brothers squaring off against each other, has a universal implication, that the doubleness of existence is permanent.

In *True West* Sam Shepard hints obliquely his own concept of creative art. Austin and Lee who are openly disdainful of each other and who follow two diametrically opposed life-styles represent two divergent different approaches to art and literature, the Dionysian and the Apollonian. Lee has vision. Austin has the skill and self-discipline. Shepard seems to think that the latter must serve the former. If Lee has the raw-material, Austin has the discipline and technique needed to harness that talent. Together they represent the opposing sides of Shepard's psyche as artist. Austin is associated with the crass and materialistic haven of the Hollywood. His play-writing is

“a little research and doing business. His only concern is whether he can get this thing off the ground”. (*Tue West* .15)

Lee, the Dionysian, speaks of writing as “a little art”, not as a little research. His attitude is more in the organic tradition of art as mystery. It is the sense of professionalism that distinguishes Austin, while it is the value of autonomy that prevails with Lee. Both brothers are writers in thrall to an industry that requires subordination of creative energy to the needs of business. Thus the play becomes a metaphor for the creative act, “a kind of sense and sensibility of the theatre”<sup>112</sup>(*C.W.E.Bigsby*.245). Austin’s decision to accompany Lee to the west shows that he has apparently relocated the imaginative root force and is determined to return to the source.

Shepard is on familiar ground in *A Lie of the Mind*, dealing once again with the disintegration of the American family with the violence and mutability of sexual love. It is a tale of two families, one in California and the other in Montana, linked by the marriage of Jake and Beth. Beth is the central character of the play. She is an actress. Jake is, somehow, led to imagine that Beth is living a fantasy life with her scene partner. His imagination overtakes him and he tries to kill her. Because, to him the line between pretence and reality is blurred. The clouds of suspicion move away

and Jake eventually realises that Beth's sexual transgression was nothing more than a lie of the mind, an imagined infidelity generated in the mind of Jake by jealousy. The event that triggers the action in the play is Jake's cruel beating of his wife which sends him to his home, thinking he has killed Beth. Both homes are loveless. Jake's father had long since walked out on his mother and died in a drunken accident. Beth's mother is nothing more than a servant and burden to her husband, a Montana rancher who would prefer a deer to his wife and family. "Shepard is dramatising the lives of those who walk the vertiginous edge of experience. Again and again they walk off into the desert which will take them out of an anxious social content at the cost of annihilating their identity"<sup>113</sup>( C.W.E. Bigsby. 189). Jake's father and Beth's father are men who fled from life shirking their responsibilities. The former had left the family long ago and lived alone in a trailer in Mexico until he died; while the latter spends all his time out in hunting. This is the central problem Shepard has always felt about his father. "He has been camped out" Like a "worm in the wood" his father is an implicit presence in *A Lie of the Mind*. Jake's funeral monologue about his father's death and the ritualistic disposal of his ashes in *A Lie of the Mind* do not allay his sorrow, instead these obsequies only intensify his urge for a connection with his father.

In *A Lie of the Mind*, Beth who is severely beaten about her head suffers from partial amnesia and aphasia. when she regains consciousness after a lot of medication, she has lost the use of her tongue. The vocal mechanism has become non-operative. She has lost command of the complexities of the spoken language. Shepard has also had the mischance to witness the effects of brain-damage and aphasia on some one who was very near and clear to him. In 1979, his wife O' Lan's mother, Scarlet Johnson Dark, suffered a stroke resulting in aphasia. Joseph Chaikin also had a similar experience, while undergoing an open-heart surgery, which seriously impaired his speech. The real life incident left Shepard with the first hand knowledge of a "perceptual dysfunction". In her biographical account of Ellen Oumano, she dwells upon all these untoward incidents in the life of Sam Shepard.

The play in its social front, leads to an examination and discussion of gender roles and male-females relations. Shepard is probing the wounds inflicted by men on women. "In their inability to fashion lasting commitments and to escape an inborn wildness and violence, the male characters cause pain and rend the fabric of family life"<sup>114</sup> (Ron Mottram.90), writes Ron Mottram in his essay on Sam Shepard's *A Lie*

*of the Mind*. When Beth requests Frankie to pretend to be Jake, she wants him to be Jake with a difference. "Be soft with me Gentle like a woman-man".

In an acquisitive society like America, love, sometimes, is charged with the power and violence of the acquisitive drive. The sense of loneliness, the hunger for fulfilment and the search for identity become tangled with the urge for power resulting in complex rifts and divergence of objectives. In *Cowboy Mouth*, Slim loves Cavale but Cavale vacillates between her and his own family. Calve's love for slim has an ulterior motive. She loves him not without reason. Cavale kidnaps slim off the street and domesticity to refashion him in her image of "a rock-and-roll-Jesus with a *Cowboy Mouth*". She sees in him the potential saviour of the rock-and-roll.

In *Mad Dog Blues* also the situation is not far different. Love struggles with other needs. Kosmo, a successful rock-star, dreams up a young man's cliché fantasy of a sex goddess, who actually appears, and so he falls in love with Mac West. Kosmo, however, then discovers that he has many other things on his mind, such as revolutionary activity, his friendship with Yahooodi, his wife and child and of course, his music and his band, while Mac like Cavale in *Cowboy Mouth*, has her pre-occupation; She is interested only in money.

In Shepard's earliest production, there is only one play where the male-female relationship can be called "amiable", that is in *La Turista*, between Kent and Salem. In all other plays we see men acting in various negative ways towards young women. In *Melodrama Play* a rock-musician views his girl friend Dana as his servant. In *Chicago* Stu is jealous of Joy who is leaving him. Male aggression and physical violence are depicted in *Buried Child*. Shelley the fiancée of Vince, who expected the family of Vince to be something "out of a Norman Rockwell illustration with turkey dinners and apple pie and all that kind a' stuff" is confronted by a radically different vision. She had to suffer insult, sexual slurs even from the patriarch of the family, Dodge Bradley one of the elder brothers of Vince, who is a menacing amputee, asks Shelley to open her mouth and puts his fingers into her month. It is a vaguely sexual rite of domination upon her and also an obvious act of rape. No wonder, in utter despair and frustration she cries out "I am fucking terrified. I wanna go"<sup>115</sup>(*Sam Shepard*.91).

In *Icarus's Mother*, Howard violently shakes Pat simply because he is angry at her for an outburst. In *A Lie of the Mind*, the very action of the play triggers off from Jake's beating of Beth. Meg, Beth's mother, says "men and women are two opposite animals".

“The female - the female on needs-the other But the male one - doesn't need the other, Not the same way (.....)

The male one goes off by himself. Leaves . He needs something else. But he doesn't really know what he needs. So he ends up by dead. By himself”<sup>116</sup>(*Sam Shepard. 77,78*).

Love and marriage in American society is not merely a frill to embroider the institutions of Chivalry. Romantic love looks to marriage as its fulfilment. Pouring so much into courtship and expecting so much of marriage, Americans find themselves frequently disillusioned in matrimony, a condition which leads them to frustration, violence and the resulting outcome of divorce. The probing of marriage failure in America has been intensive. The principal causes usually listed are the incompatible temperaments, loss of attraction for each other, infidelity, economic insecurity, and the resultant disharmony in the domestic set up.

Shepard as we have seen, has smashed the apparently water-tight divisions between the private and the public man. Anyone with a fondness for drama as biography could use his plays as a road-map which could explain his development as a playwright and his strong convictions and philosophy of composition as an artist in a society which is experiencing a moral and cultural revolution. The society, whose materialistic standards

place pre-eminent value upon money and which looks upon art only as a diversion, tangential to the really important things, offers the artist only two options. The first option is to sacrifice his artistic principle and cater to the consumerism of the society to garner sizeable rewards for himself. The second is to follow his artistic credo and be a nobody before the public. In olden days, the artist generally lived in a rather more clearly defined milieu and had the decisive choices of subscribing to the current code, with today's immense and unresolved changes he finds it impossible to know precisely what he should be for or against. As any sensitive modern, the author is greatly uneasy at best and at worst blasphemously rails at just about everything. The civilization seems to have run away with us and we are swept along by forces and events too powerful for us to control. We live in a world of bleak despair, nihilism, hollow values and futile lives. The artist is apprehensive of such a world where the centrality of culture is lost, as every thinker pursues a path different from that of his fellows. When he is made to speak out he speaks about his own bruised soul and tormented spirit and the agony caused by the socio-political and cultural compulsions to which he is subjected in the post modern America.

Shepard's artist heroes are Shaman - like figures found from the folk-lore deposits left by the past and nourished by popular stories and

myths. They assert the life potential and rebel against the terror imposed by distorted values. Some of them are self portrayals, having his own vision. His vision is his awareness, his perspective, his good and bad dreams, his intoxication with life and his battles\_\_\_battles with society, with himself and with the universe. Working through the personal to get to the general, he progresses only by maintaining intense consciousness of the world around him. Such awareness simultaneously goads him and acts as his weapon.

Shepard's Shaman - like artists have their vision arising out of a connectedness to heartland America. They confront the supernatural for the purposes of cure, clairvoyance, the finding of lost objects and the foretelling of future. In *The Mad Dog Blues* Shepard portrays the pursuit of the artist after the golden dream. A group of mythic characters Capt.Kidd, Jesse James, Paul Bunayan , Mae West Yahoodi and Cosmo, all rock-stars, go for a hunt of Capt. Kidd's buried treasure. (On its discovery the treasure turns out to be a bunch of bottle -caps). It is allegorically, the artist's pursuit of the "golden dream", the search for self, for innocence, for his roots. To Kosmo, "the famous Pop-artist" the quest is particularly meaningful, even though the treasure of gold he discovered was just a bunch of mocking bottle-caps. The quest opened his eyes to the shocking reality that the world of wealth did not exist, for the artist.

Rabbit in *Angel City*, is a Shaman, "a kind of magician" who has been summoned to help doctor a disaster movie. In the sophisticated apartment of Lanx, Rabbit is prevailed upon to shed all his creative talent in the movie making business. His artistic creations are now conditioned by the Culver City aesthetics. His imagination flags. In the confines of the consumerist culture Rabbit's aspirations and self-indulgence cannot find fruition. The artist's individuality is put at nought, he is reduced to a scapegoat. The city plagued with wealth, power and material comforts casts its irresistible spell over the artist. His medicine bundles are of no avail. "The look within-place" breeds only "a metaphysical zero at his bones". His attempts to invent a disaster movie powerful enough to stimulate the jaded sensibilities of the public miserably misfire. The Shamanistic qualities become lack-lustered. He is led into the vortex of the culver city. Thence forth he becomes ravenous, turns ambitious and finally succumbs to the "lure of the celluloid tape", as Shepard transferred himself for a time.

Niels in *Suicide in B<sup>b</sup>*, like Rabbit, provides a key to the world of the contemporary artist, where he is exploited and made a victim. For Niles, who is a wizard of music sound was the only passion. "He was driven toward it in a way most men consider dangerous and suicidal. His production is

abundant, non stop. Endlessly winding through unheard-of before symphonies. Concertos beyond belief"<sup>117</sup> (*Suicide in B<sup>b</sup>*.123).

Art and artist are of a realm apart, which cannot stand too exasperating a domination of power or money. At the surface level *Suicide in B<sup>b</sup>* is a play about the investigation of the murder of Niles the Jazzman - that is a story that is enshrouded in mystery. The police found a body in Nile's apartment, with the face completely blown off.

Niles was a wizard of music, where frenzy of creativity was Dionysian in its wildness, It looked as though he was possessed by his gift. There were plenty of Self - proclaimed protectors to take him on. He gives himself over to them willingly and caters to every demand they make. Once his thoughts are geared to their dogma, his demon begins to be tamed. His melody ceases to be the same divinely intoxicating elixir. It descends into the terrestrial plane, it becomes boring. The demon has left him. The artist is exclusively a private individual. His art is its own excuse for being. The unmediated strains of music are spun out of his inner self as a spider weaves its web. As Laureen, one of Nile's long-time collaborators remarks, "This music has no room for politics. It answers nobody. It plays by itself even when we're not playing it, even when we are not there to listen. It has no boss. Even when the boss is dead it keeps playing" (*Suicide in B<sup>b</sup>*, 123).

Nile's suicide has been, probably an attempt on his part to liberate his art and artistic self by destroying his public persona is a well-known artist. His self, which has been shaped by the desire of other people he wanted to tear asunder. He wanted to stop laying into the hands of others, for ever. As David J. De Rose remarked his suicide is, "the only way to liberate the real self which has been inhabited and reshaped by other people's expectations and by his own adopted persons"<sup>118</sup>(David J. De Rose.86).

The experience of Niles is, to an extent, the dramatization of his own personal experience when he was picked on by Michaelangelo Antonioni, the Italian film producer to collaborate in script-writing for his *Zabriskie Point*, Shepard later spoke of this experience as a "disaster" for what Antonioni wanted was a political statement of the contemporary youth, with a lot of Marxist Jargon in it. Shepard could not do it. It was an attempt of the "cultural entrepreneurs" to kidnap him.

In *Geography of a Horse-Dreamer* is the projection of "the theme of talent and its exploitation". It is a work of art which deals with the personal dilemma of the artist himself. The play brings into focus the Mafia which manipulates the career of artists from behind the scene, driving their victims on mercilessly. Cody is a 'Cowboy from Wyoming' as he is described. He is

endowed with the special gift of dreaming the winners of horse-races before the horses are run. His Power of Clairvoyance proves to be disastrous as he was kidnapped by gangsters and held a prisoner by the syndicate boss Fingers. Cody's natural talent as a dreamer has faded because his native roots, "the cultural environment" which he calls 'geography' has been destroyed by isolation, coercion and their consequent displacement and relocation. Fingers does not understand that Cody's gift arises from his particular sensitivity to his environment. Dreaming a winner is a very delicate work. The pressure of the disruptive forces upon his consciousness makes him mad. The desperate gangsters who counted him as "a mine of gold" switch him over to dog-dreaming. Dog racing is the local part-time and eventually Cody's inner space becomes attuned to "the local frequency".

Under the yoke of a foreign system and its rules and assumptions, Cody ceases to be what he was formerly. He steadily moves toward a physical and mental break-down. Eventually, in behaviour he got transformed into a dog, whimpering surrying away from other characters and crushing into things and furniture like a frightened animal. 'His gifts are poison to him now because he has been forced to slavish creativity by commercial entrepreneurship. Torm by the conflict between dream and

power; talent and exploitation, Cody is an example for the artist who is institutionalised.

*Geography of a Horse-Dreamer* was written while Shepard was in England. He was visibly ill at ease there. The critic Ross Wetzesteon writes about the play subscribing to its allegorical implication, "I think of this kind of work as a translation play. Instead of translating the text from French, say, into English, the audience has to translate the plot into its meaning."<sup>119</sup> (Ross Wetzesteon.133).

Duke Durgens in *Melodrama Play* encounters a more literal entrapment. The play has for its hero a young performing, self-improvising artist, Duke Durgens, whose very first song made a hit with the public. Actually, the song, "Prisoners, won't you get up out a your home-made beds" was composed by Drake, Dures brother. Duke recorded the song and sold it to Floyd - his Manager. Floyd is not worried about its authorship as long as it would bring him money. He orders his strong man Peter to guard Duke, Drake, Dana and Cisco until another hit is produced. Remaining in captivity under the Democlean threat neither Duke nor Drake can think of composing a song. They are smothered under the pressure of establishment and gangsterism. Floyd depersonalities Drake and Cisco by making them exchange their names.

As we read further into the play, the nature of the inescapable trap set for the artist and the authoritarian institutionalism with its square-in-saddle mentality become clearer. Peter-a thick-headed creature of the club keeps guard over the artists in *Melodrama Play* Violence-prone Peter has just one question to be put to the victim for which he expects a truthful reply, "Now, what am I like when you look in my face?"<sup>120</sup> (*Sam Shepard*.166). It is a dangerous question, dangerous because a truthful answer would pretty soon end the artist's business on earth. The artist in the authoritarian society lives under mortal threats. However, Drake answers the question evasively, stating "I like you very much". (which is farthest from the truth). "I think you are a fairly nice guy" what the answer he first thought of. He jettisoned it because it is one of the 'bull shit' generalities. Anyone is a nice guy. In an institutionalised society the artist doesn't want to risk his standing. The three part equation of economic security, public success and freedom of expression has become a myth in the world of the artist, ridden with commercialism and utilitarianism. The large, 'eyeless' photographs of Bob Dylan, King of rock-music; and of Robert Goulet, King of Crooners suggest the artist's lack of vision. The artist is an 'eyeless in Gaze', manipulated and misguided by the Mafia, with or without consent. Rabbit Brown, Hoss, Cody, Duke, Durgen, Drake - are all

'futilitarian' figures isolated, victimised and exploited in a commercial culture which buys off, transforms and perverts the artists.

Art is supposed to hold a mirror upto nature; but dramatic art must also hold a mirror upto contemporary reality. Sam Shepard seems to share the conviction of Gertrude Stein, "that the business of art is to live in the actual present and to express that complete actual present"<sup>121</sup> (*Gary Grant*.559). The New Historicists also believe that a literary text is "embedded in its context, as an interactive component within the new-work of institutions, beliefs and cultural power-relations, practices and products, that in their ensemble constitute what we call history"<sup>122</sup> (*M.H.Abrams*.250). Hence they "construct" the textual meaning rather than 'discover' them ready-made. "All fiction, the very word confesses its exile from the truth, tries to express a truth by departing from it in some way"<sup>123</sup> (*John Whitman*.1) says John Whitman. Allegory is the extreme case of this divergence. Allegory is outspokenly reticent, proclaiming that it has a secret. It has obliquity — obliquity that relies upon an assumed correspondence between 'the fiction' and 'the truth,' what the text 'says' and what it 'means'. When it comes to satire it is the artist's awareness of the gap between what is and what might be, the gap between the real and the ideal. For Sam Shepard, theatre is the home where he brings in the adventures of his life, his impressions of the

conditions of the society, the account of his inner experiences and sorts them out. He depicts the contemporary society and denounces its vices. Comedy and satire have almost the same sort of data. The aim of comedy is amusement where as the aim of satire is didactic.

The artist's imitation of nature is more than a copy of what is apparent to every eye, his imitation is in some measure a creation. The aim of the artist is not to produce a temporary emotional state but as the affective theory insists, it is to induce an emotional state that calls for an action. For example, the artist is so to stimulate in people an awareness of the horror of war that they would go out and do something about stopping war. In this regard the artist is a reformer.

*Angel City* is a satire on the film industry of Hollywood, which makes everyone live in a fantasy world. *The Tooth of Crime* is a powerful indictment against the power game in political structure. *True West* depicts the disintegration of the American family which sets aside mothers and fathers as unnecessary, comic, troublesome and insignificant. *A Fool for Love* speaks about the love that is pervasive, incestuous and trammelled up in hopeless infidelity, another marked feature of post-modern culture in America. The gender roles and male-female relations are looked into from closer quarters

in *A Lie of the Mind*. Wife-beating husbands, neglected children, quarelling brothers, long forgotten tenderness and barren households have become an everyday reality about the modern American homes. *States of Shock* lays bare before us the physical devastation and the emotional havoc wrought upon those who go to war. The masculine myth of war is exploded before us.

Shepard, as we have noticed , is not a single-issue writer. He is a social critic and a satirist with a multiplicity of interests. His is a crusade against all social and intellectual evil that appeared in the wake of industrialisation and consumerism. He is critical of the American wealth and its artefacts. A satirist is a guardian of ideals, a dreamer and a visionary. Shepard still dreams about going home again to a pastoral civilization of peace, harmony and contentment- a civilization with cowboys, gangsters, pop-singers, trance-dancers and faith-healing ceremonies. " After all , the salvation of he world depends on the men who will not take evil good humouredly"<sup>124</sup> (J. Lahiri.28) stated Bernard Shaw in his *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. He is right! The satirist and the allegorist do take evil as something to be dealt with seriously.

