

Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buired Child*:

Reverberations of the Decadent American Morals

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The literary production of Sam Shepard demonstrates some atypical intricacy. His career as a dramatist reflects an ample development on the thematic as well as the technical levels; a mounting dramatic maturity that Shepard himself concede. In an interview published in 1974 Shepard announced that "he was [now](#) trying for less flash and fewer mythic figures."¹ Although he had thought that the character is a "corny idea," he was now becoming interested in it "on a big scale." This progress is reflected in the reaction to Shepard's works which is in itself problematic:

The plays before *Curse of the Starving Class* (1977), especially when they first appeared, were generally received with a good deal of confusion even from the directors who presented them; the later plays have enjoyed much wider acceptance, but some of the popular response seems to be directed not so much to the plays themselves as to a clichéd shiny surface enveloping Shepard and the dissolution of the *American Dream*.²

A prominent attribute that characterizes Shepard's dramas and constitutes an undeniable aspect of his theatrical skill is the atmosphere that he overwhelms his audience in. His theatrical agility is best manifested in his aptitude to engulf the spectators in surprising dramatic outcomes : aggressive conflicts between characters ; abrupt and peculiar alteration in the roles characters play; conspicuous gestures and descriptions that induce attention.³ In other words, "Shepard's plays defy easy categorization, but the attempt to apply a familiar taxonomy may help to clarify their character... Shepard may come closest to theatre of cruelty, for he does shock the spectator."⁴

As a dramatist, Shepard asserts that " he had been writing for ten years in an experimental maze- poking around, fishing in the dark."⁵ His early plays are

described to be "abstracts", not in the sense that they are mere attempts to replicate expressionist or surrealistic manifestations of a human emotional experiences, but they go away from that into the examination of an unexpected creation of dramatic performance. " Shepard's early plays are abstract in the sense that (while inevitably composed of elements bearing culturally coded "messages") they seem to convey no overall "message."⁶

It seems insignificant to describe Shepard's early plays as simple detachments from realistic drama. In more conventional realistic drama the audience's focus is not only on the "message" that the drama conveys, but also on what the characters convey by their speeches and actions. Consequently, the audience is not abstracted from the performance by any instructive brainwave. Conclusively, the utterances of characters in the play are the means used by Shepard to convey the dramatic influence, and without a dramatically developed situation, they communicate practically nothing about the character's outlooks or ideas and can hardly be understood.

With the escalating impact of materialistic and economic circumstances, Shepard's intentions and revelations have become more genuinely centered upon real society which signifies the idea that his later works are considered to be a variety of an eye-catching characterization for its realistic attitude, in addition to the consistent plotting mainly focusing on the decay and estrangement in family and society. Accordingly, Shepard's focus turns out to be more distant from the profligate situations, and more detached from the complicated, out of reach pattern of his former dramas." The surface action of Shepard's later plays may be less overtly surrealistic, but they still incorporate the same themes and similar principles."⁷

Shepard has become more and more remote from any indistinctness or vagueness of themes, favoring ideas associated with themes already acknowledged on the cultural and theatrical levels. " In the 1960's and 1970's, the predominant influences on Shepard's plays were generally located in popular culture, music, beat poetry, pop art, comics, movies."⁸ Simultaneously, he is

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adroit enough to attain the intricate equation or the sophisticated compromise of exploiting all the indispensable means to make the audience realize what is happening on stage, focusing on what the characters communicate and do and instigating the audiences' attentiveness towards the complicated theatrical construction. Hence, he has made a significantly progressive step in his career, casting aside the abstract themes of his earlier works, into favoring the more evocative themes primarily taken from the typically American cultural setting.

One of the most prevailing traits of Shepard's later dramas is his inclination to bring into prospect the emptiness of an artificial society. This idea is profoundly manifested by his tendency to diminish the outcomes of dialogues used in his dramas into achieving definite fundamentals when the language is employed simply to induce observance. Consequently, this technique will bring into prospect the perishing society and its concerns, surpassing the shallowness of merely concentrating upon the commonly admired American values. Thomas P. Adler denotes that "Shepard displays a peculiar power in his highly symbolic family problem plays and allegorizing the American experience, of deflating the myth of America as the New Eden."⁹

