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ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI

(AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYATI)

ANABİLİM DALI

STAGING LOSS: MELANCHOLIA AND WORKING-THROUGH IN THREE PLAYS BY SAM SHEPARD

(SAHNEDEKİ YAS: SAM SHEPARD'IN ÜÇ OYUNUNDA MELANKOLİ VE ÇÖZÜM İŞLEMİ)

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

Bu belge ile, bu tezdeki bütün bilgilerin akademik kurallara ve etik davranış ilkelerine uygun olarak toplanıp sunulduğunu beyan ederim. Bu kural ve ilkelerin gereği olarak, çalışmada bana ait olmayan tüm veri, düşünce ve sonuçları andığımı ve kaynağını gösterdiğimi ayrıca beyan ederim. (23/05/2008)

Tezi Hazırlayan Öğrencinin

Adı ve Soyadı

Nisa Harika GÜZEL

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to study the dramatic works of the American playwright Sam Shepard, principally from the point of view of the psychoanalytic theory developed by Sigmund Freud. The intention behind such an approach is to show the intimate relationship between elements of psychoanalysis and drama, especially in the light of some specific psychoanalytic concepts such as working-through, acting-out, transference, mourning, melancholia, and some dramatic elements such as catharsis, speech and dialogue, audience, and the idea of the dramatic in general. The purpose of this study is thus both to demonstrate the usefulness of psychoanalysis to explain drama as a genre and to explore the above terms or concepts through the analysis of three of Sam Shepard's plays *Buried Child* (1978), *True West* (1980) and *Curse of the Starving Class* (1978).

Psychoanalysis has its origins in the works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), starting in the last decade of the nineteenth century. However, his theories continued to develop and be modified until his death in 1939. In particular, his theories of clinical practice and the nature of the analytical "cure" went through several transitions which it will be useful to summarize here. An Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist, Freud at first endeavored to analyze and cure the dysfunctions of the human mind by hypnosis. He followed the studies of the Viennese physician Dr. Josef Breuer, who applied hypnosis in

the treatment of the causes of hysteria. In the first of the five lectures he delivered early in the twentieth century in the United States, which were later published under the title *The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis* (1987), Freud defines psychoanalysis as a "new method of research and cure" (1), and he states that the reason for his taking Breuer's technique as a springboard for his own psychotherapeutic techniques was primarily that the use of hypnosis helps the repressed elements residing in the unconscious to rise into consciousness.

The purpose of Breuer's technique of hypnosis in individual cases of hysteria was to remove the repressed material that hinders a healthy mental life, the so-called "cathartic" model of therapy. Freud gives a specific example from Breuer's patients, a girl of twenty-one, who suffered from serious physical and mental disturbances. Among the symptoms were "a severe paralysis of both right extremities, ... disturbance of the eye-movements, and much impairment of vision; difficulty in maintaining the position of the head" (2). These symptoms were followed by nausea accompanying her attempts to take nourishment and the loss of the ability to drink, despite tormenting thirst, and an inability to speak and understand her mother tongue. The development of mental disturbances was characterized by "states of absence, of confusion, delirium" (2) and the alteration of the girl's entire personality. In the absence of any evident organic lesion of the brain that could have assisted the physician to diagnose such a disturbance, it was discovered that the girl fell ill during a period of caring for her sick father.

The treatment of this specific case involved a particular kind of interaction between the physician and the patient. Freud reports that the girl would mumble several words to herself, and these involved associations springing from her memories of taking care of her sick father. The process of hypnosis, which required the doctor to repeat the mumbled words over and over to the girl, forced her to surrender to the reproduction of these psychic associations. The repetition and the subsequent reproduction of these associations appear to have taken "as their starting point the situation of a girl beside the sick-bed of the father" (6). Freud asserts that the girl was freed from her repressions and restored to her normal mental life whenever she expressed one element of her distress.