# ALLEGORY AS MYTH , IMAGE AND IRONY

Lalitha.P.R “Allegory in the plays of sam shepard ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter V

### ALLEGORY AS MYTH, IMAGE AND IRONY

Sam Shepard has the best claim of any writer since Beckett and Genet to being a poet of the theatre. He is a dramatist with an intensely poetic temperament and allows himself to be overwhelmed by the music of ideas and tropes which interpenetrate each other, gather swiftness, raciness and volume as they flow and carry the poet-playwright along. A playwright of uncompromising imagination, he brings into drama a liberating interplay of word, theme, image and symbol. His stylistic mode and mythic preoccupations recall an earlier group of American writers like Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman. "The Symbolic abstraction of, for instance, Hawthorne's forest, Melville's White Whale or Poe's gothic spaces become echoed in Shepard's desert, Sidewinder computer and farm-house that hides secrets from the past"<sup>125</sup> (*Michael Earley*.127). His plays work more like romances where the imaginary landscape is so remote and open that it allows for the depiction of legend, adventure and even the supernatural. The

mythic orientation of some of his plays is too obvious. *The Tooth of Crime* depicts the dethronement of a ruler. The eternal grievance of son with father is dramatised in embryo in *Rock Garden* and in more maturity in *Curse of the Starving Class*.

Drama deals with character-in- a situation. The situation is not static, but a developing action. The characters exist only in the situation as agents of the action. The situation reflects the milieu. A play speaks from culture to culture. Hence, an awareness of the milieu is essential for the proper understanding of it. E.M.W. Tillyard, Theodore Spencer and Gilbert Murray painstakingly reconstructed the milieu of the Shakespearean period for us, with all its attitudes and ideals. Similar attempts have to be made in the case of every dramatist.

The dramatic milieu contains not merely the immediate cultural situation, it comprises collectively the dramatic conventions and traditions and the heritage of the western culture. In short, it is the environmental and "emotional territory" in which the dramatist works. Thomas E. Porter in the introduction to his book *Myth and Modern American Drama* states that "three major categories of literary and sub-literary expression reflect and shape cultural attitudes:

1. the literary tradition of Western Culture.
2. folk myth : Legends and tales capsulated in popular sub-literary forms.
3. 'authoritative' analysis of institutions and behaviour patterns popularised from a scientific background..... It includes for example, the great formulation of attitudes found in the Old Testament as well as the literary heritage of Greek and Roman culture. Folk myth and its surrogates are products of those specific experiences that make a culture unique"<sup>126</sup> (*Thomas E.Porter.19*).

Traditional forms like comedy and tragedy have their own patterns of action with conventional meaning. The tragic action is a movement from guilt through suffering to purgation. The pattern reflects the basic human desire to be free from guilt and to rejoin a purified society. The basic movement of the comic action often involves a progress to wedding. The "wedding" is symbolic of the unification of the society on its own terms. The boy - meets - girl pattern is the most prevalent in the comic action. Another traditional element in the dramatic milieu is the heritage of western culture which offers the conventional imagery and motifs to the drama. The most valuable contribution in this respect is made by the Judaeo-

Christian tradition. The problem of evil, the Puritan theology of Election and the Greek, the Roman and the Pagan rituals are thus made use of to highlight the situation, action and characters in modern drama. These traditional elements are used to serve the present rather than to embalm the past. O'Neill, Miller, Williams and Wilder deal with moralistic principles implicit in Puritan theology. Mac Leish begins *J.B.* with the invocation of Job from the Old Testament. American culture is a product of adaptation. The alien soil and the hostile environment were a real challenge to the early settlers, which called forth stoic endurance and an insatiable zest to survive and be invincible. Adversities only reinforced the fanatical faith of the American in self-reliance. This ego-centrism is an integral part of the American psyche and is a kind of secularisation of the puritan principle of God-reliance. Benjamin Franklin's "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise" is actually an aphoristic formulation of the success ideology. Horatio Alger, in the late nineteenth century evolved the myth of "rags-to-riches" a stock-pattern which idealised the American drive for success at any cost. Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Buffalo Bill - are some of the macho figures deemed to be models of frontier manhood, who carried with them an aura of isolation, self-reliance, independence and resolution. In popular imagination they have assumed heroic proportions

because they represented the ideals and aspirations of the community. These characters who descended from folk-myths appeared to be incarnations of courage, physical prowess and moral justice. As culture advanced and the way of living improved the needs of people for particular types of legends and myths changed too. Attempts were made by new dramatists to replace old myths with viable new ones. The American playwrights have made conscious use of literary models from Greek tragic, Greek comic, Judeo-Christian and the Greco-Roman folk-myths. Each playwright modifies his model to suit the cultural attitude of his audience. Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* is a play closely modelled on the Greek myth of Agamemnon. Agamemnon, the King of Argos was married to Clytemnestra. He commanded the Greek host that went to Troy to recover Helen. On his return he was murdered by Clytemnestra and her paramour Aegisthus. Electra, Agamemnon's daughter incites her brother Orestes to avenge their father's death. Orestes murders Aegisthus. Learning about the death of Aegisthus, Clytemnestra commits suicide. Upto this point, O'Neill follows his model point for point. There after, his invention is more or less free of the Greek background. Writing for a twentieth century audience O'Neill could not rely on the theme of revenge as a motive for his play. In O'Neill's play, Orin corresponds to Orestes and Lavinia to Electra. Haunted by the Furies

for his blood-guilt, Orin commits suicide. Lavinia forsakes her own future and bars the house and retires into it forever. No one character escapes the visitation of Nemesis. The moral transgression is given a new dimension in the case of Orin and Lavinia by O'Neill. It is psychological. Orin's mother-fixation changed into an incestuous passion for Lavinia of which his sudden awareness is provocation for his suicide. Lavinia, also has grown recognizable into a likeness of her mother. Orin's and her knowledge of this is the culmination of the play.

Thus, a myth is a complex creation, mostly, a cultural product "which assimilates and crystallizes the traditions and cultural experience of a society into a permanent system of values, a higher imaginative form"<sup>127</sup> (N.S.Pradhan.14). Myth also becomes a permanent foil, a dominant and pervasive idealisation of life against which the current realities of an advancing culture are measured.

Myths are also stories which manifest some aspects of the cosmic order. They provide the community with the means of structuring experience in the present and provide the rationale for social customs and observances. Most myths are related to social rituals but anthropologists are divided about whether rituals generated myths or myths generated rituals. Myths

are narrated and enacted in rituals. The myth often justifies the ritual. There had been a close correlation of myth and ritual in the mystery religions of the Near East, such as Orphic, Eleusinian and Isis cults too. Both myths and rituals are based on particular beliefs about the cosmic order. Ian G. Barbour comments in his book *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A comparative Study*

“ If a myth is defined as a story in which some aspect of the cosmic order is manifest, then the scriptures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam must be said to include myths. For in them one finds stories of God’s creation, judgement, deliverance, incarnation and so forth...”<sup>128</sup>  
 ( Ian G.Barbour.22).

There are myths borrowed from Nature, ancient civilization, old literature and Christian scriptures. One of the popular myths, universally used in the myth of birth, death and rebirth which has its origin in the vegetation rituals in ancient Egypt. In the Christian faith it is represented by the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The historical myths of the Fisher King, King Oedipus of Thebes refer to the consequences of sin— death, blight and devastation- affecting the land and its rulers. Subsequent repentance and penance helped the rulers regain their health and the fertility of the land.

The seasonal cycle of Nature inspired the vegetation myth. Winter is the season of death while spring is the season of rebirth. The spring showers fill the plants and the trees with vitality. In ancient Egypt the effigy of the vegetation God known by different names like Osiris, Adonis Atis, was filled with grains of corn and buried under the earth. When the grains sprouted, it signified the rebirth of the god.

There are specific myths which hold a special fascination for the artists. "...the artist creates a family of romance and identifies with heroes, specifically divine or demonic beings. Some favourites of the artist include myths of Prometheus, Daedalus, Faust and Icarus"<sup>129</sup>(Grace Stewart.6) says Grace Stewart in her book *A New Mythos*. Some writers show an increasing tendency to identify themselves with these heroes and live out their lives in their works. James Joyce's novel *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is admittedly autobiographical and it leans very heavily on mythology. The hero Stephen Dedalus, identifies himself not only with the mythical Dedalus but also with Christ. In Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus* Adrian Leverkühn represents the hero with the demonic powers. Both these novels of the twentieth century follow the mythic pattern of a quest.

The journey or quest is an important element in myth. The quest for identity and the concept of the discovery of the self are intimately connected.

In modern literature, the quest takes this pattern of man's search for the meaning of existence in a meaningless universe. "The quest is topical yet universal for the pattern repeats the search for the honeyed land, the Holy Grail, the lifted maya, the rebirth of the soul, nirvana or the womb"<sup>130</sup>(*Grace Stewart.8*).

According to many interpreters myths are neither true nor false, they are at best useful fictions. Even if myths are not true when taken literally they can be said to have a kind of truth. One possibility would be to take them as symbols of man's inner life. They express man's feelings, hopes and fears or his experiences of guilt, reconciliation and liberation from anxiety. "Myths are allegories of goings on in the Universe around us: myths are not history, but natural history"<sup>131</sup>(*K.K.Ruthven.10*) writes K.K. Ruthven in his *Myth: The critical Idiom*. Freud looked upon myths as precipitates of unconscious processes. The unconscious he imagined to be a sort of cellar in which sexual fantasies are stored. Carl Jung disagreed with it. He substituted a two-tiered structure of his own design. The upper level is the "personal unconscious" which lies just below the threshold of consciousness. Beneath this lies a much deeper "collective unconscious". Jung first called the contents of the collective unconscious "archetypes" in 1919 and these contents, according to him, produce the archetypal images familiar in

myths, dreams, art and literature. "Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices"<sup>132</sup>(*Jung King.22*) wrote Jung. W.B. Yeats also reached similar conclusions and in his essay 'Magic' he expressed his belief in the 'Great Memory' \_\_ 'Spiritus Mundi' \_\_ clearly akin to the 'collective unconscious' of Jung. Images which evoke primordial emotions are the means to a literature of universal significance. Myth is a symbolic form which we interpose between ourselves and the outside world in order to understand it. In terms of meaning, myth is a structure of imagery with conceptual implications. Both myth and images speak in metaphorical language. If realism is an art of implicit simile, myth is an art of implicit metaphorical identity. A metaphor is open-ended like the allegory. Metaphors often have emotional and valuational over-tones. They are expressive of the poet's experiences and evocative of the readers' imagination. This metaphor-image-allegory nexus is ever operative in literature. eg. to say something as simple as 'it is night' the ancient Aryans found themselves obliged to say that "Selene kisses Endymion into sleep". (Selene is the moon and Endymion the setting sun) As John Crowe Ransom remarked, "Myths are conceits born of metaphor"<sup>133</sup>(*John Crowe Ransom.34*). T.S. Eliots, "Wasteland" invites comparison with Jessie Weston's study of the Grail quest in *From Ritual to Romance*. Having invented a mythical

method, Eliot draws the parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, portraying the immense panorama of futility and anarchy. The primordial image or archetype—let it be the journey, or quest or fall—constantly recurs in the course of literature. These images give the local habitation and form to the innumerable experiences of our ancestors. If the image is structurally the common ground between myth and literature allegory is the inevitable go-between. Both pagans and Christians are accustomed to read their respective mythologies allegorically. Hercules who stands at the cross-roads and contemplates the broad way to vice before taking the rough road to virtue, is neither man nor god but wisdom caught in the very act of making a correct moral choice. Centuries later, Robert Frost regenerates the same mythical situation to present a man confronted with the problem of 'Choice' in life, in his poem '*The Road Not Taken*', Myth is encased in a verbal covering which has, very often, nothing to do with the core meaning underneath. Behind myth lies the ancient desire to make comprehensible that which is not in a shared language.

Literature, as K.K.Ruthven remarks is "displaced" mythology best understood if replaced in its correct mythical context. The context endows the particular word or image or statement with significance. "The obvious warping of a statement by the context, we characterize as 'ironical'" states

Cleanth Brooks in his "Irony as principle of structure"<sup>134</sup> (*Cleanth Brooks*.60). In certain contexts, the statement means quite the opposite of what it purports to say literally. This is sarcasm. The tone of irony can be effected by the skilful disposition of the context. Modern poetry and drama do use irony as its special and perhaps characteristic strategy. Eliot deliberately chose the mythical method to effect an ironic contrast between parallel situations in the past and the present. In "*The Wasteland*," T.S.Eliot uses this device to effect a contrast 'between the evils of the modern civilization with the felicities of the Golden Age. In the past, fairies walked on the banks of river Thames, today prostitutes and call-girls wander on the bank in search of sex. The fairies washed their feet in the river water. But now a days Mrs Porter and her daughter wash their feet in soda water. Literary quotations and allusions from works of Ovid, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Webster, Middleton, French and German writers and the Upanishads also serve the end of irony in Eliot's "*Wasteland*". Three different kinds of Wasteland are evoked\_\_ the Biblical, King Fisher's, King Oedipus's. They have points of similarity as well as points of dissimilarity with the modern wasteland. Irony lies in the very method of recalling the past and placing it side by side with conditions of the world of today. Different periods of history are telescoped right from the pre-historic times,

through the Egyptian and the Greek civilizations to the Renaissance down to the twentieth century. Almost all the myths he employed are traditional ones, the vegetation myth of Egypt, the Christian myth of Crucifixion and resurrection, the historical myths of the Fisher King and of King Oedipus. Thematically, all these myths refer to the consequences of sin which affected the rulers and their lands, the subsequent penance and atonement which lead to the regeneration of the land and regain of fertility. The idea is that redemption or salvation is possible only through suffering and purification. Similarly, the modern Wasteland can still be saved through self-reformation and a life of faith, service and dedication to moral values.

W.H. Auden, in his poem, "The shield of Achilles" makes use of a similar kind of mythopoetic imagination which enables him to attain a double-focus and thereby turn the Homeric legend into a befitting analogy of the post-war world. The double edged device of irony suggests a parallel between the classical world and the present one. The myth has been worked to a deep significance. Thetis, the mother of Achilles the Greek hero, is looking at the shield of her son, hanging over his shoulder. The shield is a symbol of art and etched in it are scenes of beauty, adventure and love. But the shield of Achilles was made by Hephaestus, the black-smith of the gods. Instead of the familiar scene of beauty, adventure and art like "marble,

well-governed cities", "wine-dark seas" and "ritual pieties," Thetis sees sights of decay and desolation where "unintelligible multitude" without expression congregated. Auden contrasts the ancient Greek world of beauty, valour and adventure with the modern world of horrors with the least chance for redemption.

Myth shows the essential structure of reality manifest in particular events of the past that are remembered by generation after generation. Irony brings out the essential difference between the past and the present.

Sam Shepard's plays are a metaphoric model of the American experience localised in fictional characters with a mythical orientation.

He creates a sense of mystery out of the actual. In an interview with Carl Rosen, he opened his mind about myth in this manner.

"...the traditional meaning of myth, the ancient meaning of myth is that it served a purpose in our life....Myth served as a story in which people could connect themselves in time in the past, And thereby connect themselves with the present and future..... It was so powerful and so strong that it acted as a thread in culture...."<sup>135</sup>(*Carol Rosen.5*)

Myth connects us to the family of generations and generations of races of people, tribes, the mythology of the ancient people, their prayers, rituals, dance and music that lead people to the river of myth.

In the 1950s there was a vigorous reappraisal of old-world values in the American society and theatre. In the theatre, rock-music came to be accepted as one of the major codes of identity. Rock-themes became the standard fare of Shepard. His use of music in the theatre — rock, jazz, blues country and western and folk — is significant. These become the building stones with which Shepard created his vision of America. Shepard evokes visions and images on the stage with the magical power of a Shaman. Peter Brooks the theatre-critic, has spoken of the theatre as “the place where the invisible can appear”<sup>136</sup> (*Peter Brooks*.102). Most of life escapes our senses. Underlying every art is the power to detect and present the missing and the invisible. Drama presents the invisible through the use of rhythms, music, rituals, incarnations and dance. Since Shepard’s concern is not with the bland exterior of experience he makes use of these elements effectively. Thus he has his roots in the oldest traditions of drama, namely “myth, magic and the Dionysian frenzy”<sup>137</sup> (*Michael J. Hayes*.139).

My attempt in this chapter is to analyse the mythical orientation in some of his plays like *The Tooth of Crime*, *Buried Child*, *Geography of A Horse*

*Dreamer* and *Icarsu's Mother* and how such an orientation enhances the allegorical meaning by its superimposition of irony and images.

*The Tooth of Crime* takes the mythic story of the ageing hero and leader being challenged by a young rebel. Hoss is the reigning rock-star, Crow is the challenger who dethrones the reigning King to establish his supremacy over the domain of the rock-music. He sends the aging Elvis Presley model Hoss into the junk and oblivion. Hoss has been endowed with a royal stature in the play. He has all the kingly paraphernalia about him. He is surrounded by his accolytes. He has Becky his hand -maiden, a private astrologer to advice him about the propitiousness of time, two Tiresian seers to read astrological signs and ancient oracles; and also a personal doctor to administer drugs to keep him cool or make him hot as the situation required. Yet, like Oedipus and Julius Caesar Hoss chooses to disregard the oracles and their warnings when he announces his readiness to battle with Crow. Hoss knows that his rock - world standards are antiquated but he refuses to acknowledge the genuineness of the upcoming Majo Root Force represented by Crow. In the star-war, set up like a boxing match, with language as the ammunition, the old veteran is out-manoeuvred by the fresh vigour of his adversary. It is a value-conflict at the end of which a new system is established. Hoss, the artist of the old school, has a connectedness to

heartland America. He can work only within a code. Now the code itself is breaking down. Crow on the otherhand, is disconnected from Time and Place. It is his absence of connection which gives Crow his freedom. The Yeastian "rough beast" is a nihilistic anti-hero who represents pure anarchy. Against him, Hoss must re-orient his identity which his moral intransigence would not permit him. He can only envy Crow for his style but cannot adopt his ways. The inevitable follows, Hoss is clean bowled. "...I guess, I don't get your smarts. That's for sure...The turf's yours. The whole shot..."<sup>138</sup> (*The Tooth of Crime*.245). With the victorious Crow looking on, Hoss puts the gun into his mouth and pulls the trigger. Desperate and self-negating Hoss falls on his shot. Where he left off Crow begins.

*The Tooth of Crime* has a powerful image at the centre - the image of a dual in which words are used as weapons. Every play of Shepard contains a single, powerful image, as the aeroplane in *Icarsu's Mother*, the snake computer in *Operation Sidewinder*, the green slime in *Angel City* and the empty refrigerator in *Curse of the Starving Class*. The structure of the play *The Tooth of Crime* depends on the multiple meanings of words like 'hit', 'big-killing', "contract" and so on - words that we associate with a fight and also with rock-music, crime and big business. The first act of the play reveals the magic circle of Hoss . In the second act we witness the

duel between Hoss and Crow, in which Crow usurps the throne. The battle between Hoss and Crow is a verbal duel, a war of styles. Shepard the wordsmith through the stylised dialect conjures up before us two contending generations of rock-singers - of Elvis Presley and Johnny Rottan. Writing for *Plays and Players* John Burgess calls the play "a sort of long-winded rewrite of the *Golden Bough* with rock accompaniment"<sup>139</sup>(*John Burgess* .88). As Shepard himself remarked, "we are continuously taking in images of experience from the outside world through our senses...."<sup>140</sup>(*Visualization*.215). Some of these images sometimes tally with the mythical images already stored away in some kind of inner library to give us back an allegorical meaning. The allegorical theory of myths supposes that "all the myths of the ancients were allegorical and symbolical and contained some moral, religious or philosophical truth...."<sup>141</sup>(*Thomas Bulfinch*.368).