Subsequently, In this phase of his literary career, the themes that constitute Shepard's core of interest are mainly related to the problematic issues of the dysfunction of familial morals; the family system that typifies people who are frustrated to live together; and the anguish resulting from the deprivation of the family spirit that tries its best to stay alive. This scarcity of household shrewdness is most excellently evident by each character's aspiration to achieve a kind of an individual entity away from the rest of the family. Yet, this individuality frequently takes the form of dreams of escape that often ends in devastation. Furthermore, a vital aspect of Shepard's family problem plays is the portrayal of some crucial themes mostly associated with the collapse of marital bonds and the vanity of parental relations. Such themes have formulated the motifs of the loss of sense of marital sanctity, while offspring are frequently motivated either by the husband or the wife to conspire against the other, and the

only time siblings come together is in shared run off dreams. Shepard " managed to make the family play a structure for subterranean probe into the American nightmare... those relationships between violent and sensitive brothers, loony mothers and children, fathers and alienated sons, husbands and estranged wives, have increasingly moved to the center of his plays"¹⁰

The failure of communication influences the entire family and the collapse of conversation reflects in dramatic form the failure to safeguard familial relationships. This failure will cause the family to live in a state of isolation from the society. The family is presented to be incapable of establishing a connection with the neighborhood and the family members are often overwhelmed in a sense of insecurity that they want to overcome by their ongoing dreams of changing residence. "The sense of removal from other people, from a rooted surrounding, from the self is a central concern of a writer whose plays explore the American psyche at a time of failed dreams and lost visions."¹¹ This may be Shepard's denunciation of contemporary American society; a disapproval that is best incarnated in plays like *Curse of the Starving Class* (1977) and *Buired Child* (1978) which constitute a turning point to a more down-to-earth pattern as Charles R.Lyons states that " Shepard took up another highly conventionalized aesthetic form – dramatic realism- and reconfigured its typical structure to accommodate the more open, fluid conventions of his writing ."¹²

Shepard's focal point in *Curse of the Starving Class* is on the sternly dysfunctional Tate family to bring into sight concerns of house and inheritance, of rootedness and escape, of determinism and change. The title of the play is quite provocative. The "curse" of the play's title is proved to be the outcome of social and economic impacts, while the starvation is wreaked not only on the physical level, but most importantly on the spiritual level as well. " People who have a profound hunger for anything- the hunger for drugs, the hunger for sex- this hunger is a direct response to the profound sense of emptiness and aloneness, maybe, or disconnectiveness."¹³ On the symbolic level, *Curse of the Starving Class* exhibits an explicit symbolism that surpasses the kind of emblematic

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employment of scene and objects. For instance, an intensified feeling of deprivation and emptiness is already established in the opening scenes of the play by setting an empty refrigerator on the stage into which one or other of the characters is frequently found gazing. When they find "Nothing"¹⁴, a feeling of agony and extreme anxiety overwhelms the atmosphere of the play from the outset. The centrality of the refrigerator to which the family members go again and again, seeking food that will decrease their hunger, gives this object, in repeated use, a kind of iconographic value. The refrigerator stands for a failing source of food and the storehouse and for the insufficient nourishment the parents provide for themselves and their children.

The play opens with the son, Wesley, narrating the inconsiderate arrival and abrupt departure of the father, Weston, as an event in the immediate past; the play clarifies that the father's presence is periodic rather than continuous; and that it removes his ownership of the land and distances him as a husband of his wife, replacing him with a surrogate lover. Wesley's actions attempt to appropriate and displace the presence of the father; an aspiration that would eventually end with the lose his own identity.

From the start, the sense that a house is the foremost source of protection and safety has been devastated when the son Wesley is seen removing the wood of a door broken by his father Weston who arrived drunkenly a night earlier. To intensify this sense, other characters, like Taylor, a lawyer friend who has affection towards the mother Ella, and Ellis, the club-owner to whom Weston owes money, are introduced in this way to constitute a crucial threat of family destruction. Evading this menace, Ella plans to sell the house and assets to make a "change" and to "bring a little adventure into their lives" (148). She aims at achieving a kind of false uniqueness by using the money to travel to Europe where she thinks that she will be more refined, despite the fact that it would be profoundly difficult to imagine her concerned with "High art. Painting. Castles. Fancy food."(144). Ella is fallaciously affected by the impression that she can reshape herself by changing places.

The daughter, Emma, and Weston share the notion that people are " all be the same people" (148) anywhere else , but Emma also desires to reach an "escape" that takes the form of revolt against the already accredited masculine authority she has suffered from in the different jobs she has experienced. Believing that power comes with being wealthy, Emma decides to be engulfed by the crime world; the " perfect self employment" with the outcome of "Just straight profit. Right off the top" (197-98). Eventually, the dream of "escape" and self uniqueness ends with self-destruction.