As this particular instance illustrates, the initial therapeutic strategy of psychoanalysis is principally based on the interaction between the analyst and the analysand and the power of language as the medium in which this interaction takes place. Nevertheless, it is useful to state that Freud later abandoned hypnosis insofar as it was simply an attempt to erase memory. It hence entailed forgetting the traumatic memories and never remembering them again. Instead, Freud began to adopt remembering, anamnesis, as a technique, for he believed that recalling past memories is itself in some forms therapeutic. From Breuer's method to Freud's belief in the role of memory in exploring the unconscious wishes, traumas or abnormalities, the role of interaction between the analyst and the analysand remained constant. For Freud, it is not enough for the patient to talk, but there should also be a strong

transference, a drama taking place in between the analyst and the analysand, whose primary purpose is to help the patient to reproduce and work through the repressed traumatic memories.

Freud calls Breuer's technique "a cathartic treatment", a therapeutic process that aims at the "cleansing of the soul" (6). The girl, who as a result of her affliction at one point could oddly enough speak and understand only English, named the process the "talking cure" (6). Freud indicates in his lecture the symptoms, which were dramatic and powerful at the moment of analysis are thus purged away with the help of talking and the interaction between the physician and the patient. In "Psycho-Analysis" (1926), Freud states that "Cathartic treatment gave excellent therapeutic results, but it was found out that they were not permanent and they were not independent of the personal relation between the patient and the physician" (264). For the purpose of this study, however, the most remarkable aspect of the term catharsis in the context of psychoanalysis is that it reminds us of Aristotle's early dramatic theory of tragedy that accentuates the importance of the final moments of catharsis during a dramatic play.

Catharsis, a Greek word signifying cleansing and purification, plays a vital role in the philosophical theories of literature and drama, especially in the writings of Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle in his definition of tragedy in his *Poetics (*350 B.C.E*)* explains the term catharsis as the moment in which the

emotions of pity and fear are aroused in the audience. The ultimate aim of catharsis for Aristotle is to purge away the excessive passions the audience is already subjected to in their lives via the representation of the feelings of pity and fear on the theatrical stage. The moment of catharsis is thus an abrupt breakdown of the emotions, a climax that stimulates purification of emotions, principally those of pity and fear. According to Aristotle, the effectiveness of catharsis originates from the elaborate design of tragedy, and the end of the play which is "the chief thing of all" (*Poetics* 2). In his description of tragedy, Aristotle says:

> Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude, in language embellished with each of the artistic ornaments (rhythm, harmony, and song) being found in separate parts of the play, in form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions (2).

The removal of emotions of pity and fear by drama affords pleasurable, though not permanent, relief and a feeling of renewal. In this way, tragic emotion serves as a kind of medicine to discharge and relieve the audience of emotions repressed and kept under control until the end of the play. Therefore, it is possible to state that the model of catharsis suggested by Aristotle for the Greek theater is already a pathological model. Accordingly,

Aristotle's discussion of catharsis coincides with Freud's medical notion of discharging pathology through making the patient become conversant with the pathology by means of the "talking cure". Aristotle in a similar fashion implies that the body must be restored to an equilibrium with the help of the "proper purgation" of the emotions the audience sees on the stage. In this sense, the Aristotelian explanation of catharsis parallels that of Freud's cathartic treatment that was used to denote the method of psychotherapy in which the therapeutic effect aims to discharge the pathogenic influences of the repressed materials in the analysand (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973 60).

As early as 335 B.C., Aristotle used catharsis to refer to the effect of tragedy on the audience. In the twentieth century, psychoanalysis offers a new interpretation of the workings of the human mind and psychology in which we can see connections to the ancient concept of catharsis. This connection is not surprising when Freud's study and interpretation of theatrical works is taken into consideration. The influence of Greek tragedy on Freud's work is of decisive importance in terms of his developing psychoanalytic theory. In his analysis of the relationship of the child to their parents, Freud claimed that the child may feel attracted to the parents of the opposite sex and antipathetic to the parent of the same sex. He suggests that the causes for such a confusing situation lie in the repressed incestuous wishes of the male child for the mother and the female child for the father. When he is introducing one of his central concepts in the field of psychoanalysis, namely the "Oedipus

Complex", Freud draws on Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex,* which is one of the greatest tragedies of the ancient Greek drama.