Shepard employs the myth as a mode of expression for making a point. The play under discussion *The Tooth of Crime* works as a variation on the myth of the dying god. The incidents in the play bear a close resemblance "to the morphology of "Golden Bough myth" or the King of the Woods myth described by Sir James Frazer"<sup>142</sup>(*Dharanidhar Sahu*.88). The veteran Rock-star Hoss, dethroned and replaced calls for a parallel in the

multilayered myth of "The Golden Bough". The myth speaks about the cyclic transfer of power under violent conditions.

The priest-king Nemi is wedded to the Golden Bough and Diana. He is the priest, the king, the murderer and the protector who keeps vigil under the tree, always apprehensive of an enemy who would turn the tables against him, kill him and assume power. His old age and weakness create a situation for an inexorable ferment and rearrangement of power. *The Tooth of Crime* also points to a similar structure of power game. Hoss has been holding the scepter of power for too long a period and his unwillingness to part with power is also obvious. When Hoss sees Crow who looks like Keith Richards, exuding confidence and arrogance, he visualises his inevitable obliteration. Frazer remarks in "The Golden Bough", "The rule of succession by the sword was observed down to imperial times..."<sup>143</sup> (Dharmindhar Sahu.87) The climax of the play witnesses the classic shoot-out between the established top-gun and the new comer and the subsequent defeat and death of the former. In tribal societies, the transfer of power is inevitably through violent usurpations. The text of *The Tooth of Crime* is modelled upon the multi-layered myth of the cyclic transfer of power, Upon closer reading, the play responds to the general structure of such a power game and the violence inherent in it.

The structuralist mode of thought makes it imperative to discover the structure of the dethronement - usurpation - dethronement syndrome. Structures of power operative in myths, in political and tribal system do not rule out defeat or dethronement as an avoidable evil.

A similar structure of power game can be witnessed in the Greek myth of Cronos. Cronos, son of Uranus conspired against his father, dethroned him and became the ruler of the Universe. He was in turn dethroned by his son Zeus. Cronos after usurping the throne of Uranus, cannot get rid of the fear of being treated like-wise by his son Zeus. Hoss in *The Tooth of Crime*, is caught in the grip of a similar fear and is mustering up courage to meet his adversary. Under an indefinitely deferred threat Hoss remains ever vigilant because "The Crown sticks where it fits"<sup>144</sup> (*The Tooth of Crime*.213). And prophetically he foresees that "The next genius is gonna be a Gypsy killer"<sup>145</sup> (*The Tooth of Crime*.209). The terror of succession by usurpation is a built-in-complex which cannot be erased from the minds of the power-mongers. The different levels of signification impart the obvious message that the power acquired through violence would be transferred through violence. The Hoss-Crow battle over the 'turf' is hence guided by an inexorable law of necessity. The characters are tormented by a sense of sin because they realise that they are only links in the great chain of necessity

and violence. This is the irony of the situation. Hoss himself came to power by shoving aside his predecessor and now he is getting prepared to be side-tracked. This structure of power-game imposes itself upon certain images. The idea of place is caught up in a room, the room gets enlarged into the world. The chair placed in the centre of the room is the Principle of power.

*Buried Child*, which is basically a realistic family play, leans heavily on the Greek mythology. With the archetypal narratives as Orestean home-coming, Oedipal incest, the battles of fathers and sons as well as patricide and infanticide the play penetrates into the fantastic world of myths and beliefs.

The play with its conventional three-act format presents an eccentric, contemporary family in Illinois — “a private, closed highly individualistic universe that exists beyond the conventions of society”<sup>146</sup> (Bonnie Marranca.109). It is a decrepit farm-house where drunken Dodge, a man in his seventies sits like Eliots Gerontion awaiting death. The other members are the two sons, one legged Bradley and his nitwit brother Tilden and their mother Halie who had Tilden’s child years ago. Into this curious world come Tilden’s son Vince and his girl friend Shelley. It is a surprise visit to the folk at home. Shelley the unsuspecting outsider

expects a royal reception with "turkey dinners and apple-pie". But it is a frightening battleground that she walks into. She is insulted by Dodge, terrorised by Bradley who shoves his fingers into her mouth (in a symbolic image of rape) and taken for a prostitute by Halie. Before long she realises this is not model, middle American home. From this point onward she serves as a "perceptual guide for the audience"<sup>147</sup> (*David J. De Rose*.107).

It is shocking to Shelley that nobody recognizes Vince in the household except Halie. Yet Vince claims to be Tilden's son. Halie tells a strange story about a third son, Ansel who was married to a Mafia princess and was dead in a motel room on his honey-moon. She speaks of him fondly as a military hero and a great basket-ball player. Bradley negates the last attribute and says that Ansel never played basket-ball. Unmindful of his comment, Halie goes out with the local pastor. A sense of mystery hovers around the house-hold.

The pervasive sense of mystery deepens as the play progresses. In the II<sup>nd</sup> Act, Tilden enters the house, carrying an armful of vegetables and carrots which he gives Shelley to cut. It is Tilden who tells Shelley about a family secret. Halie was pregnant late in life and the child was illegitimate. Because Dodge himself confessed that they had not been sleeping in the

same bed for six years. May be the child was a product of Halie's incest with Tilden We are led to believe that Didge drowned and buried it behind the yard. At one moment Dodge confesses "My flesh and blood is buried in the backyard"<sup>148</sup> (*Buried Child*.76) and in the same breath he tries to convince Tilden that it all happened before he was born. The incest and the subsequent birth of the unwanted child are the family's dark-secrets. Shelley is disillusioned that the family of Vince, does not correspond to the images and beliefs she has been taught. In utter despair, she is awaiting the return of Vince who has gone out. He comes back heavily drunk and as if in a trance he mutters. "I've gotta carry on the line"<sup>149</sup> (*Buried Child*.130). Vince is drawn back into the vortex of the inescapable destiny. Just before his death, Dodge has willed the house and whatever is left of the big farm to Vince. Vince lies down on the sofa taking Dodge's usual spot and posture.

The surface realism of the play is deceptive. As Ruby Cohn has remarked, "the play is realistic in setting, straight forward in plot and coherent in character"<sup>150</sup> (*Bruce.J.Mann*.82). Though the characters in *Buried Child* are realistic American types, some of their actions carry them beyond the boundaries of normal behaviour. From the surface realism the characters move on into the confusingly mysterious and the mythic levels.

Like the House of Oedipus, the family of Dodge and Halie is cursed. It is a claustrophobic family in which the father is invariably trying to keep his sons away from getting power. He has always "dodged" responsibility for his sons. It is a savage world of exclusive patriarchal values of violence and dominance that we witness in *Buried Child*. Dodge is the quintessential patriarch, hard, ruthless and all powerful. His sons Bradley and Tilden are both handicapped, physically and mentally. Before the arrival of Vince, Dodge does not see any threat to his supremacy from any quarter. All the same, like Cronos who was dethroned by his Progeny Zeus; and Lanius who was later ousted by Oedipus, Dodge is also terrified of losing control of the house. " They'll steal your bottle! They'll cut your hair. They will murder your children"<sup>151</sup> (*Buried Child*.94). There had been attempts on the part of the sons to overpower him. Tilden empties an entire basket of corn-husk over his body making him appear a corn-king. The hair cut which Bradley gives him, signifies castration and imminent death of Dodge. He becomes the modern Samson who has lost his power and potency. The brothers who have no love lost between them indulge in mocking each other. They are acting out the primeval, brutal, Cain and Abel conflict of brotherhood. The house is in a fine disarray as the house of Atreus. It is into this scene of degeneration, Vince comes as a saviour, signalling a new lease of life. The

young son is the spiritual saviour and he has the moral courage to assume responsibility.

The play is also about Vince's home-coming. Vince is coming back to what he left behind six years ago. He is like Orestes who comes back to settle the score with Aegisthus. He is the questing hero searching for his heritage. Vince has been living the "debauched life" of an artist in the big city. The journey that he undertook searching for his heritage, "stopping at every donut shop he ever kissed a girl in" (*Buried Child*.119) brought him to the door step of his once ancestral home. Like Oswald in Ibsen's *Ghosts* Vince gives up everything in the present, his girl and his music, to undertake the journey to discover his true identity and biological roots. At first, he tries to run away from the loony family where he is not recognized, where he suffers the pain of being a stranger. In his final speech he describes how he realises his own connectedness with the past. The continuous images of the men in his family fading through the rainy wind - shield of the car he was driving, in his attempt to run away from them, convince him that he cannot escape their influence.

"I could see myself in the windshield....I studied my face. Studied everything about it. As though I was looking at another man. As though I could see his whole race behind him. Like a mummy's face.

I saw him dead and alive at the same time. In the windshield I watched him breathe as though he was frozen in time.....And then his face changed. His face became his father's face. Same bones, same eyes, same nose, same breath And his father's face changed to his Grandfather's face. And it went on like that....I followed my family clear into Iowa....Then it all dissolved. Eveything dissolved"<sup>152</sup>(*Buried Child*.130).

Vince returns to find his place in the house and claim his inheritance. The drunken Vince crashes through the screen porch and knocks the door off its hinges. Unfolding a hunting knife he carves a circular hole in the screen door, through which he crawls back into the family, and yells out, "I gotta carry on the line. I've gotta see to it that things keep rolling"<sup>153</sup> (*Buried Child*.130) It is Vince's ritualistic initiation into the family and also symbolic of his spiritual rebirth.

The play *Buried Child*, may be viewed as a throw-back upon the ancient fertility legend of the impotent Fisher King whose deposition makes the "Wasteland" bear fruits again. Myth of the Fisher King is also connected with the famous Grail legend. Miss Jessie Weston in her book *From Ritual to Romance* has treated the legend critically and historically and has concluded that the Grail was originally connected with the fertility myth by its sexual

symbols. According to this myth Parsifal and his fellow adventurers happened to arrive in a country ruled over by a Prince named the Fisher King. At that time the king appeared to be a human wreck maimed and impotent as the result of a sin committed by his soldiers in outraging the modesty of a group of nuns in the Grail Chapel. The impotency of the Fisher King was reflected, sympathetically, in the land of which he was the ruler. The land also became dry and barren, The King, however, was waiting with hope in the midst of despair, that one day the knight of the pure soul would visit the Chapel perilous and his star-crossed kingdom whereby he would get well and his land would get fertile. Vince is the knight who comes in search of the Holy Grail. The sudden fecundity that he brings in the wake of his arrival stuns Halie who exclaims ".... I've never seen such a corn. Have you taken a look at it lately...Tall as a man already... Carrots too, Potatoes...Peas...a miracle" (*Buried Child*. 132). Vince here grows into the dimension of the Holy knight and the "guardian angel" about whom Halie is convinced that "he'd watch over us. He would watch over all of us". (*Buried Child*.128).

There was a time when Dodge's farm also used to produce a bumper crop and milk enough to "fill Lake Michigan twice over" as Dodge himself recalls reminiscing over the lost Garden of Eden. For years now, like the

cursed land of the Fisher king and that of Oedipus the King of Thebes the farms have been lying fallow Dodge had planted the corn. But he failed to nurture it just as he failed to nurture his sons. His sins never allowed him to have a harvest.

Thomas Nash calls the play “ a modern version of the central theme of western mythology of death and rebirth of the Corn King”<sup>154</sup>(*Thomas Nash*.486). The essence of the mythical method lies in establishing a parallel between the past and the present. The problems of mankind are the same, though spaced by time. The fertility ritual myth has its origin in Egypt. The effigy of the vegetation god known by different names like Osiris, Adonis and Attis, was stocked with grains of corn and buried underground. After some days the grains sprouted. In some cases the effigy was drowned in the Sea. A few days later it surfaced forth with the grain sproutings. Then the God was said to be reborn.

In *Buried Child* we encounter with the archetypal image of the sick-king presiding over a cursed blighted land. The farm has not produced a crop of corn since very long. The farm’s failure is mirrored in Dodge, Halie and their maimed children. The members of the house are dead for each other. Dodge awaits death in a costume of Khaki clothes, a colour that symbolically represents the withering of the body and soul. As Dodge sleeps

in the coach he is visited by his sons Tilden and Bradley. Tilden spreads a basketful of husk over the body of his father Bradley sneaks up to him to give him a vicious hair-cut. These actions signify figuratively the castration and ritualistic killing of the corn-king, in the winter of his life. Halie who carries a single rose in her hand drops it between the e legs of Dodge- a floral tribute of sorts. The ritualistic events in the play foreshadows the death of the old man. Dodge allows Vince to fill in "the heroic vacuum", caused by his death, in the same spot on the sofa, in the same posture. The corn king has died but he lives again in the person of the new king; who is the incarnation of the buried child, about whom Dodge once said, "My flesh and blood". Young Vince takes his grandfather's place literally and figuratively and inherits his house and farm. Tilden enters in the final moments of the play with the infant corpse cradled in his arms. Seeing it raining outside Halie exclaims "Good hard rain. Takes everything straight down deep to the roots....I've never seen a crop like this in my whole life. May be its' the sun. May be that's it. May be its the sun" (*Buried Child* .132)

The enthusiastic remarks about the sun and opulent vegetation in the background is a promise of revitalization. As Toby Silverman Zinman has remarked "... the play teases us with its mythic underlayer. We see glimpses of Adonis and Attis and Osiris beneath the veneer of plot; and when we

look again we see in the glare the paraphernalia of the Grail legend"<sup>155</sup> (*Toby Silverman Zinman*.425).

*Buried Child* is propelled also by two fearful themes \_\_incest and infanticide. Levi Strauss in *The Structural Study of Myth* says that myths may be characterised as having "bundles" of relations. According to Strauss "....the Oedipus myth is among other things the story of over-rating blood-relations (Oedipus marries his mother) and under rating blood relations (Oedipus kills his father Laius)"<sup>156</sup> (*Thomas Nash*.491).

The polar opposites of Shepard's play, "the over-rating and under-rating" of blood relations are the same ones used by Levi Strauss to describe the structures of the Oedipus myth. The blood ties of the family were over-rated in Tilden's incest with Halie, they were under-rated in the infanticide.

In *Buried Child* the incest between Tilden and Halie is a family secret. It is so secret that everybody is convinced that it never happened. Halie, like Eve bore the child in pain, the child that "begged to be born". Tilden nurtured the child. The idea of incest is only very subtly communicated in this play, through a description of Tilden's loving attention to the baby in contrast with Dodge's brutal insensitivity; "he'd walk all night out in pasture with it. Talking to it, singing to it" (*Buried Child* .124). Halie refers to "stench

of sin in this house' (Buried Child p-116). In a mood of self-revelation Tilden confesses to Shelley the outsider, "I had a son but we buried him" (*Buried Child* .92) Suggesting that his mother's child is his too. In Act III Dodge opens his mind, "Then Halie got pregnant again Out O' the middle a' nowhere she got pregnant... In fact, we hadn't been sleeping in the same bed for about six years" (*Buried Child* .123) Dodge continues, "...it wanted to pretend that I was its father. She wanted me to believe in it. Even when everyone around us knew. Everyone....Tilden knew. Tilden was the one who knew. Better than any of us" (*Buried Child* .124).

The child threatened Dodge's patriarchal powers and so he killed it. The mother and Tilden were unable to protect it. Dodge "couldn't allow a thing like that to grow up in the middle" of their lives Because the existence of this child conceived through incest would destroy his world. Halie, the mother is cursed by the combined acts of over-rating and under -rating blood relations. Over rating led her to the incest with Tilden and the subsequent birth of the unwanted child. The underrating resulted in the infanticide, thought for which she is not responsible something which she could not prevent.

Embedded within the old myth are contradictory realities juxtaposed, which however afford an alternative reading, a contrary interpretation, which we refer to as irony. The play presents three

generations of characters - Dodge the patriarch, his sons, Tilden, Bradley and Ansal and the grandson 'Vincent'. Vince who is working as an artist in Illinois arrives home with his girl friend Shelley on their way to New Mexico. No one in the family recognises him. Vince turns aggressive and is determined to claim his inheritance though the land is anything but fertile now. Finally Dodge, in spite of himself has to proclaim his last will and testament making Vince his legal heir. At this point it dawns on Vince that heritage is different from the idyllic first impression. With this conviction, grows in him a feeling of entrapment. But he cannot escape the powerful grip of heredity. The inherited poison of violence makes him attuned to the ways of the family. He goes out and comes back in a drunken fit. He crawls in through a circular hole into the house, removes the mantle from Dodge and removes the artificial leg of his uncle. Vince, as we see him at the beginning of the play, an artist musician, dressed like a cow-boy and carrying a musical instrument, is spiritually dead. The armful of corn and carrot which Tilden brings signal the fecundity that burst in the fallow field. But the rotting corpse of the buried child which Tilden holds in his arms, as he climbs up the stairs in the last scene underscores the terrible irony of the play that it is death, not life that has been harvested. The paralysing irony is that Vince the erstwhile lover of

Shelley has also inherited Dodge's failure to love. That is why he lets Shelley leave. Shelley was his only link with reality. Now that she is gone Vince has no moorings. The substance and spirit of the place enter his bones. Vince suffers another kind of burial, leaving the real world, that is Shelley, behind. He is entombed by the poisons of a deadly past.

The major images in the play — Vinee's journey to Iowa in a drunken fit, his entry into the house through a hole in the screen door, the armful of corn and carrots that Tilden brings, the infant corpse - all these signify a negative import and a tragic paradox.

In the words of Northrop Frye the play "begins in realism and dispassionate observation and moves steadily toward myth"<sup>157</sup> (*Johan Callens*.409) taking advantage of the ironic mode in the process. Irony provides the key to a deeper understanding of the play *Buried Child*. As Michael Smith Director of Shepards' plays, pointed out on a different occasion, "It needs reality in order to transcend reality"<sup>158</sup> (*Michael Smith*.161).

Shepard's *True West* which had its premiere in 1980 is a play cast in the realistic mode but dominated by the spirit of myth and fantasy. The play is set in Southern California, in a suburban kitchen, the action focusses

on the relationship of two brothers, Austin and Lee. The house actually belongs to their 'Mom' and Austin is taking care of her house while she is on vacation in Alaska. Austin who has a frail physique, is neatly dressed and has a full head of hair. In appearance, Lee is just the opposite. Balding, Shabby, he speaks with a Western twang and looks certainly ten years older. He tells Austin he has been living in Mojave desert. His reason for the decision to go home is not clear. Lee's intrusion is not naturally relished by his brother but he tries to be patient with Lee.

The two brothers, like the Biblical Cain and Abel, are poles apart\_\_ in their appearance, conduct and conviction. With his Ivy League Diploma and his job as a writer Austin has middle class status. He is a successful script-writer who has nearly completed an artistic "project" which he hopes to sell to Saul Kimmer a Hollywood producer. Lee is an outlaw who lives by stealing and gambling. With his annoying and demanding presence Lee destroys Austin's concentration and hinders his work. However, Austin allows Lee to have his way in the house. Lee is not satisfied. He makes Austin loan him his car. Austin knows that he would use it to rob his neighbours but Austin can neither resist him nor deny his request. Lee who believes in muscle-power breaks in on Austin's conference with Saul Kimmer and

badgers him into agreeing to consider a story which he (Lee ) himself has written, "a true to life western".