On the other hand, Weston and Wesley share the same intolerance of the idea "that everything would stay the same"(195) as they endeavor to achieve individuality by seeking it outside the house. In more than an occasion, Weston thinks about going to Mexico, but he seems quite reluctant about the opportunity of " starting a whole new life" (195); while Wesley often talks about a need to go to " Alaska, maybe ...The frontier ...It's full of possibilities. It's undiscovered" (164). Contrarily, in other situations they are seen striving to be reconnected to the family when, for instance, Weston is seen doing household chores, while Wesley depicts the caring side of his personality by trying to keep the orchard for the sake of the family.

Shepard has presented such characters in an expressive technique; circulating in a vortex of seeking phony individuality and re-establishing familial bonds. As it has been mentioned earlier, a prominent aspect of Shepard's theatrical liveliness is to overwhelm the audience in eye-catching dramatic outcomes, one of which is the abrupt and peculiar alteration in the roles characters play, not with the aim of casting chaos and confusion, but to intensify a sense of defeat and dissatisfaction that characterizes such families in the contemporary American West. " This confusion of role and being performance and authenticity is the centre of Shepard's characters' search for a stable identity."¹⁵

In *Curse of the Starving Class* the images of blood are presented to carry out more than an aim. They have been employed to shed light on the idea of

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the familial blood connection. Weston states that " It was good to be connected by blood like that. That a family wasn't just a social thing. It was an animal thing."(187). Weston, in a kind of redemptive ritual, after being drunk and violent, he appears on the stage fresh and temperate as he tries to be reborn again. Taking a walk around the orchard in which he experiences a kind of epiphany, he suddenly realizes that " actually was the owner. That somehow it was me and I was actually the one walking on my own piece of land. And that gave me a great feeling."(186). On his part, Wesley is deeply affected when he recounts this experience. He describes his father: " just walked through the whole damn house in his birthday suit... it was like peeling off a whole person."(186). Weston takes a hot bath and then cold bath followed by a fine farm breakfast cooked from unforeseen groceries in the refrigerator which is a surprise. "just like somebody knew I was going to be reborn this morning or something... like I was coming back to my life after a long time."(186-87). Weston, by taking baths and announcing himself "reborn", thinks that he has reached deliverance; that he is able to "escape" and achieve uniqueness as he no longer "feel guilty ... because I don't have to pay for my past now!"(193). Yet, Shepard actually discards Weston's effortless expiation as a too simple escape from the consequences of his actions : he must still compensate for his past infirmities and sins, not only by the loss of land, but also by the death of his daughter which is another image of blood.

The first mention of blood in the play is to the "curse" of Emma's first time of being an adult. Paradoxically, Emma's coming to fertility coincides with her death by a bloody car bombing supposedly planned to get rid of her father. Therefore, the bloodline becomes the curse; the past haunts the one who is not supposed to pay for the ill-actions committed by the father. The family curse extends both to the past and forward to the future:

It goes back and back to tiny little cells and genes.

To atoms...in the air. We're surrounded with it ...

It goes forward too. We spread it on. We inherit it

and pass it down and then we pass it down again. (174-75)

All through the play, the son Wesley has been frequently associated with the "lamb" that he brings onto the stage in Act I. Later, he appears washing the blood off his face from trying to reclaim his father's money from the club owner. He takes the lamb and when he re-enters again wearing Weston's "baseball cap, overcoat and tennis shoes", he announces that he "butchered the lamb for "some food" and then " crosses quickly to refrigerator, opens it, and starts pulling out all kinds of food and eating it ravenously."(192). The son Wesley is still entrapped in the vortex of imitating his father. He imitates his father's rite of purification in hot and cold baths, but in the son's case, he is washed in the blood of the lamb. Yet, the process proves futile: " it didn't work. Nothing happened."(196). The sense of identification between Wesley and the lamb is quite overwhelming when he thinks of himself like the lamb being sacrificed to bring salvation. Not only did he have " the lamb's blood dripping down his arms," but "for a second he thought it was himself bleeding". He felt that " a part of Weston was growing on him...taking over"(196,198). The sacrifice is not successful: and what should have been a forfeit of spiritual union became instead a fantastic gap that does not gratify the spiritual "starvation". The lamb that Wesley brings into the kitchen for warmth implies a more typical symbolic use of a material object.