The Oedipus myth is the story of the Greek hero who kills his father and marries his own mother without any consciousness that he is leading a matrimonial life with his mother as a consequence of his patricide. The myth seems to support Freud's argument that there exists a secret desire in almost every child for the parent of the opposite sex. In The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), Freud argues that the effectiveness of Sophocles' tragedy does not depend on the "conflict between fate and human will" but on the "peculiar nature of the material by which this conflict is revealed" (308), and thus places the accent on the role of the unconscious suppressed wishes rather than fate. Freud maintains that there is a voice within the audience which is ready to acknowledge an identification with the tragic hero:

> His fate moves us only because it might have been our own, because the oracle laid upon us before our birth the very curse which rested upon him. It may be that we were all destined to direct our first sexual impulses towards our mothers, and our first impulses of hatred and resistance toward our fathers; our dreams convince us that we were. King Oedipus, who slew his father and wedded his mother Jocasta, is nothing more or less than a wish-fulfillment – the fulfillment of the wish of our childhood (308).

The Oedipus Complex, which Freud named after King Oedipus, includes the pathology in the child's sexual development. Freud states that the audience feels "more fortunate" than the Greek hero, for they assume that they have succeeded in removing their incestuous wishes for the mother or the father and that they have overcome their hatred and jealousy for the parent of the opposite sex. The ability of the audience to compare and contrast their own lives with that of the hero on the stage centers on the question of identification the audience establishes with the character. The exposition of Oedipus' unconscious crime and his guilt makes the members of the audience think of the similar, yet repressed, impulses in their interior lives. The spectator comes to recognize the suppressed desires, and experiences a sense of relief as a result of the fact that it is not s/he, but the hero himself that is exposed to misfortune due to his incestuous crime. As Freud argues, nevertheless, this recognition that provides the spectators with a certain degree of relief does not totally lift the spectator's repression. It is then a partial de-repression that assists the spectator in finding a way towards relief. Thus, it is possible to argue that the audience depends on the identification with the hero for the relief the cathartic effect produces. Freud further indicates that "[l]ike Oedipus, we live in ignorance of the desires that offend morality, the desires that nature has forced upon us and after unveiling we may well prefer to avert our gaze from the scenes of our childhood" (309). This discussion reveals that repression of the infantile sexual desires serves as a shield against individual fears and against condemnation by the moral codes of society. Whether against a social condemnation or not, the process of

identification plays a vital role in reminding the audience of their own repressed infantile wishes.

Freud's emphasis on the idea of identification between the audience and the characters on the stage correlates with his discussion of drama as psychological drama in his essay "Psychopathic Characters On The Stage" (1905). In this seminal essay, in which Freud analyzes the effects of drama on the audience and the interaction between the characters and the audience as a consequence of the process of identification, he suggests that there is a component in drama that deals with the suffering fought out in the mind of the hero (125). Freud calls this element, which is materialized in the inner struggle of the character, "psychological drama" (125). This term is of great significance with respect to the argument this thesis develops in order to prove that psychoanalysis is a helpful method of studying dramatic plays. The content of "psychological drama", as Freud puts it, is comprised of the conflict between different warring impulses in the mind of the hero. Within psychological drama, Freud identifies a more specific kind of drama, "psychopathological drama". What is special about psychopathological drama is that one of the impulses in the hero's mind turns out to be a repressed impulse in contradistiction to another conscious impulse. The representation of the hero's struggle with his unconscious suppressed desire, implies Freud, enhances the amount of pleasure the audience derives from the hero's inner turmoil on the condition that the audience itself is neurotic. The neurotic tendency of the audience underlines the importance of the example Freud

gives in The Interpretation of Dreams with respect to the spectator's detection of his own repressed sexual wishes as reflected in the character of Oedipus. In line with this argument, it can be argued that pleasure in identifying with a psychopathologic character on the stage is blended with masochistic and sadistic satisfaction in viewing the hero suffer.