The second Act opens with Lee and Kimmer returning after a golf-game with Lee having all the golf club, which means that he has won a bet. As part of that bet Kimmer has had to agree that he would develop Lee's ideas. Austin's amazement and shock turn to near hysteria. He legitimately gets furious when he learns that Kimmer dropped the deal with him without consulting him. Lee adds insult to injury when he says that Austin would be hired to write his script.

The moment Kimmer decides in favour of Lee, a personality transference takes place in the brothers. The spirit of each brother seems to possess the other. Lee, all on a sudden, hates his vagrant life and longs for "Mom's paradise". The change that comes over Austin is unbelievable. He gets roaring drunk and threatens to roam through Mom's neighbourhood perhaps committing worse crimes Lee has ever dreamt of. Thus Lee who was formerly like his father newly identifies with his Mom and Austin does vice-versa. Though they are utterly disdainful of each other they are envious of each other. Lee's screen-writing attempts fail, consequently he turns violent and begins to smash everything in the room with the golf club, first the type-writer and then the stack of buttered toast. Austin drops down on

his knees to pick up the toast. About this William Kleb remarks, "It seems a mortification ritual, a final submission to Lee's power and authority"<sup>159</sup> (*William Kleb.67*).

Into this littered kitchen, Mom returns. She notices that her plants are dead. The savage battle between her sons and their primal capacity for violence make her desperate. In the presence of the Cain and Abel - like siblings she feels "worse than being homeless"<sup>160</sup> (*William Kleb.117*). The quiet, conventional, suburban life to which she is used is shattered. This wasteland is alien to her. Walking through the wreckage Mom walks out on her children.

Before her exit, Austin tells her that he is going to live in the desert with Lee. But Lee backs out from his earlier promise of taking Austin there. The reason as Lee puts it is that Austin would not last a day there. This was the provocation for Austin to turn violent and pick a quarrel with Lee. He grabs the telephone cord and throttles Lee from behind. The next moment Lee springs to his feet and the two brothers square off in Mom's ruined kitchen. It is with this surrealistic image the play ends.

*True West* is an admixture of reality and fantasy with a dream-like air hovering over it. As William Kleb has remarked, the objective and

subjective realities are super imposed upon the play so that “objects become symbols, characters archetypes and actions allegoreis”<sup>161</sup> (*William Kleb.168*). The conflict between Austin and Lee assume a meaning beyond rivalry, at the level of significance.

Tucker Orbison has exposed three levels of mythic response in *True West*: the mythic west of the Cowboy, the mythic mystery of the artist, the mythic conflict of the second self<sup>162</sup> (*Tucker Orbison.507*). Shepard sets the play “in an southern Californian suburb about 40 miles east of Los Angeles”<sup>163</sup> (*True West.3*) Lee describes the suburban homes as being “like a paradise”<sup>164</sup> (*True West. 12*). Austin subsequently comments “There is a paradise down here. We are in a Paradise”<sup>165</sup> (*True West.39*). The play with its constant harping on the word paradise awakens Biblical overtones which make the audience equate Lee and Austin with Cain and Abel who have become a part of our cultural consciousness.

Shepard has confessed, “I wanted to write a play about double nature...”<sup>166</sup> (*Robert Coe.122*) The brothers cannot look less alike, at the beginning of the play. They are physical and psychological opposites. Like Abel and Cain they represent the dichotomy of good and evil, the imaginative and the rational, the constructive and the destructive.

The story in the Old Testament reads as follows. (Genesis 4:2-26) : Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. As they grew up Cain became a farmer and Abel a Shepherd. Adam and Eve often made offerings to God. One day Cain and Abel made their first offering. Cain brought some of the corn from his harvest. He did not bother to pick out the best and he sulked as he put it on the altar. He did not want to make the offer at all. But Abel brought the best pieces from some freshly killed sheep and gladly offered them to God.

God accepted Abel's gift but refused Cain's. Cain was furious. He was furiously jealous of his brother. Pretending to be friendly with him Cain took Abel out to the fields and killed him. God cursed Cain for his sin. God said he would never get a harvest from the ground. He commanded him to leave Eden and wander the earth for the rest of his life.

The story in the Genesis is suggestive of the eternal dichotomy of and the conflict between the good and the evil. Another common interpretation of the story is that "it is was part of an effort by the invading Hebrews to discredit the matriarchical worship of the indigenous Canaanites"<sup>167</sup> (Jeffrey D. Hosper.76). Before the invasion of the Hebrews, the canaanites worshipped a variety of gods, but fertility rites were central

to their religion and the triple goddesses Asherah, Anath and Astarte were worshipped with special fervour as life-bringers and harvest-givers.

*True West* gives us unmistakable hints of conflicts between matriarchal and patriarchal orders. Lee is clearly allied with the masculine and violent values. He is also associated with the sacrifice of animals. In scene I Lee tells Austin "Had me a pit Bull there for a while but I lost him....fighting dog. Damn I made some good money off that little dog. Real good money"<sup>168</sup>(*True West*.9) while Lee, Cain's counterpart is associated with animal sacrifice, Austin, Abel's counterpart is associated with vegetation. In his mother's home, like a dutiful son he tends her flourishing house-plants. The mother has a paradise-like neighbourhood. Nameless as she is in the play mother is just mother or "Mom", representing motherhood.

In contrast to Austin who is just "a vegetable", Lee like a nomadic Hebrew after his exodus, comes up from the desert to begin his conquest. Lee imposes himself upon Austin. He is an outlaw who lives by stealing, cheating, and gambling. In contrast to Austin's love story Lee offers Saul Kimmer a western about a man's confrontation with his wife's lover. Lee's world is a masculine world where he feels a strange affinity to his father who lives as a tramp in the Mojave Desert. When Saul Kimmer promises to

produce a movie based on Lee's story, Lee arranges to have "a big slice" of his remuneration turned over to his father. Their father, like their mother in the play, has no name. They are simply "Pop" and "Mom," representing two diverse ways of life and two systems of social establishment. Austin's ludicrous description of their father as a toothless, drunken beggar, staggering from one bar to the other, searching for the suey bag which contained his false-teeth evokes disdain for him in Lee. Thus Austin manages to give a dig at the father - complex of Lee.

The paradise - like heaven of Mom is no longer a paradise now. The plants in the pots are wilted and withered. As Isis resurrected her husband Osiris, Mom cannot bring back the dead to life. The play urges us to think along the line that in modern life, both patriarchy and matriarchy are equally irrelevant, comic, trivial and insignificant.

*True West* also deals with the myth of the mystery of the artist. On the realistic plane Shepard only "wanted to write about double nature, one that wouldn't be symbolic or metaphorical or any of that stuff"<sup>169</sup> (Robert Coe.122).

As a writer Shepard has always distinguished between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Dionysian art stands for inspiration, vision and spontaneity. It is passionate and explosive. Apollonian is largely

laboured art, contemplative and serene - the result of a training that is "rigorous, cruel and war-like"<sup>170</sup> (*Trevis Bogard*.217). The artistic process is to be intuitive, not something imposed from without. The sense of mystery which it exudes can arise only from a mythic awareness. A story without the mystery of this mythic context would be a piece of banality. "The real quest of the writer is to penetrate into another world, to make a myth"<sup>171</sup> (*William Herman*.57) according to Sam Shepard.

The two opposed methods of creative art are easily seen in Austin and Lee, the former making Hollywood "business" and the latter making authentic "art". This is the aspect of the doubleness of conception which Tucker Orbison points out in his *"Mythic levels in Shepards' True West."*<sup>172</sup> (*Tucker Orbison*.508). Although Austin tells Lee that he used to enjoy his "imagination" the play contains no suggestions that he has become an artist, that he can create a mystery. The way he talks about the artistic process declares him to be a hack-writer. He calls what he does "a project"<sup>173</sup> (*True West*.13) "just a little research"<sup>174</sup> (*True West*. 14). He describes his script, "a period piece"<sup>175</sup> (*True West*. 13) Austin does not do art, he simply follows some cut and dried formulae. For him, it is "to bullshit your way into a million bucks"<sup>176</sup> (*True West*.13) by striking a deal with Saul Kimmer.

Lee says "I did a little art myself once" (*True West*. 6) and then angrily refuses to speak of it. Lee's attitude is "fully in the organic tradition of art as a mystery to be courted and not one to be spoken to death"<sup>177</sup> (*William Herman*.59). When Austin finds fault with Lee's story for not being "like real life"<sup>178</sup> (*True West*.21) and characters as "illusions of characters"<sup>179</sup> (*True West*. 40) and "fantasies of a long lost boyhood"<sup>180</sup> (*True West*. 41) he is paying the work an appropriate compliment. "Art is not like real life, it is made up of fantasy and dream material"<sup>181</sup> (*William Herman*.59). Even Saul Kimmer recognizes "the ring of truth"<sup>182</sup> (*William Herman*.60) in it. As the final tableau of the brothers squaring off against each other indicates the Dionysian and the Apollonian in art will continue to co-exist but separately, poised against each other, the one not dominating the other and the two never getting united.

In the *Genesis* Saul is the King of Hebrews, who is powerless to control the Philistines. Saul Kimmer in *True West* rejects Austin's screen play which Lee terms as "art" and decides to produce movie based on Lee's story. Saul has the least regard for aesthetic qualities as he is down to the toes a typical businessman who says ".....we make movies, American movies, Leave the films to the French" (*True West*. 30). The modern West, is

ironically a place where materialistic gods set artists at each others throat. It is no more the “look-within place” Shepard described in *Angel City*.

A third theme in *True West* has to do with the mythic nature of the American West. This fanciful terrain of America invites diverse responses and treatments from the two main characters in the play. Shepard raises the question of what is ‘true west’? Is it the world of the cowboy who faces life all alone, of people like Lee who survived without woman, family, home or love(?), an archaic figure alienated from society. The conventional west represents a terrain of transcendent beauty, triumph of individualism and manliness, unlimited potential and disdain of regulations. The cowboys who aspire for heroism are at the heart of the American west mythology. Shepard would agree with Thoreau’s conception of the ideal west \_\_the west, “stretching on infinitely far and grand and wild, qualifying all our thoughts....”<sup>183</sup> (*Tucker Orbison*.509). Thoreau’s west seems not so much a place as a country of the mind.

Sam Shepard the incurable romantic longs for the macho-laws of the old frontier in his plays like *The Unseen Hand*, *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*, *La Turista* and *Operation Sidewinder*.

In *The Unseen Hand*, the Morphan brothers embody the old-west traditions of rugged individualism, spontaneity and violence. Blue

Morphan's opening monologue in the play is all about the west, west of long ago, of a time when things were simple, when justice was served with a six-gun. The Morphan brothers lament that with no trains to rob and no battles to fight they have no identity or purpose.

In *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* Cody's two brothers, Jasper and Jason burst violently and dramatically on to the scene in order to rescue Cody. They are both six foot -five and weight 250 lbs. They wear Wyoming Cow-boy gear, with dust covering them from head to toe. They both wear side-guns on the waist. The two bigger than life-size heroes are too real for the anaemic hotel room where Cody is imprisoned. They are moving images of manliness, vigour, mobility and unpredictability and violence. Autonomy is the quintessential quality of the hero of the West. Lee ridicules the idea that he needs fear Soul and his kind. He refuses Austin's offer of help. Life in the desert is elemental, crude and rough. He has been making his living by dog-fighting.

West is the place of witch-doctors and Shaman figures capable of curing humanity of the spiritual maladies. In *La Turista* a witch doctor is seen initiating a Mayan ritual with live chicken, over the body of Kent who is afflicted with sleeping sickness. In *Operation Sidewinder* the Spider Lady

after a Hopi dance unites the head of the rattle-snake-like computer with its tail effecting thereby a synthesis of the spirit and the body. These Shaman figures who were part of the ancient religion of the West are also part of its power structure.

The legendary west of the past, as Austin points out in *True West*, is almost extinct. "There is no such thing as the west anymore. It's a dead issue" (*True West*.35). The new West is a false and demonic terrain. The irony is that the real west is shabby and a diminished place for which an appropriate image is a drunken old man losing his false teeth in a bag of chop suey. It is a place which has crushed imagination and substituted materialism. As Lee says it is the "kind a place that sort a kills ya inside" (*True West*.12). He means spiritual death. In the last scene as Mom is returning to the Motel room she is reminded 'Picasso is in town'. Coming out of the mouth of Mom it has the ring of a faint hope. Mother Earth announces the resurrection of sorts, the possibility of a renewal". The idea of dying and being reborn" has been of eternal fascination to Shepard. *True West* is a realistic play. However, his realism does not exclude mythic levels. Mythic structures form underlying patterns which pierce through powerful ironies to focus on thematic concerns such as socio-historical and religious issues, on the wild west and on art and the artist in America.

Myths persist in literature. Plots and characters, widely separated in time, can be explained by the basic cultures of Greece, Rome and the Bible. Northrop Frye asserts, "literature can derive its form only from itself, they cannot exist outside literature....I am saying that everything is new and yet recognisably the same kind of thing as the old..."<sup>184</sup>(*Elmer Borklund*.216).

Shepard's plots and characters, as we have seen in the plays analysed earlier, have a mythical orientation. Mythical paradigms do not very often represent a one to one correspondence, but they convey enough sense of analogy to make them allegorical and open ended.. Some of the plays by Shepard, which embody certain features of American culture and temporal issues transcend their themes to acquire a mythical orientation. The configuration of a large number of his heroes may be identified and defined by relating them to some of the Greek archetypes like Orpheus, Icarus and Philoctetes. Shepard has never been a conscious adapter or a conscientious student of mythology. Yet, under the veneer of realism, many of his plays, on close scrutiny, reveal the "displaced myths".

Orpheus in Greek mythology is a Shaman figure, a seer and a bard in one, a magician, a divine singer who could cast a spell over both the animate and inanimate beings.

In its raw outline, the myth runs like this: Orpheus was the son of Apollo, the Muse of Epic poetry. He was presented with a lyre by his father and was taught to play upon it. Orpheus played with such perfection that nothing could withstand the charm of his music. Not only his fellow mortals, but even wild beasts were softened by his lay.

Orpheus married a lovely nymph Eurydice. Before long, she died of snake bite. The heart-broken husband set out to the under world to persuade King Pluto and his Queen Proserpine to release Eurydice. The ravishing music of Orpheus, the reckless courage of the singer in invading the region of the damned, the uncontrollable grief of the lover and the passionate love of the husband, were a combination the ruler of the under world could not resist. They agreed to restore Eurydice to life and to her husband's arms but on one condition: he must not look back as she followed behind him. Orpheus accepted the terms and began the long journey back. He was torn by love, fear, eagerness, doubt and as he neared the land of the living, he turned his head to see if his wife was really following him. Eurydice uttered a cry and vanished from his sight to return forever to Hades. The sequel is more painful and horrible. Orpheus who returned to the world alone was inconsolable, desperate; and he lost all interest in life. He shunned the company of women

thereafter. According to the myth, he was finally torn to pieces by the Maenads.

The Orpheus myth enacts as a prism in the analysis of imagination in modern literature. Orpheus was taught to play upon the lyre by his father Apollo, the God of Gods and the patron of all arts. Hence this myth exists in close conjunction with religion itself.

There are three major points of significance in the myth.

1. Orpheus was a Shaman figure who possessed magical powers and prophetic vision and the special attribute of a lyricist of magnificent seductive force. He was also capable of establishing harmony in the Universe.
2. The descent into Hades : the loss of Eurydice, the subsequent subterranean quest and the second loss.
3. The Orphic journey beyond death. Orpheus journeys down, to the depth of the psyche, to the sub-conscious.

We come across the modern counterparts of Orpheus who possess the magic and mystique of art of a divine origin in the plays of Sam Shepard. Such an artist is Tympani in *Angel City* who is a percussionist, devoted to the impersonal beauty of art. His talent empowers him to purge the repulsive

subjectivity. He has the power to produce the mental state of trance in men and the power to effect metamorphoses in them . He turns some of them into seekers of gorgeous dreams. The dream world would appear to them to be more alluring because of the immense poverty and frustration, not so much material as in a spiritual sense, experienced in the real world. These opulent dreams which are behind every quest, point to a magic realm floating in the future and are fashioned out of the tragic wants of immediate reality. The disillusionment which is implicit in every quest results in a fading if not a total vanishing of the creative power, "the primeval fire", "the visionary glean" of the artist.

The descent of Orpheus into Hades signifies the unique way in which the artist imposes his congenital faith in life, love, beauty on the chaos and muddle he finds around him. It is his attempt to reach the very Kernal of life. "Orpheus becomes a mythical figure who affirms death within life, being within becoming"<sup>185</sup> (Waller A. Straws.17) writes Walter A. Straws. The journey of Orpheus to Hades and back to the earth corresponds with the phase of inner exploration and the re-orientation of the artistic self with the sombre, sub-terranean knowledge. Many of the Shaman artists in Shepard, share a parallel existence with Orpheus. Kosmo in *Mad Dog Blues* is Shepard's portrait of the artist in pursuit of the golden dream. The Shaman

figures of Doc in *La Turista*, Spider Lady in *Operation Sidewinder* and Willie in *The Unseen Hand*, traverse the unknown land of the unconscious and have the claim to a higher level of awareness.

Tympani is a Shaman of music and rhythm like Orpheus and the dramatic action in *Angel City* hinges upon him. He is a magician at a trip who is both transformer and the transformed. He has been hired by the producer Wheeler to create an original rhythm, "guaranteed to produce certain trance states in masses of people...The one special never-before-heard-before rhythm which will drive men crazy"<sup>186</sup> (*Angel City*.16). It is really a fantastic experiment, something beyond imagination, something "impossible".

The moment the right rhythm was touched upon by Tympani, the characters in *Angel City* are lulled into a sort of trance, each entering thereby, into a world of his own. Under the spell, Lanx shadow-boxes. Rabbit and Wheeler, however, stand apart from the rest, still working on the disaster film. Tympani, wearing a chef's hat and a white apron cooks imaginary eggs. Miss Scoons the sexy secretary, has changed into an Irish scrub-woman. Wheeler the producer of the 'disaster movie' has been transformed into a slimy green monster with two fangs and extra-long finger nails. Tympani,

like Orpheus is convinced, in an ironical way, the hidden power of his art upon himself and others even though there is nothing laudable about it.

The Play *Angel City* displays Shepard's inventive engagement with popular culture and the Orphean myth. It brings into lime light, Shepard's bizarre sense of humour and irony with its satiric attack on Hollywood. To Shepard the city symbolises hell. 'Angel City' displays the anti-myth of Los Angeles, an ironic version of the 'angel city'. The play reveals the dark vision of 'no exit' from the simulated world of Hollywood. Miss Scoon becomes an easy victim to the fantasy and identifies herself with a star, an image which, however, remains out of her reach.

"I look at the screen. I'm not me. I don't know who I am. I look at the movie and I am the movie. I am the star. I am the star in the movie. For days I am the star and I'm not me. I'm me being the star....I hate my life not being a movie" (*Angel City*.21).

Rabbit is also a symbol of the deception of the Hollywood dreams. Rabbit is drawn to Hollywood by the power of its image, as Orpheus by the dream of Eurydice. He is carried away by the vision of a celluloid tape with a series of moving images telling a story to millions. Rabbit's transformation into a sci-fi-montster at the play's end attests to the seduction of the image

and the corrupting power of the city of 'Angels'. Thus Hollywood is no holy ground but a "dream dump" and the angel city represents a "decreative universe"<sup>187</sup> (*Leonard Wilcox*.64). The characters in the play not only regress into fantasy but revert into animal status, mutating into snakes and lizards and slide into slimy figures.

The dream of Orpheus had been betrayed. So also the dreams of the characters in Angel City. The 'neon rectangle' in the play is the window that evokes visions and promise of the west. Rabbit, the dreamer and the visionary, gazes out through the window for inspiration but sees only fog. Moreover Rabbit's medicine bundle which is said to contain the spirit of the West itself turns out to contain only green slime, an image which suggests the debasement of the American dream.