The Pascal lamb sacrificed in the Passover as a substitute for the firstborn son, as that figure is articulated by the Hebrew Bible and transformed in the New Testament into the image of the Christ himself, the lamb or son of God, sacrificed to atone for the sins of all mankind.¹⁶

Curse of the Starving Class merges the image of problematic father with the conventional images representing problematic sons who are caught within the coordinates of a role determined by their father's identity despite their eagerness

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to achieve a kind of uniqueness even if it implies self-destruction. Additionally, *Curse of the Starving Class* attempts to identify the father as spendthrift and tries to identify the son as both inadequate substitute for the father, and as the failed redeemer of familial guilt through his performance of a ritual sacrifice. So, the "curse" dominates as Lynda Hart states that " it controls from within and from without; it is both an internal biological and psychological structure and an insidious invader that penetrates the family's enclosure."¹⁷

An study the family structure of Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* reveals that this family of outcasts is caught up in a cyclical pattern of self-destruction. The family, already "dysfunctional", tries to maintain a sense of commonplace way of living, but their efforts only adds to their dysfunction. It is not only the eagerness of each family member to achieve individuality and change that inflicts chaos on the family, but it is their reaction: as an alternative of dealing with the events through open communication, their sense of disgrace makes them silent, and this silence affects every contact among the family members.

A comparable atmosphere of "the crippling disease of heredity"¹⁸ saturates Shepard's *Biured Child* that was produced in 1978, and for which he's been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1979. " Few families in American drama are as dysfunctional as the unnamed family in Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*."¹⁹ In this play, the figure of the father, who fails to pass on a significantly successful, uplifting inheritance to his offspring, goes on. Intensifying this trait, the father, Dodge, is presented sitting corpse-like and motionless before a flashing TV screen, while his wife Halie is dressed all in black to indicate that she is in a state of mourning. Ironically, her grief is related to something that will be revealed later; an undisclosed matter interwoven to the family's innermost scruples. With the progress of the plot, another vital character is introduced. Vince, the grandson, comes back home after being absent for six years. Being drunk, Vince's entry echoes that of Weston in *Curse of the Starving Class* as he thrusts through the door "tearing off its hinges" , bringing with him his girlfriend, Shelly, who

mistakenly believes that she is going to enter a family world where the familial ties are cherished; a world of " turkey dinners and apple pie and all that kinda stuff"(91).Showing the inconsistency between the existent and the imagined, between the factual and the fantastic, Shepard often emasculates the portayal of the idyllic, perfect American family that is frequently presented in the American popular culture. In this play, the family is living in disagreement; in a foul ambiance.

In Shepard's *Biured Child*, only two of the three sons appear on the stage. Tilden, Vince's father, has been absent for twenty years as he's been imprisoned for an unspecified felony in New Mexico. Now, he comes back, roving the property in a way suggesting that he's about to lose his mind. The other son, Bradley, has gone through an agonizing experience of losing his leg in a chain-saw accident; an experience that inflicted an enormous traumatic effect on his psyche which is expressed in terms of bitter resentment of his father. The third son, Ansell, the basketball star who is the source of pride and delight of his mother as he represents the sole guarantee of attaining prominence, is dead scandalously in a hotel bedroom rather as a war hero. As in *Curse of the Starving Class*, fragility of the marital bond in *Biured Child* is also highlighted when Halie pointedly exclaims " What's happened to the men in this family! Where are the men!"(124). She echoes Ella in the *Curse of the Starving Class* by renouncing her husband and having an affair with Father Dewis; a surrogate lover.

Unlike Weston in *Curse of the Starving Class* who often comments on the "blood connection", Dodge in *Biured Child* declares no essential and emotional bond with his family. He declares that " just because people propagate does not mean they have to love their offspring...You never seen a bitch eat her puppies?"(112). The character of the father has been much reshaped by Sheaprd than that appeared in *Curse of the Starving Class*. Distinct from Weston, Dodge comes into sight to be devoid of any principal bond to his own family. It seems as if his most important function is the camouflage of an undermining secret that

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would ruin everything and this concealment constitutes the motivation behind giving up everything else.

Dodge insists on hiding the details of one specific act of propagation; a child born of an incestuous relation between Halie and Teldin. Dodge is resolute to burry this matter since " It made everything we'd accomplished look like it was nothing. Everything was cancelled out by this one mistake. This one weakness."(124).

The truth of the child and its destiny are the out of sight substances around which the play revolve. With the progress of the plot, everything related to those matters are revealed due to the the unrelenting inquisition made by Shelly where the audience will be acquainted with, not only the secret of incest, but that Dodge himself has killed the newly born child by drowning it "just like the runt in the litter" , and buried its remains since "We couldn't allow that to grow up right in the middle of our lives."(124).