The parallelism between Aristotle's catharsis and Freud's cathartic notion of treatment focuses on the idea of emotional release. In Freud's discussion, the economic benefit of cathartic relief peculiar to drama points to the idea that the audience is relieved of the burden of repression through the recognition of similar repressed elements in themselves at a distance. A compromise is reached according to which the audience is no longer compelled to expend energy in keeping unwanted feelings repressed. The role of repression becomes significant in the context of the interaction between the spectator and the character. The nature of repression, as Freud observes it in "Repression" (1915), centers on putting an unpleasurable traumatic event aside and banishing it from consciousness. In Freud's theory of repression, the mind follows the pleasure principle while repressing the traumatic memory to prevent overpowering distress. In this sense, there appears another sort of pleasure the audience derives from a spectacle as well as the one gained from the cathartic relief. It is the pleasure of maintaining their own repressed wishes and viewing only a representation of them by the characters till the moment of recognition and catharsis. The act of viewing

the spectacle is itself in this regard pleasurable as it provides a distance for the audience from their own repressed wishes and a focus on the character's.

If the members of the audience have all dealt with unpleasurable and inadmissible experience through repression, then the reason why the lifting or partial lifting of this repression provides relief is that it re-establishes the emotional balance that has been lost with those traumatic experiences. The dissolution of repression in the relief occasioned by the identification with the character brings the audience to a compromise with their repressed feelings. Furthermore, the alleviation of repression reflects an acknowledgement of repression on the part of the spectator. It is an occasion where both the character on the stage and the audience in their seats come to terms with the traumatic memories that have continued to unsettle them.

The idea of psychological relief in the context of the interaction between the audience and the character draws our attention to the importance of repetition and remembering the unconscious wishes by the help of acting out, rather than covering them up and pushing them back into remoter places of the mind. Freud, according to the cathartic model in his earlier work, thought that hypnosis was a technique of removing the repressions, but later he came to see that hypnosis was no more than covering over repressions. Freud likens covering repressed traumatic memories up in hypnotic treatment to the use of cosmetics, and compares becoming familiar with the repressed

elements by repeating and remembering them in the analytic treatment to surgery. In his lecture "Analytic Theraphy" (1917), where Freud declares the difference between the hypnotic treatment and the analytic treatment, he states that the purpose of analytic treatment is to seek the roots of the conflicts lying beneath symptomatic acts by using suggestion so as to alter the outcome of those conflicts (451). This is Freud's announcement of his abandonment of the hypnotic treatment in favor of the analytic treatment that includes suggestion and a more active involvement of the physician in the process of transference. Freud regards the hypnotic treatment as lacking the transference between the analyst and the analysand, and favors the analytic treatment, or, as he puts it, "psycho-analytic suggestion", which "demands from both doctor and patient the accomplishment of serious work, which is employed in lifting internal resistances" (1917 451). The paramount function of the analytical treatment in the clinical model of therapy is to overcome the resistances caused by repression by placing the doctor in a guiding position in relation to the patient's repressions. Therefore, the physician is not dependent solely on the patient's account, but takes an active part in leading the patient to re-experience the traumatic repressed elements through repetition and remembering. The relationship between the analyst and the analysand is hence an interaction that creates the transference the psycho-analytic treatment acts upon. It is also as a result of this transference that psychoanalytic clinical work becomes a drama.

Likewise, the involvement of the spectator in the hero's agony forms a transference, a "psychopathological drama" between the character and the audience. The blend of pleasure with masochistic fulfillment reminds the audience that they are uncannily familiar with the character's painful emotions. The audience sees the reflection of their inner psychic struggles and feels attached intensely to the unfolding of the trauma as a way of actualizing their repressed desires or sufferings. The identification with the character is a version of drama that is seen in analytical transference as a method of cure. In this respect, the moments during which the spectator is subjected to the struggles of the character and the cathartic relief in a theatrical play bear strong resemblances to the transference during treatment. As Laplanche and Pontalis explain it, in its classical sense, transference, the context of which is analytic treatment, is a "terrain on which all the basic problems of a given analysis play themselves out: the establishment, modalities, interpretation and resolution of the transference are in fact what define the cure" (1973 455). In line with Laplanche and Pontalis' delineation of the term transference, the establishment of a successful analysis mainly depends on the patient's relationship with the analyst; the modalities, interpretation and resolution of it on the interaction that puts into practice a process of re-experiencing, repeating, remembering the traumatic memories. Hence, transference can be considered to be the skeleton on which the flesh of successful analysis rests.