The Orphean quest for beauty and life with its transitory moments of hope and gripping sense of distrust and disillusionment finally ending up in a lingering yearning for peace and stability is witnessed in the *Mad Dog Blues*. The play is an ironical treatment of the Orpheus quest. Apparently it is a quest undertaken by a group of mythic characters Marlene Detrich, Capt. Kidd, Jesse James, Paul Bunyan, Mae West, -a ghost, Yahooodi, -a drug-addict- and Kosmo, a rock-star. They go for a hunt of Capt. Kidd's

buried treasure. On opening the treasure, it when opened turns out to be a bunch of bottle-caps. The hunt for gold takes on an added significance for the characters other than Kosmo and Yahoo. They believe that gold will enable them to be some one different or to go somewhere else. It is their pursuit after the golden dream. For artists like Kosmo and Yahoo, it is a search for the inspiring vision. They are the explorers of the dark, the unknown and the enigmatic region. The world, life and people are the raw materials for the artist and it is imperative that he must constantly search after them. To Kosmo, the quest is meaningful even though the 'treasure of gold' he discovered was nothing more than a bunch of mocking bottle-caps. The quest opened his eyes to the shocking reality, as in the case of Orpheus, that the world of wealth, love and beauty did not exist.

The mythological paradigm of Philoctetes, the archetypal artist - victim has been exploited with an allegorical orientation by Sam Shepard in many of his plays. Philoctetes has not been a popular hero like Orpheus, Prometheus or Icarus, with creative writers. However, he is a character who evinces a feeling of realistic solidarity with the society which let him down once.

Philoctetes was one of the Greek heroes of the Trojan war who had inherited the bow and arrows of Hercules. He had all along been in the

vanguard of the battle. It was he who brought warriors from Methone and other places to the war in seven ships. But as the fleet moved to Troy he was abandoned in the island of Lemos, on their way, when a snake-bite festered and a "noisy wound" made him insufferable to his companions. The war continued. In the tenth year of the war the prophet Calchas revealed that Troy could be taken only with the aid of Hercules' bow and arrows which were now in the possession of Philoctetes. Odysseus and Neoptolomus now arrived to persuade him to rejoin the Greek with the bow and arrows. The embittered cripple would not listen to their entreaties. Finally Hercules himself appeared before him and bade him to go to Troy, and help the Greeks in taking the city. Thus the mythical figure contains in him the despair of resolving the dilemma of art and its unwarranted social exploitation. The Machiavellian pragmatism and the sophistry of the society, triumphed over the simplistic virtues of Philoctetes. He responds to the call of the society and renders Yeoman's service. This sort of concern for social welfare is a certain stage in the evolution of the individual's personality. A great deal of the sense of detachment and resignation, is associated with it.

This thematic focus\_\_ artist as victim\_\_unites Cody in *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*, Duke in *Melodrama Play* and Slim in *Cowboy Mouth*. In *Cowboy Mouth* a girl kidnaps a boy, a rock-and-roll artist with an old 45

and she is keeping him prisoner, determined to make him into a rock-and-roll star. In *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*, a man who can pick winning horses, is chained to a bed in a hotel room and guarded by two gangsters. In *Melodrama Play* two men shut up in a room with a gun-man, are ordered to compose a hit tune.

In the case of Slim in *Cowboy Mouth*, it is his own talents that got him ensnared. Cavale believes that people need a saint, “ a rock and roll Jesus with a Cowboy mouth”<sup>188</sup> (*Cowboy Mouth*.208) who in the Yeatsian fashion will come rocking to Bethlehem to be born - a kind of counter culture god, communicating by means of an outlaw street language. It is for this purpose Cavale kidnaps the reluctant Slim off the street and from domesticity, to be refashioned into her image of a rock-and-roll Jesus. “ I was doing the streets looking for a man with nothing. So I could give him everything. Everything it takes to make the world reel like a drunkard. But you have less than nothing, baby”<sup>189</sup> (*Cowboy Mouth*-209). She has come upon the right person and his fate is sealed. She tactfully wins him over to her side and gives instructions as to how he should fulfil the role she has set for him. The creation of a rock-and-roll god is based on the collective unconscious of the people. Because “traditional Christianity is defunct” According to Cavale, “ The old God don’t represent our pain no more. His

words don't shake us no more"<sup>190</sup> (*Cowboy Mouth*. 208) So "reach out and grab all the broken up busted people's frustration" take them into himself and "pour it back out bigger than life". This moral obligations lies too heavily on Slim. The only reality before him is his family which he has been forced to desert. "I have a baby! My own baby! with its own cradle! You have put a curse on me! I have a wife and life of my own! Why don't you let me go! I ain't no rock-and-roll star...."<sup>191</sup> (*Cowboy Mouth*.205) He whimpers mournfully making no secret of his reluctance to take up the social responsibility and his apprehension that he is unequal to the Messianic task. He knows that he miserably lacks the intense vulnerability for so desperate and violent a leap into the blank future. At the end, convinced that he is not cut out for the calling of a Messiah Slim slips away. Johny Ace is the one Cavale has set before him as the model. Johny had committed suicide being unable to meet the exacting demands of the society. Thus, martyrdom, the fate of every innovator, was thrust upon him too.

Another artist-hero upon whom society blindly imposed its palpable design is Cody, in *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*. Cody, "a Mr. Artist Cowboy from Wyoming" as he has been described in the play is a Shaman, endowed with the special gift of dreaming the winners of horse-races before they are run. His power of clairvoyance proves disastrous to him and he is kidnapped

by gangsters and is held a prisoner by a syndicate boss, Fingers, in a hotel room somewhere in England. Under conditions of captivity and being at odds with his own geography, Cody's power begins to fade.

"I don't understand the area I have to dream in....The inside one. The space where the dream comes. It's gotta be created. That's what Fingers don't understand....It's blocked up my senses. He will never get a winner out of me till the space comes back"<sup>192</sup>(*Sam Shepard.95*).

The pressure of the disruptive forces upon his consciousness makes Cody mad. The greedy gangsters who counted him as a mine of gold switch him to dog-dreaming. Dog-racing is the local pastime and eventually Gody's inner space becomes attuned to the 'local frequency.'" Under the yoke of a foreign system and its rules and assumptions, cody ceases to be what he once was. He steadily moves toward a physical and mental breakdown . He gets transferred into a dog, whimpering and scurrying away from other characters. The gangsters get a doctor to treat him. Right at the moment when the doctor is about to operate on Cody his two brothers Jasper and Jason burst in and forcibly take him away.

Cody is a modern Philoctetes who has been kidnapped by commercial entrepreneurship and forced into creative slavery. The

gangsters who strive for sudden economic prosperity over-exploit him . Now “his gifts are poison to him” (*The Geography of a Horse Dreamer*.127) The moment Cody’s faculty ceases to function he is looked upon only as an encumbrance. It is a pity that rescue out of such situations is not self-generated. In the case of Cody, his brothers are instrumental in effecting his escape. The irony is that there is no guarantee that his brothers would not exploit him. Philoctetes, in the myth comes to terms with the ingratitude of the society and the selfishness of his companions. Through his act of nobility, he transcends them all. Casting away his despondency and pessimism Cody continues with his horse-dreaming. He says “I was walking in a dream, A great circle. I was walking and I stopped. Even After the smoke was cleared, I couldn’t see my home, Not even a familiar rock. You could tell it was anywhere. I would believe you”<sup>193</sup>(*Geography of a Horse Dreamer*.130) Cody -too, like Philoctetes has come to terms with his utterly unenviable situation. Cody and Slim are, ironically, artists who get entrapped by the virtue of their vision and talent which others turn into money or exploit for social purposes. Such situations, as is evident precipitate identity-crisis in them. Artist as the “wounded faun” surrounded by Philistines, is the image we have of these Philoctetes - like heroes.

Another of the best known figures in classical mythology "Icarus" is an implicit paradigm in many of the plays of Sam Shepard. The various myths surrounding Icarus focus on creative energy. The driving force seeks to express itself in various forms. It is the potential behind all fabulous achievements. The potential for spectacular and impressive success has a corresponding possibility of failure and suffering. There are opposing forces that conspire against the driving energy of the pioneer, which include even the opposition from the previous generation. The Icarus myth is looked upon as the fable of a lost hero. But there is more in it. He is a path-finder, who hitched his wagon to the star. The hero undergoes no agonising conflict over alternatives. His victory demands too high a price which he pays with his own life. The self-assertive impulses lead him on and on to a point from where retreat is impossible. The realization comes to him only at the end. He is a tragic hero who is concerned with the meaning behind the tremendous urges which over-power people. His death evokes in us, not merely sympathy for him but admiration.

It is in *Metamorphosis VIII* Ovid tells the story of Daedalus and his son Icarus. Daedalus was the architect who built the labyrinth for King Minos. Later he fell from the favour of the King and was condemned to be imprisoned in a tower with his son. Captivity and loneliness made him

nostalgically long for Athens and his wife Naucratis. He decided to construct wings made of wax and feathers both for himself and his son Icarus. So that they could escape from Crete. Daedalus fitted the wings to his son's shoulders and gave instructions not to fly too near the sun. Daedalus presumably speaks words like these, "My son be warned! Neither soar too high, lest the sun melt the wax, nor, swoop too low, lest the feather be wetted by the sea....Follow me closely....do not set your own course"<sup>194</sup>(Robert Graves.312-13). Then rising on the wings he flew off asking his son to follow suit. The boy in his exultation paid no heed to his father's words and began to soar upward as if to reach heaven. The blazing sun melted the wax which held the feathers together and he fell into the sea, which thenceforth was called by his name.

In Shepard's Play, *Icarus's Mother*, the most obvious candidate for the role of the modern-day Icarus is the "unnamed and the invisible character"<sup>195</sup>(Albert E. Wilhel.22) - the Pilot who flies the jet plane. The pilot circles above the picnic area where the other characters have assembled; soars very high into the sky and falls into the sea in a fiery crash. Icarus is a tragic victim of hubris because he is unwilling to or unable to follow the advice given by his father. Embedded in the old myth are the elements of a contrary interpretation that the father figure projected forces of repression

towards his son. The father gave the son a great gift but rigidly restricted the use of it. In prescribing a safe mean to his son Daedalus is making him follow his footsteps. Icarus deviated and so had to pay the price for disobedience with his life. Icarus, in the myth, is fixed for ever as the symbol of failed rebellion against the father. As Harold Bloom has pointed out "powerful creators wrestle with their precursors, even to death in order to clear imaginative space for themselves"<sup>196</sup> (*Harold Bloom.5*). Implicit in the myth is the notion that the life of the artist is a continual fight against the father figure. May be, it is his mother who nurtures the creative energy as the title identifies. She never appears in the play. By making her so obscure and remote Shepard dramatises "the inaccessibility in the contemporary world of the spirit which fosters creativity"<sup>197</sup> (*Albert E. Wilhelm.25*). Though the title is from mythology, the characters in the play do not pair up with the individual figures in the myth.

In *Icarus's Mother* Shepard presents the myth of Icarus against the background of the technological age. The "unnamed, invisible" pilot of the sky-writing jet- plane is the Icarus figure in the play. He flies the plane above the area where a 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic party is pre-occupied with celebrations. The party consists of two women, Pat and Jill; and three young men, Howard, Bill and Frank. The characters enjoying 'the sun-burnt mirth',

on the ground assume that the pilot is trying to communicate with them. They also begin to spin stories about his life. Howard and Jill speculate that he is signalling to his mother or his wife. Pat soon claims that she too is married to him. Jill also puts forward the same claim. They describe themselves to be 'the ripe' and "juicy" wives of the pilot. The pilot is blissfully unaware of the 'Small-talk' of the groundlings. He is a man of ambition and pursues success with a single - minded devotion. He soars up with the plane and disappears into the blue heavens. In that attitude he inspires creativity. His upward surge serves as a source of infectious enthusiasm and motivation to the other characters on the ground to do some exploration of the unknown land around them. He makes them shake off their lethargy.

But just as Daedalus laid stringent rules before Icarus, these spectators also begin to overrule the pilot. They became too demanding and appeared to harass him. Howard yells out, "we've got your wives Mr. Pilot. You'd better come down or we'll take them"<sup>198</sup> (*Icarus's Mother*.35). This is the allegory of the society's treatment of an aspiring creator. Ironically, the encouragement given to the creative impulse is subject to the conformity of the creator to the societal standard. The society administers restrictive forces which limit creativity just as Daedalus prescribed unsympathetic measures to his son. The Icarus-syndrome, as Henry. A Murray has

suggested, is characterised by “the desire to rise above the crowd, intellectually or socially and to be admired for doing so”<sup>199</sup> (*Albert E. Wilhelm*.30). By being thoroughly iconoclastic in his text and technique Sam Shepard himself is an Icarus figure, who pushed past his predecessors.

As the characters make up scenarios about the pilots’ life Howard describes the ecstasy of the pilot in flying at a great height. “Looking through and seeing miles and miles of sky that changes colour from grey to blue their back to grey again as you move through it”<sup>200</sup> (*Icarus’s Mother*.42) Figuratively, Howard is recounting the beauties one can command only if one rises above the crowd and gains a vantage point. His imagination unfolds its wings as he watches the flight overhead. His empathetic response to the powers of the pilot has transformed him into a poet and a mystic.

The jet-pilot who had disappeared suddenly returns and writes across the sky an emphatic message: “ $E=mc^2$ ” the ultimate truth is present in all matter. But this potential is seldom realised. As soon as their message is successfully written there is a crash after which the plane and the pilot fall into the sea like Icarus. The pilot performed the final feat of excellence at the cost of his own life. Had he returned safely this fact would have been termed ‘a success.’ However, it has been a costly failure courted at the face

of death. He belongs to the stock of Icarus in the myth. He is both a dreamer and a fighter as all precursors are and is destined to taste both the nectar of success and the bitterness of failure. The pilot meets with his tragic end only after having displayed his acrobatic excellence in the sky. The crash creates ambivalent feelings in the spectators. The pilot has a message for the creative artist - to set his aim high, soar up and live dangerously. But he should not risk his life as Icarus in the myth and the Pilot in real life did. The pilot who appears realistic, begins to assume a stature that over-reaches the mythic and the symbolic into the ironic realm of meaning.

Henry Hackamore in *Seduced* is another Icarus-like character who became a victim of his 'hubris', the over-vaulting ambition. The billionaire figure in the play bears a suspicious resemblance to Howard Hughes. Like Hughes, Hackamore was a plane-designer by profession, who owned "Hotels, Movies and Airplanes". Like Marlowe's Faustus he was seduced by the lust for power and wealth. He did make an enormous leap into the world of pyramiding wealth. In the wake of his incredible success the self-made man takes a decision to shun the world.

Ministered to by Raul, his caretaker and body-guard, Hackamore withdrew as a recluse into some bare, interior space, in Mexico. In his self-imposed exile, like Shakespeare's Prospero in *The Tempest* he sought to be

the creator of his kingdom and the master of his destiny. Obsessed by the thought of bacteria he lives in a tomb-like structure. Riddled by paranoia he does not keep any furniture, for furniture provides more space for bacteria to grow.

His ultimate aim was to gain control over life through control over death. Such an idea might not have figured in the wildest fancies of his predecessors. He wanted to extricate himself from the world by transforming himself into a legend. He did this through impersonation. He managed to get the corpse of a pilot who crashed over Nebraska made it wear his clothes and costume and left it some where to catch the eyes of the public. It was a very carefully structured image of his, which he wanted the nation to cherish about him after his death. He wanted the world to believe that his death occurred in a crash, and not after ailing in a sick-bed.

The 'rags-to- riches' myth has its complete realisation in Hackamore. Power and wealth made him heady and turned the values upside down for him. An alien to the delicate sweetness and felicity associated with a family and progeny, he continuously put at nought the life force inherent in women. He dreaded women while he was always a master with men. Luna and Miami, the two women characters in the play are two macho-fantasies of

1. a) Women with physical disabilities and non-disabled women differ in personality
- b) Women with orthopaedic disabilities and women with visual disabilities differ in personality.
2. a) Women with physical disabilities and non-disabled women differ in stress-tolerance.
- b) Women with orthopaedic disabilities and women with visual disabilities differ in stress-tolerance.
3. a) Women with physical disabilities and non-disabled women differ in well-being
- b) women with orthopaedic disabilities and women with visual disabilities differ in well-being.
4. Personality and stress-tolerance are related in women with physical disabilities.
5. Personality and well-being are related in women with physical disabilities.
6. Stress-tolerance and well-being are related in women with physical disabilities.

#### **SAMPLE**

The sample of the study consisted of two categories of population, namely the disabled women and the non-disabled women. The total

When he transformed himself into a legend under the camouflage of a crash his real physical self “ disappeared off the face of the earth”. No trace of the physical Henry is to be seen after that. In the death of the pilot Henry had his death too. The colossal failure of Henry Hackamore, is the failure to retain his identity. He sacrificed the vital part of his self to the self-created image. The real Henry had been dead for years. His very self crumbled before him as he stood witnessing it passively and helplessly. He sees himself, now, not as a super-entity but as a victim. “I was taken by the world and all the time I thought I was taking it”<sup>203</sup> (*Seduced*. 114). Thus Hackamore the dying god with his strange lethal innocence ends up as “loony Icarus crash landing into spiritual death”<sup>204</sup> (*Jack Kroll*.94). Drawing a parallel with the experiences of the mythical Icarus, the resounding triumphs of Henry, overshadowed him, eclipsed him and finally blotted him out of existence. But unlike Icarus, he goes down into oblivion, “leaving not a rack behind”. Yet in his last moments he takes consolation from the thought. “Every seed I ever planted is growing”. The demarcation line between perversion and sanity is, rather, too thin. Though his ambition and ingenuity are Icarus-like his perversion is satanic. The wages of perversion are insanity and death. An aspiring Icarus with the persistent efforts for success and no perversion would have been our ideal hero. Hackamore has

not only fallen from grace as the archangel but has degraded himself to become a monster, a Frankenstein. He became a living metaphor of the great American dream of supreme wealth and power and sought eternal life through power and protection. The irony is that the same wealth and power, enormous in quantity, removed him from the face of the earth.

Iconoclastic in texts and technique alike, Shepard had evolved a method of writing which is an open-ended system. There is a continuous exchange of energy between the visualisation of the images that are let loose on the stage and the emotive and cognitive processes of the audience. The interaction and the integration of the various elements complete the theatrical transaction with them. What is important here is the underlying myths that produce the ethos. While the dramatist harmonises new images and old ideas as in the tales of oral societies the characters assume mythic or archetypal characteristics. Shepard's juxtaposition of the theatrical images carries the dynamics of a co-creative process, a shared journey between the author and the audience. Myth material is made rational and visceral by the conscious intellectualisation by modernist writers like T.S.Eliot. But Shepard's creative process and dramaturgy conspire to make myth a pre-rational, pre-natal psychic experience. The mythic energy erupts in the primordial fear of the putrifying baby, the wonder of the mysterious

fertility of the corn-field in *Buried Child* the power-game implicit in the death of the Rock-King in *The Tooth of Crime*, the pre-historic spirit of rivalry that presides over the Cain-Abel blood feud, the flight and fall of Icarus and pholoctetes-like Cody who is reduced to an instrument in the hands the of society.

In many of his plays myth is not merely a key to the discourse. It is the sub-strata into which images penetrate to evoke irony and paradox. The myths by their juxtaposition of the past and the present, ironically, focus on the degradation that has come over the American society. The spiritual rootlessness, "the culture of Narcissism"<sup>205</sup> (*Esther Harriot.XV*) the insatiable appetite for victory, the psychological annihilation of identity and moral bankruptcy are some of the horrifying features of the American culture projected through these provocative plays. The images become moving three-dimensional metaphors which conjure up reality before the audience.