Yet, concealment of incest and killing do not necessarily mean that these actions are not associated with the family's heritage. In more than one situation within the play, Shepard reinforces the thought of the connection between the past with all its infirmities and the present. Vince, representing the younger generation, is seen powerless to free himself and change. His negative response to any change is projected by his unwillingness to escape the pattern already set by the family. His rejection of change is instigated, not only by cherishing and preserving the familial conventions, but also by a willpower of seeking rootedness, and by the mere realization that the indisputable past burdens the present with its moral and immoral consequences. This idea is manifested by the pictures of the ancestors that decorate the upstairs walls. They stand for the family "heritage" with which Vince hopes to reunite. He realizes that they all look the same. 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" (130). Not only in the scene where the family photos are

seen by Vince that this idea is initiated, but also in the situation when Vince comes back from a trip across Illinois. After seeing his face reflected in the windshield, he also realizes the likeness between his face and those of his ancestors. That's why he states " Clear on back to faces I'd never seen before but still recognized the bones underneath."(130). The sequence of likeness is presented to achieve the aim of introducing a story about the dominance of the past over the present; a story of transgression and reprisal.

On the contrary, Dodge denies any connection between the present consequences and what happened in the past. He rejects any similarity between him and " Somebody who looks like he used to look" in the photos of the family decorating the walls. Additionally, he insists "That isn's me! That never was me!"(111). He is keen to get rid of anything related to the past, even if takes the denial of family ties. The past, for Dodge, symbolizes a distressing burden rather than a family history deserves to be relished ; a burden of disappointment and frustration overwhelmed by a dishonorable lust that came alive in the form incest: the everlasting "weakness" or the traumatizing sense of humiliation that he wants to bury with burial of the child. Yet, all his efforts seem to be pointless when the past pops up to haunt the present as Teldin appears on the stage carrying the remains of a mud-covered body of a dead child that he dug up from the garden.

The end of the play is quite suggestive on the symbolic level. The weather is rainy; and Halie is heard commenting on the flourishing of what is implanted and cleaned by the rain, providing a reason to the increase of the harvest: " Maybe it's the sun"(132). The word "sun" is used as a pun for "son" in a symbolic reference to the "bured child". In a sense, her speech might imply the idea that burying the child will bring a kind of regeneration that is symbolized by the harvest. On the other hand, Vinc'e arrival to the house is associated with the sunshine, yet, neither his return nor the image of the "sun" can be interpreted in terms of renewal or regeneration. The house, that is described ironically by Bradley to be like " paradise", continues to be a collapsed world up to the end of the play.

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In *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Biured Child*, Shepard presents two American families to reflect his concentration on the family as an entity rather than expressing a seemingly deeper concern with the wider social scale stating that "the American social scene... totally bores me." Yet, the two families here are profoundly connected to their cultural setting to the extent that they can hardly be seen secluded, neither from the social nor the political scenes. Moreover, it is quite intricate to see these plays as mere assessments of familial ties being violated only, but, on a wider scope, they also can be seen as analytical projections of the political grounds and the social impacts that eventually lead to the obliteration of those families.

Elucidating this issue, the plays imply a criticism of one of the typically admired concepts in the contemporary American culture; a notion that favours attaining money, which is a necessity of power and of the American Dream, over providing the emotional support that the family needs. In *Curse of the Starving Class*, the concept of supreme power is connected with the broader sense of nation that is conceited with its military supremacy and artificial demonstrations of valour. For this reason, the image of America at war is brought into prospect over and over again. When Weston arrives drunkenly into the house, his son is seen lying in bed contemplating his collection of airplanes: " My p-39. My Jap Zero"(137). In another image, Weston himself assimilates the feeling of being indignant with the excitement he used to feel when he "flew giant machines in the air. Giants! Bombers. What a sight"(172). Later, when he weighs up his predicament, he holds the armed forces responsible for making him able to kill. " I was in the war. I know how to kill...I've done it before. It's no big deal. You must make an adjustment. You convince yourself it's all right...It's easy. You just slaughter them."(171).