In *Operation Sidewinder*, Shepard has presented an unrealistic image of a Computer. It looks and sounds like a six-foot rattle snake. It has marvellous flashing red eyes and is sufficiently animal like to feel amorous in the presence of a pretty woman like Honey. This species of snake evokes atavistic memories for it is related to some of the rain and

fertility rites of the black-folk and their Hopi dance. The snake is the agent of temptation. It lured Adam and Eve away from the bliss of Paradise. Here, the Sidewinder computer lures men into a lethal civilization of technology.

In the play it is one of the desperados who decapitated the Sidewinder when he saw it strangling Honey. He takes the head of the snake to the Spider Lady, the Shaman of the Hopi dance. She whole-heartedly accepts it for she sees in it a good omen. She believed that humanity would find its inner peace if the head and the body of the snake are united. She acts as the *dues ex-machina* that brings about the synthesis. The orphic ritual begins and untouched by the fiery blasts from the desperados they move towards their salvation.

“Myth is not the object of thought, nor does it give food for thought, it by-passes thought, so that the unthought may emerge and the intermediary disappear.....and it thus opens up the realm of freedom, not the mere liberty of choice, but the freedom of being”<sup>206</sup>(*Raimundo Panikkar*.129).

# CONCLUSION

Lalitha.P.R “Allegory in the plays of sam shepard ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2003

## Chapter VI

### CONCLUSION

Shepard's plays often give the impression that they spring from a sense of erosion of spiritual values in America. To provoke an awareness of the chaos lurking beneath the contemporary scene is the mission of the playwright. For this moralistic end, paradoxically enough, Sam Shepard calls on the movies to supply the appropriate language, music of rock, space-man fantasies, wild-west fantasies and rituals of contemporary religion. His sophisticated theatrical techniques make him appear an anomaly on the stage.

Shepard's passion for the dark, ominous visions, spectacles and abstractions takes him to the roots of the American drama which is essentially religious and moralistic. Allegory is an accepted mode in the calvinistic Puritan literature of the seventeenth century America. Images and abstractions predominated in allegorical literature. Because, the figures of speech implicit in the mode carried the meaning through suggestion

and signification beyond the realm of the intellect. It always acted as a code language. Despite the presence of the post-modern elements of sophistication like spectacle fantasy rituals and rock-music, he belongs to a theatre where language is still primary. In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to evaluate some of his major plays as contemporary allegories. Allegorical criticism in the conventional sense of a one to one interpretation has fallen in severe disrepute. It is the post-Saussurian dynamics of signification which means endless suggestion that I am concerned with.

Shepard has a perception of American life that is brilliantly suited to the theatre, which he conveys through an appropriate language of images metaphors and abstractions, myth and irony ie the language of allegory. His plays are metaphorical models of life and experiences in America. His theatrical experience is overwhelmingly of the present. They are his responses to the social and philosophical imperatives of the post-modern America. The collapse of the community, the decay of individualism, the demise of social responsibility and loss of faith in the face of materialism and technological advancement are all dexterously documented in his plays. He shares also the personal trauma of the self in a complex association with the roots of the family tradition and the ancestral ties along with the generational conflicts that inevitably spark off.

Allegory is the most illusive of techniques constantly seeming to be other than what it is. Being a figurative narrative, it has a primary, literal level of signification and a secondary correlated order of agents, concepts and events. This narrative technique is actually an extended metaphor which conveys a veiled moral meaning and so is usually didactic in its undertone. It is closely related to religion and myths. Myths are also allegorical narratives. They may also be called developed metaphors which serve to image truth beyond the reach of intellect. The Greek myth of Ceres and Proserpine which began as an allegorical explanation of sowing and harvesting, by an almost inevitable extension became the allegory of human immortality. Typological allegory is the Biblical form combining historical reality with prophetic meaning. Allegory has also become the instrument for satire - social, political and personal. It was the Roman writer Quintilian who discussed allegory as irony, something opposed to the literal meaning of words. Irony also took the form of sarcasm and contradiction. In the modern times when allegorical way of writing has become more illusive and oblique the emphasis in this mode moved from the external to the internal, from the society to the individual and his consciousness; from the public to the private. Different aspects of personal failures, confessions and perversions came to be highlighted and allegorised.

Allegorical theory and practice is largely philosophic stressing the interpretive technique of extracting meaning from a work of art. In allegory, a person, and abstract idea or event stands for itself and for something else. Language comes to mean something other than what is said. The verbal pattern becomes a symbol or sign or image. Interpretation ceases to be a one level activity. It becomes a reconciliation of statement and suggestion, simplicity and subtlety, denotation and connotation. There are some universal symbols which have unlimited potential for communication - for example food and drink, light and darkness, quest or journey, fall and rise, death and regeneration, archetypal characters like Ceres and Proserpine, Abel and Cain, Oedipus, Icarus and so on. The communicability of such archetypes is accounted for by a theory of the collective unconscious. Allegorical writing includes processes which are sub-conscious. The most satisfactory and interesting allegories are those in which the writer has been most ingenious in contriving clues that lead the reader straight to the meaning. The chief means of access to the unstated meanings are the metaphoric language, the images which are symbolic and the archetypes and myths.

Shepard has made it clear that he writes in terms of images. "I am pulled toward, images that shine in the middle of the junk"<sup>207</sup> (*Ronald Hayman*.169). He has also registered his conviction that "every play is a

metaphor" Shepard does not conceive plays as narratives. His plays live in a rhythm of image and action. Strange and unexpected things are ordered to happen which gather meaning within Shepard's individual type of theatre. The smashing of a chair, searching for a lost place in a book, a dead fish in a bucket of water, the man who could not trust his body and the image of the body killing the self\_\_\_in a context of boredom and alienation these images gather meaning and momentum.

There is the poetically illusive speech of one of the characters Shooter in *Action* about a family of moths fascinated by a flame. Most of them avoid a close approach. But one of them is bolder. "He embraced her (the flame) completely.....and his whole body became as red as fire"<sup>208</sup>(*Action*.141). The leader turned to the other moths and said "He's learned what he wanted to know but he's the only one who understands it"<sup>209</sup>(*Action*.141 ). True knowledge is acquired only through union with what is outside ourselves, through a "mystic embrace."

The artistic economy of imagery can hardly be equalled by any other kind of verbal expression, with the probable exception of irony. The images are designed in themselves as antidotes to logic and rationalism operating on another level. Hence, the plays improvised around a central image can-

not be approached through textual analysis. In the highly sophisticated performing art of the theatre, the writer-text -director-performers-spectators relationship is very significant because each participant brings his own codal baggage.

Sam Shepard's imagination remains close to the value system stemming from the calvinistic moral ethic of the puritan Americans which is not merely religious and moralistic but also didactic. To the society's evils like pretentiousness, hypocrisy and distorted values Shepard reacts vehemently. With the commitment of a social reformer and the responsibility of a satirist to mend the society he offers scathing criticism. In unequivocal terms Shepard has registered his disenchantment with the present conditions of America. His plays *Angel City*, *The Unseen Hand*, *Curse of the Sharing Class*, *The Tooth of Crime* and *States of Shock* are powerful allegories of the chaotic world around him. There is nothing angelic about the *Angel City*. It is an allegory of the destructive danger brought about by the 'vampire-art' of films. The play is a satirical allegory of the filmic civilization of America which has dubiously displaced religion, politics and art. The 'green slime', the key image of the play denotes the 'rotten something' in Hollywood, which contaminates everyone associated with the industry.

*The Tooth of Crime* woven around the image of a dog's teeth, is an allegory of the aggressive competition that exists in every walk of life. The archetypal characters of Crow and Hoss exemplify the ambition in every American mind - to be on the top at any cost. Not merely the candidates for public office are afflicted with it, but rock stars and rival race-car drivers.

*The Unseen Hand* is an allegorical statement against the political monitoring of people in a state by the oppressive authority. England is any country where such tyranny reigns, where men walked "day and night like dogs on the end of a leash"<sup>210</sup> (*The Unseen Hand*.63) Willie complains, "whenever I think beyond a certain circumference, of a certain circle there's a hand that squeezes"<sup>211</sup> (*The Unseen Hand*.51). In the political allegory, the oppression and thralldom imposed upon its subjects by the authoritarian govt, "the sorcerers of the High-commission"<sup>212</sup> (*The Unseen Hand*.50) as Willie calls it, are only too obvious.

With 'Curse' and 'hunger' as the central images the allegory in *Curse of the Starving Class* reaches out to different levels of meaning. The play begins with Weston's violent attack upon his own house, breaking the door which signifies the literal and symbolic destruction of the protective circles

of the family. The family is under a 'curse', the curse of marital discord, the estrangement between the father and the mother who make individual attempts to sell the farm and the house without the others' knowledge. The "developers" and 'real estate' hustlers exploit the Los Angeles post-war population by wiping out the small farming communities. They sound the death-knell of the American farm culture. The repeated reference to the refrigerator loaded with worthless artichokes\_\_loaded by the father and thrown away by the mother \_\_\_give a mythic dimension to the hunger of the four members of the family. Visual imagery of food in Shepard symbolises deep longings for some meaning to life. Staring into the refrigerator Wesley says, "I am starving". The refrigerator filled with artichokes, suggests spiritual starvation and insufficient nourishing. The story narrated by Weston, that of the eagle and the cat is nerve-racking though it carries great import. The eagle and the cat clutching at each other is a metaphor for the self-destructive way in which the family members cling to each other with whom they fight. Peace and harmony have long fled from American homes.

*States of Shock* may be termed a socio-political allegory for it explodes many of the bluffs about heroism associated with war. War is inglorious. It wreaks physical and emotional havocs upon those who participate in it. To Colonel, fighting willingly for one's country is a 'virture'. Like Abraham

who was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac to God, Colonel is willing to sacrifice his son stubbs to the God of War. From the battle field he comes back handicapped and as an impotent. Robbed of his life, his dreams and aspirations he finds himself in an existential crisis. The initial metaphor of the play has been taken from the American government's invasion of Iraq in 1991. The play is also a pointer to the inhuman indifference and criminal complacency shown by the affluent section of the American public, as suggested by the white couple who enjoy their food leisurely in the family restaurant.

Many of his plays are allegories of the self, which get developed from single point perspective to plays of multiple perspectives. Through plays like *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child*, *Fool for Love* and *True West* Shepard is forging a new alliance between himself and the world . He makes the personal get to the public and generalises the experience. He addresses issues of the alienation of youth in an average American family, the alienation an artist in a foreign country and the professional compromises an artist is forced to make based on his own experiences. His relationship with his own father which had never been cordial, finds place in many of his plays. Even in the lime light of Shepard's popularity his father preferred to remain beyond the pale of its reflected glory. This

tendency to get away from one's family and the near and dear ones to become more and more self-centred is a growing global phenomenon. Father Weston in *Curse of the Starving Class* has been fashioned after Shepard's own father, a vagrant, irresponsible drunk. *Fool for Love* chronicles his own desire for and rejection of women in a confessional vein. Leaving aside his wife O' Lan Shepard carried on with the popular rock-singer Patti Smith for a time. The character Cavale in *Cowboy Mouth* is a dramatised version of Patti Smith and she enacted the role when the play was performed at the American place Theatre. Rabbit, the Shaman-like artist with the medicine bundles in *Angel City* is Shepard himself though he was lured away by the promise of money and power in the film industry. As a satirist, Shepard speaks out explicitly through his allegories.

Shepard's use of myth is just another mode of recording and communicating his perceptions of reality and consciousness. Myths show the essential structure of reality manifest in particular events of the past that are remembered generation after generation. Irony lies in the contrast between the past and the present. Myths are cultural products belonging to the realm of the collective unconscious. Primordial images which spring out of the collective unconscious are encoded expressions which have a universal significance. Like images and metaphor, myth also is open-ended.

It "speaks to everything at once"<sup>213</sup> (*Visualization and Inner Library*.217) as Shepard himself said. In drama, it becomes a shared journey between the dramatist and the audience.

Major poetry keeps returning to the 'matrix' of myth which is the primitive imaginative structure. Shepard sniffs through these cultural artifacts of the past to gather pieces of evidence that could lead us to a truer picture of the present. His play *The Tooth of Crime* leans very heavily on the myth of the Golden Bough where Nemi usurped the throne and is consequently in constant vigil against dethronement. The terror of succession by usurpation that works in the minds of the power mongers is thus allegorised. Both Hoss and Crow are culpable.

*Buried Child* contains in it the fertility legend of the impotent Fisher King whose deposition makes the wasteland bear fruits again. The central theme of both the play and the allegory is death and rebirth. Halie, the mother, speaks about the rain and the sun as the images of fertility. It is death for Dodge and Vince is there to carry on the line of succession. But the irony is that it is not rebirth or life for Vince but death. His sweet-heart Shelley left him. His decision to stay back in the family mansion tantamount getting entombed there.

In the Americanized mythology of *True West* the biblical story of Cain and Abel undergoes ironic and comic revisions of the two brothers the younger one Austin is clearly the better one, kind moral and industrious. The other one Lee is of questionable character, who prefers to live in the desert like the nomadic Hebrews. Austin is initially the favoured minion of the American deity of success. But the tables are turned against him when Saul the producer rejects his 'wholesome love-story' in favour of Lee's western with the promise of a bloody duel at the end. Like Abel associated with animal sacrifice Lee is associated with violence and blood. In the Bible Saul is the King of the Hebrews who proves himself incapable of controlling the Philistines. In the play Saul the producer abandons all efforts to control the Philistines in American culture, whose indifference to culture is notorious.

*Angel City* is a satiric allegory underscoring the ironic element. Angel city is Los Angeles. Shepard implicates the world of art as a world elsewhere, and artist as fundamentally different persons, somewhat like angels. The air of a dream-like fantasy persists with the play. Rabbit, Tympani and Miss Scoons have all been out - of -town innocents as they entered the culver city, through the neon rectangle. But they have all been 'cheated and betrayed' by the images of glamour propagated by the celluloid tape. The

green light of hope associated with heaven has transformed itself into the 'green slime' of the disastrous movies. Angel City is no longer a city of angels, of bliss and hope. By a strange working of irony it has been transformed into a black hole where every hope has been changed into apocalyptic premonitions of disaster. Irony and parody thus contribute to the sub-structure of the play.

It is the theme of artist as victim as exemplified in the myth of Philoctetes that links *Geography of the Horse Dreamer*, *Cowboy Mouth* and *Melodrama Play*. Philoctetes, though living in isolation, neglected by the society, responds to its call in its hour of need. In *Geography of a Horse-Dreamer* Cody has an infallible intuitive power to predict winners of horse-races. He is whisked away to England, put in a hotel-room and is watched over by two gangsters. He is prompted to predict the winners. But when moved to an alien territory his gifts fail him. An artist's inspiration springs from an attachment to his natural roots. Any kind of exploitation for commercialness is to be considered criminal. Another example of commercial entrepreneurship forcing artists into creative slavery, we find in *Melodrama Play*. Duke Durgeon is brutalised by his Manager to compose a hit-song. In *Cowboy Mouth* slim is kidnapped off the street and from composed domesticity by Cavale. Her intention is to refashion him into a

“rock-n-roll Jesus with a Cowboy mouth”, who would express the aspirations of the community. Artist as the “wounded faun” surrounded by the Philistines of the world is the mental image conjured up by these plays.

The doctrine of the supremacy of the self, and a magnified view of the internal potentialities of the self, dominate the character of Icarus. He defies his father because his aim is to win laurels in an unprecedented way. The Pilot in *Icarus's Mother* wins the admiration of the spectators by his sky-writing. At the end of the hieroglyphics there is a deafening sound of explosion. When the smoke clears itself the aeroplane and the Pilot are gone out of sight ‘leaving not a rack behind’. A vague experience of unseen terror which is very close to the ‘great metaphysical fear’ is felt by the audience.

Hackamore in *Seduced* is another Icarus figure who became the living metaphor of the great dream of success, money and power. Like Prospero, he is the lord of all that he surveyed. But by some perversion he shut himself out of the community, hid away from the world. So instead of enjoying the scene of fulfilment he encounters the horrifying void of frustration and anguish. Icarus, the nameless Pilot and Hackamore are examples of how the rooted anarchies in the American experience might result in the loss of human sanity.

The finesse with which Sam Shepard handles the morality structure of allegory underlined with the strains of realism, satire and myth, established beyond doubt that his roots are in the oldest traditions of American drama. His aesthetic belief is in the transcendental power of theatrical images and language. Shepard has been successfully able to produce the "carefully constructed elaborate allegories" of post-modern America. He explained the nature of being human through sensational subject matter like infanticide, poverty, alcoholism, wife-beating and victimisation of the weak. In a ten-row Off,Off Broadway theatre his plays worked better as energy packages that would not merely call attention to these issues but would "rivet, trouble and torment" the audience. Shepard does not offer any magical solutions to this social malaise and spiritual degeneracy. But he seems to think that if redemption is to come it should come from the direction of faith and moral stamina and a readiness to return to the cultural roots of the country as is suggested by the Spider Lady in *Operation Sidewinder*.

In the history of no country has there been a time when it was absolutely free of misery and problems. Were it not for religion, mankind would not have survived. Shepard's Theatre of allegory is not one of resolutions but of explorations, discoveries and new beginnings.

## WORKS CITED

1. C.W.E Bigsby. *A Critical Introduction to 20th century Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p.248.
2. Kimball King, (ed) *Sam Shepard : A Casebook* (New York: London, Garland Publishing Inc, 1988).
3. Ann Wilson, "Great Expectations" Language and the Presence in Sam Shepards' writings" *Sam Shepard : A Casebook ed Kimball king*. NewYork: Garland Publishing Inc, 1988) p. 135.
4. Thomas Nash, "Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*: The Ironic uses of Folklore" *Modern Drama* 26.4(1983) p.486-91.
5. Ruby Cohn, 'Sam Shepard', *Contemporary Dramatists* ed James Vinson (London: St.James Press, 1973) p. 722-23.
6. Jack Gelber, Sam Shepard : "The Playwright as Shaman" Introduction to Sam Shepard's *Angel City and Other Plays*, (New York : Urizen Books, 1976)
7. Ron Mottram, *Inner Landscapes : The Theatre of Sam Shepard* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1984).
8. Bonnie Marranca, ed. *American Dreams : The Imagination of Sam Shepard* (New York : Performing Arts Journals Publications, 1981).
9. Herman William, *Understanding Contemporary Drama* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986).
10. Esther Harriet - *American Voices - Five Contemporary Playwrights* (North Carolina : Mc Farland & Co Inc Publishing, 1988).
11. Sam Shepard, 'The Tooth of Crime', *Seven Plays* (New York : Bantam, 1981) p.251.
12. Ronald Hayman, "Albee and Shepard", *Theatre and Anti-Theatre New Movements since Beckett* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
13. Ronald Hayman, 'Albee and Shepard', *Theater and Anti-Theater : New Movements since Beckett* ( New York: OUP, 1979) p. 167.
14. David J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard* (New York : Twayna Publishers, 1992).

15. David J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard* (New York : Twayne Publishers, 1992) p.2.
16. Ibid p.19.
17. David J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard*, (New York: Twayne Publishers 1992) p.78.
18. "Metaphors, Mad Dogs and Old Time Cowboys" Interview with Kenneth Chubb. *Theatre Quarterly* IV (August - October 1974) p.12.
19. David J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992) p.91.
20. Doris Auerbach, *Sam Shepard, Arthur Kopit and the Off Broadway* (Boston : Twayne Publishers, 1982).
21. Sam Shepard, "Angel City", *Angel City and Other Plays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976) p.13.
22. Sam Shepard, "Visualization, Language and the Inner Library". *American Dreams : The Imagination of Sam Shepard* ed by Bonnie Marranca, (New York : Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1981) p.217.
23. C.W. E. Bigsby, *A Critical Introduction to the Twentieth Century Drama Beyond Broadway* Vol III. Cambridge University Press, 1985).
24. Ruby Cohn quoting John Lahr in "The word is My Shepard" *New American Dramatists 1960-80* (London: Mac Millan Press, 1982) p.178.
25. Ron Mottram, *Inner Landscapes : The Theatre of Sam Shepard* (Columbia : University of Missouri, 1984).
26. Ellen Oumano, *Sam Shepard: The Life and workd of an American Dreamer* ( New York: St.Martin's Press, 1986)
27. George Santayana, *The German Mind : A philosophical Diagnosis* (New York - 1968) p.40
28. Michael Earley, 'Of Life Immense in Passion, Pulse and Power' *American Dreams : The Imagination of Sam Shepard* ed. Bonnie Marranca, (New York, Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1981) p.130
29. Ann Wilson, "Great Expectations : The Language and the Problem of Presence in the Writings of Sam Shepard", *Sam Shepard : A Casebook* ed Kimball King (New York : Garland Publisheing Inc, 1988) p.136.
30. Stambolin, " A Trip Through Popular Culture : Mad Dog Blues", *American Dreams : The Imagination of Sam Shepard* ed. Bonnie Marranca ( New York : PAJ Publications, 1981) p.81

31. Mary S. David quoting Prof. Hudson Long in *A History of American Literature*. (Bareilly : Literary Publication Bureau, 1969) p.13.
32. Mary S. David quoting Prof. Clarenie A. Brown and JohnT. Flanagan from their book *An Introduction to American Literature in A History of American Literature*. (Bareilly : Literary Publication Bureau, 1969) p.14.
33. Mary S. David quoting Thomas Paine from his *Common Sense*, in her book *A History of American Literature* (Bareilly : Literary Publication Bureau, 1969)
34. Robert E. Spiller quoting Moody in *Literary History of the United States*. (ed) Robert E.Spiller (New Delhi: Amarined Publishing Company, 1972) p. 1015.
35. Robert E. Spiller(ed) *Literary History of the United States* ( New Delhi: Amarind Publishing Company, 1972) p.1249.
36. Jagadish Chander quoting O'Neill in "Quest of Eugene . *Asian Response to American Literature* (ed) C.D. Narasimhaiah(Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972) p.140.
37. Jagadish Chander quoting O'Neill in "Quest of Eugene . *Asian Response to American Literature* (ed) C.D. Narasimhaiah(Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972) p. 140.
38. Mary S. David, *History of American Literature* (Bareilly: Literary Publication Bureau, 1969) p. 373.
39. Francis Donahue. *The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams* (New York: Frederick Linger Publishing Company Inc. 1964) p.211.
40. Francis Donahue. *The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams* (New York: Frederick Linger Publishing Company Inc. 1964) p. 212.
41. Francis Donahue citing Arthur Miller in *The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams* (New York: Frederick Linger Publishing Company Inc, 1964) p. 218.
42. Francis Donahue, *The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams*. (New York : Frederick Linger Publishing Company Inc, 1964) p.220.
43. Dennis Welland, *Arthur Miller* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) p.6-7
44. Arthur Miller, *Introduction to Collected Plays* (New York: Viking, 1963) p.49
45. F.O. Mathiessen quoting Hawthorne in *American Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 1941) p.242.

46. Allan Kaprove 'Happenings in the New York scene' *The Modern American Theatre* (ed) Alvin B. Kermin, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc, 1988) p.124.
47. Ruby Cohn. *New American Dramatists 1960-1980* (London : The Macmillan Perss Ltd, 1982) p. 6.
48. Doris Auerback, *Sam Shepard, Arthur Kopit and the Off Broadway Theatre* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982) p1.
49. Sam Shepard 'Visualization, Language and the Inner Language', *The Drama Review* 21.4 (December 1977) p. 55.
50. Kenneth Chubb "Metaphors, Mad Dogs and Old-Time Cowboy" Interview with Sam Shepard *American Dreams. The Imagination of Sam Shepard* (ed) Bonnie Marranca, PAJ Publications, 1981) p.197.
51. Darshan Singh Maini *The Spirit of American Literature*. (New York:Envoy Press, 1988) p.2.
52. Lionell Trilling , *The Opposing self*, ( New York: The Viking Press, Paper back 1968) p.90.
53. John Mac Queen, *Allegory*, (Metheun and Company Ltd, 1970) p.1
54. M.H.Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (VIth Edition), (Bangalore, India: Prism Books Pvt Ltd. 1993) p.4.
55. Mac Queen *Allegory*, (Methun & Co Ltd, 1970) p.13
56. John Macqueen, *Allegory* (Mctheun & Co Ltd, London 1970) P. 55
57. Harry Shaw, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*(Mc Graw Hill Book company, United States, New York 1905) p.12.
58. Miami Raphael, *The Parabolic pattern in the Poetry of Robert Frost* (M.Phil Dissertation in English , University of Calicut, 1989) p.7
59. Dan Otto Via, *The Parables* (USA: Fortress Press, 1971) p.71.
60. Cleanth Brooks "The Language of Paradox", *Twentieth centru Literary Criticism A Reader* (Ed. David Lodge, Longman Group Ltd, London : Longman 1972) p.292.
61. C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford Press, Oxford, 1936) p.48.
62. Northrop Frye. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton : 1957) p.90

63. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: 1959) p.118.
64. Sankaran Ravindran, "Paul De Man's Theory as His Deconstructive Strategy" *Language Forum* Vol 16 (December-January, 1990) p.137.
65. Jan jack quoted by Arthur Pollard in *Satire* (London: Methuen & co Ltd, 1970) p.7
66. Arthur Pollard quoting Dr. Johnson in *Satire* (London : Methuen & Co, 1970) p.3
67. Ashley Brown, *Satire* (Columbia: John L. Kimmey, Charles E . Merril Publishing Company, 1968) Intro p.3.
68. M.H.Abrams *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Sixth Edition (Bangalore: Prism Books Pvt Ltd, 1993) p.187.
69. Arthour Pollard, *Satire* (London: Metheun & Co, 1970) p.39.
70. The Complete Poetry and Prose of John Donne and The complete Poetry of Willsom Blake, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (New York: Random House, 1941) p. 558.
71. Jean Gould, *Modern American Playwrights* (Bombay:Popular Prakashan, 1969) p.5
72. Jagadish Chandra. *The Quest of O'Neill, Asian Response to American Literature* Ed by C.D. Narasimhaiah (New Delhi: Vikram Publications, 1972)p. 132.
73. Arthur Miller, Introduction *Collected Plays*, (New York :Viking, 1963) p.47
74. O'Neill's letter to George Jean Nathan quoted in *Literary History of the United States* (ed by Robert E. spiller ( New Delhi: Amrind Publishing Co pvt Ltd, 1972) p.1246.
75. David J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard*, (New York: Twaywe Publisher, 1964) p.4
76. Frederic Jameson, "Post modernism and Consumer Society in the Anti-Aesthetic," *Essays on Post-modern culture ed*, by Hal Foster (Port Townsend: Washington Bay Press, 1983) p.224-255)
77. Samuel G. Freedman, ' Sam Shepard's Mythic Vision of the Family" *New York Times* (I December 1985) p.1
78. Amy Lippman, "Rhythm and Truths : An Interview with Playwright Sam Shepard", *American Theatre* (April 1984) p.9
79. Kenneth Chubb, "Metaphors Mad Dogs and Old Time Cowboys", *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard*, Ed. Bonnie Marranca ( New York: PAJ Publications, 1981) p.202

80. Sam Shepard, *Angel City, Curse of the Starving Class and Other Plays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976) p.16.
81. *Ibid* p.22 .
82. David .J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard*, (New York: Twayne Publisher, 1992) p.83.
83. Sam Shepard, *The Tooth of Crime, Seven Plays* ( New York: Bantam, 1981) p.227
84. Irving Wardle, Review of *The Tooth of Crime*, *The Times* 18 July (1972) p.11.
85. Sam Shepard, 'Language, Visualisation and the Inner Library', *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard* Ed. Bonnie Marranca ( New York: PAJ Publications, 1981) p.217
86. Sam Shepard, 'Tooth of Crime', *Seven Plays* (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.205
87. William Herman, *Understanding Contemporary American Drama*, (Columbia University of South Carolina Press, 1926) p.30
88. David J.De Rose, *Sam Shepard* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992) p.55.
89. Sam Shepard, *State of Shock*, (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1992)p.13
90. David.J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard* ( New York: Twayne Publisher, 1992) p.135
91. Sam Shepard, *States of Shock* (New York: Dramatists' Play service, 1992) p.25.
92. David.J. De Rose, *Sam Shepard*, (New York: Twayne Publishing House) p.150.
93. Susan Willadt quoting Jack Kroll in "States of Shock' *Modern Drama* XXXVI
94. Amy Lippmann "Rhythm and Truth; An Interview with Sam Shepard" *American Theatre* (April 1986) p.11.
95. Cited by Henry Schevey in 'A Worm in the wood: The Father - Son relationship in the plays of Sam Shepard *Modern Drama* No I VolXXXVI (March 1993) p.18
96. Henry Schevey, "A worm in the wood: The Father son relationship in the plays of Sam Shepard" *Modern Drama Review* Vol. XXXVI p.16
97. Sam Shepard , 'Curse of the Starving Class' *Angel City and Other Plays* , (London :Faber and Faber, 1976) p.83
98. David .J.DeRose ,*Sam Shepard* (New York Twayni Publishers, 1992) p.91

116. Sam Shepard, *A Lie of the Mind*, ( New York: Dramatists Play service, 1986) p.77,78.
117. Sam Shepard, 'Suicide in Bb, *Buried Child Seduced and Suicide in B<sup>b</sup>* (New York : Urizen Books, 1979) p.123
118. David.J.De Rose, *Sam Shepard* (New York : Tsayne Publishers, 1992) p.86.
119. Ross Wetzsteon, 'Looking a Gift Horse Dreamer in the Mouth', *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard* ed Bonnie Maranca (New York: PAJ Publications 1981) p.133.
120. Sam Shepard, *Melodrama Play, Chicago and Other Plays*, (New York: Applause Theater Book Publishers, 1967) p.166
121. Gary Grant citing Gertrude Stein in 'Sam Shepards' NoteBook' in *Modern Dram Review* Vol XXXIV No 4 (1991) p.559.
122. M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Bangalore:Prism Books Pvt Ltd, 1993) p.250
123. John Whitman, *The Allegorical Problem : The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique* (Massachussetts, Harvard University Press, 1987) p.1
124. J. Lahiri citing G.B. Shaw in his *Notes on Dryden, Mac Flecknoe*, (L.N.Agarwal Educational Publishers, 1985) p.28
125. Michael Earley, "OfLife Immense in Passion, Pulse and Poser" *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard* ed Bonnie Marranca, (New York: Paj Publishers, 1981) p.127
126. Thomas E. Porter, *Myth and Modern American Drama*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969) p.19
127. N.S. Pradhan, *Introduction Modern American Drama: A study in Myth and Tradition* (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1978) p.14
128. Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigme: A Comparative Study in Sceience and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974) p.22
129. Grace Stewart, *A New Mythos - The Novel of the Artist as Heroine* (Montreal: Eden Press Publcatons, 1981)p.6
130. Grace Stewart, *A New Mythos - The Novel of the Artist as Heroine* (Montreal: Eden Press Publcatons, 1981) p.8

99. Sam Shepard, "Buried child' Seven Plays (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.97.
100. Ibid p. 124
101. Doris Auebach quoting Ver Muelen in Sam Shepard, *Kopt and the Off Broadway Theatre*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982) p.53
102. *Seven Plays*, Sam Shepard (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.124.
103. Sam Shepard, 'A Fool for Love' A Fool for Love'. *A Fool for Love and Other Plays* (New York: Bentam, 1984) p.23.
104. Sam Shepard, 'A Fool for Love', *Chicago and Other Plays* (New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1967) p.27.
105. C.W.E. Bigsby, *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama Vol III* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1985) p.248.
106. William Kleb, 'Sam Shepards' *TrueWest Theatre XII* 1 (Fall-Winter 1980) p. 67
107. Sam Shepard 'True West' *Sam Shepard: Seven Plays* (New York: Bantam, 1981) p. 58
108. William Kleb, 'Worse then Being Homeless: The True West and the Divided - self. *American Dreams: The Imagination Sam Shepard ed. Bonnie Maranea* (New York: 1981) p.120.
109. David. J. De Rose quoting Shepard (New York: Twayne Publishing Company, 1992) p.109.
110. Sam Shepard, 'Tre West', *Seven Plays*, (New York: Banton, 1981) p.36
111. C. G. Jung, 'The psychology of the invnsions, *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology* 2nd Edition(Princeton: 1966) p.38
112. C.W.E. Bigsby, *A Critical Introduction to the Twentieth Century Drama, Vol III Beyond Broa way* (Cambridge: Cmabridge University Press, 1985) p.245
113. C.W.E. Bigsby, *Modern American Drama 1945-1990* (Cambridge: Cmabridge University Press, 1992) p.189.
114. Ron Mottaram, *Exhaustion of the American soul : Sam Shepard's A Lie of the Mind, Sam Shepard: A casebook ed Kimbell King* (New york: Gurkand Publishing Inc, 1988) p.90
115. Sam Shepard's , *Buried Child' Seven Plays* ( New York: Bantam, 1981) p.91.

131. K.K. Ruthven, *Myth: The Critical Idiom* (London : Methuen & Co Ltd, 1976) p.10
132. Jung King quoted by K.K.Ruthven *Myths: The critical Idiom* (London: Methuevan & co Ltd,1976) p.22.
133. John Crowe Ransom quoted by K.R.ruthven, *Myth: The Ciritcal Idiom* (London: Merhuevan & Co Ltd, 1976) p.34.
134. Cleanth Brooks, "Irony as Principle of Structure", *Twentieth Century Criticism* ed. William J.Handy, Max Westbrook (New Delhi:Light and Life Publishers,1974) p.60
135. "Emotional Territory" An interview with Sam Shepard Carol Rosen, *Modern Drama* Vol XXXVI (March 1998) p.5
136. Peter Brooks quoted by C.W.E. Bibsby. *Modern American Drama 1945-90* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 1992) p.102
137. Michael J. Hayes, "Sam Shepard" *Insights, American Drama Gen*, Editorr, Clive Bloom (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995) p.139
138. Sam Shepard, *The Tooth of Crime*", *Seven Plays by Sam Shepard* (New York: Toronto: Bantam, 1981) p.245
139. John Burgess quoted by Steven Putsel in "Shepard's London Audience" *Modern Drama* 36 (1993) p.88.
140. Sam Shepard, "Visualisation , Language and Inner Library", *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard* ed Bonnie Marranta (New York: PAJ Publications, 1981)215
141. Thomas Bulfinch, *The Goldern Age of Myth and Legend* ch XXXV, (Hertfordshrine : Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Cumberland Hunse, 1993) p. 368
142. Dharnidhar Sahu, "Buried Myths and the Power Game in Sam Shepard, 'The Tooth of Crime'" *Indian Journal of American Studies* Vol 19 Nos 1-2 (Winter and summer, 1989) p.88
143. Dharnidhar Sahu, quoting Frazer in *Buried Myths and the Power Game in Sam Shepard's The Tooth of Crime* 91972) *Indian Journal of Americal Studies* (Winter - summer 1989) p.87
144. Sam Shepard "The Tooth of Crime", *Sam Shepard's Seven Plays*, Edicted by Richard Gilman (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.213

145. Ibid, p.209
146. Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Das Gupta, *American Playwrights: A Critical Survey* (New York: Drama Book Specialistic, 1981) p.109.
147. David J.De Rose, *Sam Shepard* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992) p.107
148. Sam Shepard, 'Buried Child', *Seven Plays* (new York: Bantom, 1981) p.76
149. Ibid p.130
150. Bruce J. Mann quoteing Ruby Cohn in "Character, Behaviior and the Fantastic in Sam Shepard" *Buried Child" Sam Shepard A Case book* Ed Kimball King ( New delhi: Garland Publishing Inc 1988) p.82
151. Sam Shepard, "Buried Child" *Seven Plays* (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.94
152. Sam Shepard, 'Buried Child' *Seven Plays* (New York: Bantam, 1984) p.130
153. Ibid p.130
154. Thomas Nash, "Sam Shepard's Bureid Child: T eh Ironic Use of Folklore" *Modern Drama Review*, Vol 26 No.4 (December 1983) p. 486.
155. Toby Silverman Zinman, "Sam Shepard and Super- realism, *Modern Drama Review* XXIX September (1986) p.425.
156. Thomas Nash, "Sam Shepard's Buried Child", *Modern Drama review* XXVI No 4 (December 1983) p.491.
157. Johan Callens quoting Northrope Frye in "Memories of the Sea in Sam Shepard". *Modern Drama Review* XXIX (September 1986) p. 409.
158. Michael Smith, "Notes, Icarsus's Mother", *American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard*, ed. Bonnie Marranca (New York: Paj Publications, 1981) p.161
159. William Kleb, "Sam Shepard's True West Theatre VII (Fall and Winter 1980) p.67
160. William Kleb, Title "Worse Than Being Homeless', *American Dreams: Imagination of Sam Shepard*. ed. Bonnie Marranca (New York: PAJ Publications, 1981) p.117
161. William Kleb, *Theatre XII* (Fall and Winter, 1980) p.168
162. Tucker Orbison, ":Mythic Levels in Sam Shepard's True West *Modern Drama Review* Vol XXVII No.4 (1984) p.506-517 (quotations is not verbatim, only idea borrowed).

163. Sam Shepard, "True West", Sam Shepard : Seven Plays (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.3.
164. Sam Shepard, "True West", Sam Shepard : Seven Plays (New York: Bantam, 1981) p12.
165. Sam Shepard, "True West", Sam Shepard : Seven Plays (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.39.
166. Robert Coe citing Sam Shepard in Saga of Sam Shepard *New York Times Magazine* (23 (November 1980) p.122.
167. Jeffrey D. Hosper, " Cain, Canaanites and Philistines in Sam Shepard's True West, *Modern Drama Review* XXXVI (1993 March) p.76.
168. Sam Shepard, True West' Sam Shepard : Seven Plays (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.9
169. Robert Coe , "Saga of Sam Shepard" *New York Time Magazine*, (23 November 1980) p.122.
170. Trevis Bogard, *Contour in Time. The Plays of Eugene O' Nell*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) p.217.
171. William Herman quoting Sam Shepard in *Understanding Contemporary Drama*, Columbia:University of South California Press, 1926) p.57.
172. I owe a great deal to Tucker Orbison "Mythic levels in Shepard's True West, *Modern Drama*. Vol. 27 (December 1986) PP. 506-19.
173. Sam Shepard, "True West", Sam Shepard: Seven Plays (New York: Bantam, 1981)p.12.
174. Ibid p.13
175. Ibid p.14
176. Ibid p.14
177. William Herman, *Understanding Contemporary Drama*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1926) p.59
178. Sam Shepard "True West" Sam Shepard:Seven Plays (New York: Bantam, 1981) p.21.
179. Ibid p.40
180. Ibid p.41.