In *Biured Child*, Shepard exploits the same images with a more reshaped and developed technique. Like Weston, Vince returns home drunkenly singing the Marines song: " From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli. We will fight our country's battles on the land and on the sea."(125). Another

prominent image of war is presented when Halie discusses making a memorial that cherishes her son Ansell who used to be a renowned athlete and a soldier, not to be killed in action, but assassinated by the Mafia in a motel room. Ironically, the mother negotiates making a memorial statue of her son who died scandalously, not in an honorable way. She wants a "big, tall statue with a basketball in one hand and a rifle in the other." (73). The situation is quite stimulating and suggestive on the satirical level. The only means of one's being cherished and appreciated is either by being an eminent athlete or by being a soldier. In other words, they are the typically authentic measurements of manlihood. However, such ways are presented by Shepard to be bare and false rather than daring. The assumingly war hero is killed by a gang and, eventually, Halie comments on how athletes are being exploited and how the athletics, after being a method of promoting ethics, turns out to be "more vicious ...allowing themselves to run amuck. Drugs and women." (117).

Biured Child expresses the order imposed by muting the sense of sin inside the family, however Shepard tries to make the play more inclusive to express an endeavor to suppress the nation's sense of guilt; the sense of responsibility towards actions like racism and wars. Halie makes the hint more overt as she states that "the smell" from the stench of sin in the house " (116) occurs not only from individual offense (the incest) but from the communal events.

As a result, Shepard implies a focal point in his stories on the obliterating and the terrifying features of American society that have been quietened for a long time; the terrible endeavors that are no longer be concealed. Through plays like *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Biured Child* Shepard might eventually be indicating the means by which present-day American society says no to any attempt of being restricted.

NOTES

¹ Sheila Rabillard,. *Sam Shepard: Theatrical Power and American Dreams.*" *Modern Drama* 30.1 (Mar. 1987): 58-71. Rpt. in *Drama Criticism.* (Vol. 5. Detroit: Gale Research, 1995.),p.1. *Literature Resource Center.* Web. 13 July 2012.

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² Ibid.,p.2.

³ Ibid., p.2.

⁴ Ibid.,p.3.

⁵ David Krasner(ed.), *A Companion to Twentieth Century American Drama* (UK: Blackwell Publishing 2005),p.291.

⁶ Rabillard, p.4.

⁷ Chritopher Innes, *Avant Garde Theatre 1892-1992* (London : Routledge 1993),p.223.

⁸ William E. Kleb, *Curse of the Starving Class and the Logic of Destruction,* *Contemporary Theatre Review* (Vol.8, Part 4.1998) in Johan Callens (ed.), *Sam Shepard Between the Margin and the Centre* (India: Overseas Publishers Association 1998)p,2.

⁹ Thomas P. Adler. *Repetition and Regression in Curse of the Starving Class and Buired Child* in *The Cambridge Companion to Sam Shepard*, (Cambridge: Cmabridge University Press 2002),p. 112.

¹⁰ Robert Brustein,. *The Shepard Enigma*. *New Republic* 194.3706 (27 Jan. 1986): 25-26. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Janet Witalec. Vol. 169. Detroit: Gale, 2003. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 13 July 2012.Document URL:
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¹¹ Christopher Bigsby, *Born Injured : The Theatre of Sam Shepard* in Matthew Roudane (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sam Shepard*, (Cambridge: Cmabridge University Press 2002),p. 7.

¹² Charles R. Lyons, *Shepard's Family Trilogy and the Conventions of Modern Realism*, in Leonard Wilcox (ed.), *Rereading Shepard: Comtemporary Critical Essays on the Plays of Sam Shepard* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993),p.115.

¹³ Carol Rosen, *Silent Tongues: Sam Shepard's Exploration of Emotional Territory*, *Village Voice*, 4 August 1992,35 in Matthew Roudane (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sam Shepard*, (Cambridge: Cmabridge University Press 2002),p. 11.

¹⁴ The references to *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buired Chid* are taken from *Sam Shepard: Seven Plays* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981). Page references in parentheses are to this edition.

¹⁵ Annete J. Saddik, *Cotemporary American Darma* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd 2007),p.130.

¹⁶ Lyons,pp.125-129.

¹⁷ Lynda Hart, *Sam Shepard's Metaphorical Stages* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971),p.71. in *The Cambridge Companion to Sam Shepard*, (Cambridge: Cmabridge University Press 2002),p.114.

¹⁸ David J. Derose, *Sam Shepard* (New York: Twayne, 1992),p.108. in *The Cambridge Companion to Sam Shepard*, (Cambridge: Cmabridge University Press 2002),p.114.

¹⁹ Opiari, Benjamin. *Shhhhhame: silencing the family secret in Sam Shepard's Buried Child*. *Style* Spring-Summer 2010: 123+. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 13 July 2012.

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