181. William Herman, *Understanding Contemporary Drama* ( Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1926) p.59
182. William Herman, *Understanding Contemporary Drama* ( Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1926) p.60
183. Tucker Osbison quoting H.d. Torean in "Mythic Levels in Sam Shepard's True West" *Modern Drama Review* Vol 27, nO.4 (1984) p.509
184. Elmer Borklund quoting Northorp Frye in *contemporarty Literary Critics* ( London: James Press Ltd, 1977) p.216.
185. Waller A. Strauss, *Descent and Return - The Orphic Theme in Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Massachsetts harvard University, 1971) p. 17
186. Sam Shepard, 'Angel City, Angle City and Other Plays (London: Fabe, and Faber, 1976) p.16.
187. Leonard Wikcox, 'Wests' 'The Day of the Socusts' and Shepard's Angel City, *Modern Drama Review* XXXVI (march 1993) p.64
188. Sam Shepard' ' Cowboy Mouth' Angel City, *Curse of the Starving Class and Other Plays* (London : Faber and Faber, 1976) p.208.
189. Sam Shepard ' Cowboy Mouth' Angel City, *Curse of the Starving Class and Other Plays* (London : Faber and Faber, 1976) p.209.
190. Sam Shepard ' Cowboy Mouth' Angel City, *Curse of the Starving Class and Other Plays* (London : Faber and Faber, 1976) p.208.
191. Sam Shepard ' Cowboy Mouth' Angel City, *Curse of the Starving Class and Other Plays* (London : Faber and Faber, 1976) p.205.
192. Sam Shepard, *The Geography of A Horse Dreamer' The Tooth of Crime and The Geography of a Horse Dreamer* ( New York: Grove Press, 1974)p.95
193. Sam Shepard, "Geography of a Horse Dreamer", *Tooth of Crime and Geography of a Horse-Dreamer* (New York: Grove Press, 1974)p.130.
194. Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths, Vol I* (Baltimoer, Penguin, 1955) p.312-13.
195. Albert E. Wilhelm, 'Icarsu's Mother, Sam Shepard : A Casebook Kimball Kim (New York: Garland Publishing Inc , 1988) p.22
196. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* ( New York: Oxford, 1973) p.5

197. Albert. E. Wilhelm, "Icarus's Mother" Sam Shepard: A Case Book Kimball King (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1988) p.25
198. Sam Shepard "Icarus's Mother', Chicago and Other Plays (New York: Applause Theatre Publishings, 1967) p.35.
199. Albert E. Wilhelm quoting Henry. A Murray in Icarus's Mother, Sam Shepard: A Case book Ed. Kinball King (New York: Garden Publishing Inc, 1988)p.30.
200. Sam Shepard, "Icarus's Mother" Chicago and Other Plays (New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers,1967) p.42.
201. Sam Shapard, 'Seduced', Buried Child and Seduced and Suicide in Bb (New York:Urigen,1979) p.114.
202. Sam Shapard, 'Seduced', Buried Child and Seduced and Suicide in Bb (New York:Urigen,1979) p.76.
203. Sam Shapard, 'Seduced', Buried Child and Seduced and Suicide in Bb (New York:Urigen,1979) p.114.
204. Jack Croll, 'Crazy Henry' News Week 2, 91. April/June (1978) p.94
205. Esther Harriot, "Introduction" American View-five Contemporary Playwrights in Essays and Interviews (N.c.Caroline: Mc Far Land & Co.Inc,1988)XV.
206. Raimundo Panikkar quoted by Gary Grant in 'Sam Shepard and The Transformation of Cosciousness" Modern Drama Review Vol XXXVI (March 1993) p.129.
207. Ronald Hayman quoting Sam Shepard in 'Albee and Shepard', Theatre and Anti-Theater, New Movements Since Beckelt (New York, Oxford University Press, 1979) p.169.
208. Sam Shepard, 'Action', *Angel City, Curse of the Starving class and Other Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976)p.141
209. Ibid. 141.
210. Sam Shepard 'The Unseen Hand' Action and The Unseen Hand (London: Faber and Faber, 1975) 63.
211. Ibid p. 51
212. Ibid .50
213. Sam Shepard " Language, Visualisation and Inner Library' American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard (ed) Bonnie Marranca (New York:Paj Publications, 1981) p. 217

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY WORKS

#### 1. PLAYS

'Action in Action and The Unseen Hand'. London: Faber and Faber, 1975.

'Angel City' in *Angel City and Other Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

'Buried Child' in *Seven Plays*. Toronto: Bantam, 1981.

'Chicago' in *Chicago and Other Plays*. New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1967.

'Cowboy Mouth' In *Angel City and Other Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

'Cowboys' 2' in *Angel City and Other Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

'Curse of the Starving Class' in *Angel City and Other Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

'Geography of a Horse Dreamer' in *The Tooth of Crime and Geography of a Horse Dreamer*. New York: Grove Press, 1974.

'Icarus's Mother in *Chicago and Other Plays*. New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1967.

'La Turista' in *Seven Plays*. Toronto: Bantam, 1981.

'A Lie of the Mind', New York: New American Library, 1986.

'Mad Dog Blues', in *Angel City and Other Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

'Melodrama Play' in *Chicago and Other Plays*. New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1967.

'Operation Sidewinder' in *Four Two Act Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1974.

'Red Cross' in *Chicago and Other Plays*. New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1967.

'Seduced' in *Four Two Act Plays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1974.

'*States of Shock*' New York: Dramatist Phy Service, 1992.

'Suicide in B<sup>b</sup>' in *Buried Child, Sedueced and Suicide in B<sup>b</sup>*. New York: Urizen Books, 1979.

'The Tooth of Crime' in *Seven Plays*. Nwe York. Toronto: Bantam, 1981.

'True West' in *Seven Plays*. Toronto: Bantam, 1981.

'The Unseen Hand' in *Action and The Unseen Hand*. London: Faber and Faber, 1975.

#### OTHER WORKS

'Metaphors, Mad Dogs and Old Time Cow-boys'. *Theatre Quarterly*, 4.  
(August-October 1974) : 3-16.

*Motel Chorinicles*. San Francis & Co: City Light Books, 1982.

'Visualisation, Language and Inner Library', *The Drama Review*, 21.4  
(December 1977).

## SECONDARY SOURCES

- Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Third Edition). Delhi : The Macmillan Company of Indian, 1978.
- Auerbach, Doris. *Sam Shepard, Arthur Kopit and the Off Broadway Theatre*. Boston : Twayne Publishers, 1982.
- Bachman, Charles R. "Defusion of Menace in the Plays of Sam Shepard". *Modern Drama*, 19.4 (December 1976) : 405-416.
- Ballet, Arthur H. *Playwrights for Tomorrow*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1966.
- Barbour, Ian G. *Myths, Models and Paradigms : A Comparative Study in Science and Religion*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974.
- Berkowitz, Gerald M. *New Broadways, Theatre Across America 1950-1980*. New Jersey : Rowmen Allenheld, 1982.
- Bigsby, C.W.E. *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century Drama Vol III Beyond Broadway*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Blaun, Herbert. "The American Dream in Amercian Gothic : The Plays of Sam Shepard and Adrienne Kennedy". *Modern Drama*, 24.4 (1984) : 520-539.
- Bloom, Clive (ed). *Insights : American Drama*. London : Macmillan, 1995.
- Bloom, Solomon F. *Europe and America, The Western World in Modern Times*. New York : Harcourt, Brace and Wrold Inc, 1961.
- Bogard, Travis. *Contour in Time : The Plays of Eugene O'Neil*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1972.

- Borklund, Elmer. *Contemporary Literary Critics*. London : St. James Press Ltd, 1977.
- Brater Enoch. American Clocks : Sam Shepard's Time Plays. *Modern Drama*. 37.4 (1994). 603 - 611.
- Brown Asley. *Satire*. Columbia : John L. Kimmey, Charles. E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1968.
- Bulfinch, Thomas. *The Age of Fable*. London : Aldine Press, 1969.
- Bulfinch Thomas. *The Golden Age of Myth and Legends*, Hertfordshire . Cumberland: Wordsworth Publications, 1993.
- Callens, Johna, "Memories of the sea in Shepard's Illinois". *Modern Drama* 29.3 (1986) : 403-413.
- Campbell, Joseph. *Myths to Live By*. (3rd Ediction) Toronto : Bantam Books, 1988.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, New Jersey : Preinceton University Press, 1972.
- Carrigan, Robert W. Ed. *Theatre in the Twentieth Century*. New Yrok : Grove Press, 1963.
- Carrol, Dennis. " The Filmic cut and 'switchback' in the plays of Sam Shepard". *Modern Drama*. 19.4 (December 1976) : 125-138.
- Chiari, Joseph. *Landmarks of Contemporay Drama*. New York : Gordian Press, 1971.
- Chubb, Kenneth. "Fruitful Difficulties of Directing Shepard". *Theatre Quarterly*, 4 (1974) : 17-25.
- Clark, Barrett Harper. *A Study of Modern Drama*. New York : Appleton.1925.
- Clurman, Harold. *The Nation* (May 4, 1975) : 542.
- Clurman, Harold. *The Nation* (January 10, 1976) : 27-29.

- coe, Robert. "Saga of Sam Shepard". *New York Times Magazine* (23 November, 1980) : 56-58, 118, 120, 122, 124.
- Coh, Ruby. *New American Dramatists (1960-1980)*. London: Macmillan Press, 1982.
- Das, Biojoy Kumar. *Aspects of Twentieth Century Criticism*. New Delhi : Atlantic Publishers, 1992.
- David, Mary S. *A History of American Literature*. Barutty Literary Publication Bureau, 1969.
- De Rose, David J. *Sam Shepard*. New York : Twayne Publishers, 1992.
- Donahue, Francis. *The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams*. New York : Frederick Uger Publisher Company Inc, 1964.
- Eric, Gould. *Mythical Intentions in Modern Literature*. New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Faber, Lillian. *Crowell's Handbook of Classical Literature*. New York : Thomas Y Crowell Company, 1964.
- Fermor, Una Ellis. *The Frontiers of Drama*. Suffolk : Methyen & Co Ltd, 1945.
- Freedman, Morris. *American Drama in Social Context*. London : Southern Illinois University Press, 1971.
- Frye Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Gannanathan, Eswari. *A Study of Themes in the Selected Plays of Sam Shepard*. M.Phil Diss., Madras, 1986.
- Gerald, Borkman. Ed. *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1984.

- Gerald, Weales. "Greate Divide. Shepard's *Life of the Mind Commonweal*, (14 February, 1986) : 86-87.
- Gill, Brenden. "Getting on with the story", *The New Yorker* (March 21, 1970) : 115-16.
- Gilman, Richard. "Introduction" *Seven Plays by Sam Shepard*. New York : Bantam, 1981.
- Gould, Jean. *Modern American Playwrights*. Bombay : Popular Prakashan, 1969.
- Grant, Gary. 'Writing as a process of performing the self : Sam Shepard's Notebooks". *Modern Drama*, 34.4 (1991) : 549-565.
- Grant, Gary. "Shifting the Paradigm", Shepard, Myth and the Transformation of Consciousness". *Modern Drama*. 36.1 (1993) March : 120-129.
- Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths 2 Vols*. Baltimore : Penguin, 1955.
- Guthrie, W.K.C. *The Greeks and their Gods*. London : Methuen and Com., 1950.
- Haedicke, Janet I. " A Population (and Theatre) at Risk" Battered Women in Henley's "Crime of the Heart and Shepard's *Lie of the Mind*, *Modern Drama*. 36.1 (March 1993) 83-95.
- Harriot, Esther. *American Voices : Five Contemporary Playwrights in Essay and Interviews*. North Carolina : McFarland and Co. Inc Publishers, 1988.
- Hayman, Ronald. *Theater and Anti-Theater, New Movements Since Beckett*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Herman, William. *Understanding Contemporary American Drama*. Columbia : University of South Carolina Press, 1926.

- Homan, Richard L. "American Playwrights in the 1970s. Rabe and Shepard". *Critical Quarterly*, 24.1 (1982) : 73-82.
- Horton, Rod E and Edwards W. Herbert. *Backgrounds of American Literary Thought*. New Jersey : Princeton Hall Inc, 1974.
- Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasan. *The Adventure of Criticism*. New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Private Ltd, 1985.
- Jain, Naresh K. *Love in Modern American Drama*. New Delhi : Manohar Publications, 1991.
- Kerenji , C. *The Heroes of the Greeks*. Southampton : Camelot Press, Thames & Hudson, 1959.
- Kermin, Alvin B.ed. *The Modern American Theatre*. New Jersey : Prentice Hall Inc, 1967.
- King, Kimball. ed. *Sam Shepard : A Casebook*. New York : Gerland Publishing Inc, 1988.
- Kirk, G.S. *The Nature of Greek Myths*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1974.
- Kleb, William. "Sam Shepard's True West". *Theatre*, 12.1 (Fall Winter, 1980) : 65-71.
- Kroll, Jack. "Crazy Henry" *Newsweek* (March 1978) : 94.
- Kroll, Jack. Theatre, "Desert Apocalypse" *Newsweek*, (March 23, 1970) : 69.
- Lerner, Max. *America as a Civilization*. New York : Henry Holt and Company Inc, 1957.
- Leslie, Gerald R. *The Family in Social Context*. Oxford : Oxford University press, 1982.

- Lewis, Allan. *American Plays and Playwrights of the Contemporary Theatre*. New York : Crown, 1970.
- Maccaffrey, Isabel G. *Spencer's Allegory. The Anatomy of Imagination*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Marranca, Bonnie. *American Playwrights : A Critical Survey by Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Das Gupta*. New York : Drama Book Specialists, 1981.
- Marranca, Bonnie. ed. *American Dreams : The Imagination of Sam Shepard*. New York : PAJ Publications, 1981.
- Martin, Esslin. *New Theatre Voices of the Seventies*. ed. Simon Trussler, London : Methuen, 1981.
- Mathiessen, F.O. *American Renaissance*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Muecke, D.C. *Irony (The critical Idioms)*, Norfolk : Harper and Row Publishers, 1970.
- Mac Queen John. *Allegory*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1970.
- Narasimhaiah, C.D (ed) *Asian Response to American Literature*. New Delhi : Vikas Publications, 1972.
- Nash, Thomas. "Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* : The Ironic Use of Folk-lore". *Modern Drama*, 26.4 (December 1983) : 486-491.
- Oliver, Edith. "The Theatre, Off Braodway". *New Yorker*, (September 2, 1985) : 71.
- Oliver, Edith. "Off Broadway - Fractured Tooth" *New Yorker*, (17 March, 1973) : 92-94.

- Orbison, Tucker. 'Mythic Levels in Sam Shepard's True West'. *Modern Drama*, 27.4 (1984) : 506-19.
- Oumano, Ellen. *Sam Shepard*. New York : St. Martins Press, 1986.
- Panigrahi Ramesh P. "The Phenomenon of Non character : A Study of Sam Shepard's Plays through the 1960s and 1970s". *Indian Journal of American Studies*, 15.2 (Summer 1985) : 113-122.
- Parker, Dorothy. *Essays on Modern American Drama* : Toronto, London: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Pasoli, Robert. 'Off Off Broadway'. *The Nation*, (April 4, 1966) : 403-406.
- Patraka, Vivian. *Sam Shepard* Boise, Idaho : Boise State University, 1969.
- Picard, Barbara Leonie. *The Encyclopaedia of Myths and Legends of All Nations*. London : Garden City Books, 1950.
- Poggi, Jack. *Theatre in America. The Impact of Economic Forces 1870-1967*. Ithaca, New York : Cornell University Press, 1968.
- Pollard Arthur. *Satire*. London : Methuen & co, 1970.
- Porter, Thomas E. *Myth and Modern American Drama*. Detroit : Wayne State University Pres, 1969.
- Powe, Bruce. W. "The Tooth of Crime : Sam Shepard's Way with Music". *Modern Drama*, 24.1 (March 1981) : 13-25.
- Pradhan, N.S. *Modern American Drama : A Study in Myth and Tradition*. New Delhi : Arnold Heinemann, 1978.
- Putzel Steven. "An American Cowboy on the English Fringe : Sam Shepard's London Audience". *Modern Drama* 36.1. (1993) March 131 -144.

- Rabillard, Sheila. "Sam Shepard : Theatriacal Power and American Dreams" *Modern Drama*, 30.1 (March 1987) : 58-71.
- Raghavacharyalu D.V.K. (ed) *The Experience of American Literature*. Jullunder City : Orient Publishers, 1969.
- Raman Sethu, V.S. (ed) *Contemporary Criticism. An Anthology*. Macmillan India Ltd, 1989.
- Rosen, Carol. "Sam Shepard's Angel City : A Movie for the stage" *Modern Drama*, 30.1 (March 1979) : 39-46.
- Rosen, Carol. "Emotioal Territory" An Intervie with Sam Shepard. *Modern Drama*. 36.1 (March 1993) : 1-11.
- Rose.H.J. *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*. London : Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1964.
- Ruthven K.K. *Myth*. London : Methuen & Co Ltd., 1976.
- Rycroft, Charles. *A Critical Dictionary of Psycho-analysis Hamondsworth* : Penguin Books, 1985.
- Sahu, Dharanidhar. "Buried Myths and the Powr Game in Sam Shepard's *The Tooth of Crime* (1972)". *Indian Journal of American Studies*, 19.1 and 2.(Winter And Summer 1989) : 87-92.
- Sankar, Misra Girija. *The Plays of Sam Shepard : A Study*. M.Phil Diss, Berhampur, 1985.
- Sankaran Ravindran. "Paul de Man's "Theory as his deconstructive strategy" *Language Forum* Vol 16 (1990) December. New Delhi : Bahri Publications.

- Sauvage, Leo. "Act of Insanity". *The New Leader*, (March 10, 1986) : 21-22.
- Schevey Henry. "A Worm in the Wood: The Father -Son relationship in the Plays of Sam Shepard". *Modern Drama* 36.1 (March 1993) : 12-26.
- Scott Wilbur. *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism*. New York : Macmillan, 1962.
- Spiller, Robert E. (ed) *Literary History of the United States*.
- Stewart, Grace. *A New Mythos - The Novel of the Artist as Heroine (1877-1977)*. Montreal, Canada : Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981.
- Strauss, Walter A. *Descent And Return - The Orphic Theme in Modern Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard university Press, 1971.
- Vinson, James. (ed) Contemporary Dramatists. London : St. James Press, 1977.
- Wager, Warren.W. *Terminal Visions - The Literature of Last Things*. Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Weales, Gerald. *American Drama Since World War II*. New York : Harcourt, 1962.
- Weales, Gerald. *The Jumping-off Place : American Drama in the 1960s*. New York : Macmillan, 1969.
- Whiting, Charles G. "Images of Women in Shepard's Theatre" *Modern Drama*, 33.4 (December 1990) : 494-506
- Whiting, Charles G. 'Inverted Chronology in Sam Shepard's *La Turista*', *Modern Drama*, 29.3 (September 1986) : 416-22.

- Willadt Susanne. "States of War in Sam Shepard's States of Shock," *Modern Drama* 36.1 (1993) : 147-163.
- Wilson, Ann. "Fool of Desire : The Spectator to the Plays of Sam Shepard".  
*Modern Drama*, 30.1 (March 1987) : 46-57.
- Wilcox, Leonard. 'Modernism Vs Post modernism : Shepard's *The Tooth of Crime* and the Discourses of Popular Culture". *Modern Drama*, 30.4 (December 1987) : 56-673.
- Wilcox, Leonard. "Wests' The Day of the Locust and Shepard's *Angel City* : Refigurinhg L.A. Noir". *Modern Drama* 36.1 (March 1993) : 61-74.
- Whitman John. *Allegory : The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval technique*.  
Cambridge , Masschuseetts : Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Zinman, Toby Silverman. "Sam Shepard and Super-Realism" *Modern Drama*, 29.3 (September 1986) : 423-428.