If transference requires re-experiencing, dramatizing the repressed materials, an analysis without transference is impossible, since the process of clinical

psychoanalysis in essence seeks to overcome resistances due to repression by filling in gaps in memory (Freud, 1914 148). As discussed previously, the role played by the analyst in relation to the analysand as Freud describes it in "Analytic Therapy" is suggestion or, as in "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through", (1914) the "art of interpretation" or in brief language as a powerful tool of interaction. The responsibility of the analyst is to uncover the whole history of repressions and unconscious wishes of the analysand by leading the analysand, through the use of suggestion, into a deeper understanding of what lies beneath the surface account. The primary purpose of this technique is to offer the patient a total freedom from the repressions by letting him/her pursue a process of repeating and remembering the unconscious material. The physician in this way helps the patient to make "thought-connections" and draw the right conclusions.

However, remembering may not be so easy for the patient, as it is opposed by the resistances which work to keep the repressed material at bay. The resistances the repressions develop against any threat of encountering the undesired memories endeavor to keep the repressed materials intact. In such a case, the patient acts the repressed elements out and repeats them without any awareness that s/he is repeating them (Freud, 1914 150). Freud indicates in "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through" that the treatment begins with a repetition in which "the patient does not say that he remembers he used to be defiant and critical towards his parents' authority; instead he behaves in that way to the doctor" or "he does not remember how he came to

a helpless or hopeless deadlock in his infantile sexual researches; but he produces a mass of confused dreams and associations" at the time of analysis (150). Instead of remembering the causes of distress without any obstacle put up by resistances, the analysand cannot easily articulate what causes in him such complicated feelings as anger, shame or anxiety. Rather, the analysand sees in the analyst the incarnation of a significant figure like one of his parents, a friend or a teacher out of his past, and transfers his reactions on to the analyst with an immediacy of action. In this way too, the analyst can be seen as a kind of character in a play, who is ready to play his part in acting out the role of the figure in the analysand's mind. Transference thus conveys the movement that goes back and forth between unconsciously repeating and remembering the memories that have caused trauma.

The analyst thus serves as a prototype of the figure with whom the analysand had problems in the past. The analysand directs his/her aggressiveness as well as, according to the principle of ambivalence, love towards the analyst as though the analyst is the return of the figure from the analysand's past. The relationship of the behavior of the analysand to the transference should moreover be understood in the light of the terms acting out and working-through. As Freud suggests, the whole range of actions of the analysand during the moment of analysis is a repetitive acting out of the repressions: the analysand dramatically and unconsciously imitates the actions which took place in the past and performs them as if in a play. The analysand becomes the actor of his own life and acts the most important parts of his life with an

immediacy and clarity, which it is impossible to achieve in speech. Instead of giving an account of the repressed material, the analysand reproduces it as a drama in acts and words. Each act is a piece of repetition performed for the analyst within the atmosphere of the current analysis. Each repetition is a "talking cure" performed without awareness but in search of relief. The overall portrait of acting out comes to resemble a dramatic play.

The desired destination of transference is the working-through of the repressions after the analyst and the analysand achieve the process of acting the repressed contents out in a dramatic manner. The representation of the inner conflicts of the analysand brings unconscious acts into relation with the dynamics of the transference in a scenario. This dramatic representation gives way to a psychical labor to be perfomed by the analysand which includes the acknowledgement and acceptance of the repressed elements and subsequently freedom from their clench. Another consequential contribution made by the process of working-through is that it ends the repetition in the course of acting out and provides relief. Referring to Freud's "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through", Laplanche and Pontalis discuss the main points of working-through as follows:

a) Working-through applies to resistances.

b) It generally follows the interpretation of a resistance that has apparently had no effect; in this sense a period of relative

> stagnation may in fact conceal that eminently positive work which Freud looks upon as the principal factor in therapeutic efficacy.
>
> c) Working-through permits the subject to pass from rejection or merely intellectual acceptance to a conviction based on lived experience (*Erleben*) of the repressed instincts which are 'feeding the resistance'. In this sense, it is by 'becoming more conversant with this resistance' that the patient is enabled to carry out the working-through (488).

In the literal sense, to work something through is to deal with it successfully, thus coming to terms with it. Since the analysand becomes conversant with his/her repressions during the process of working-through, ideally all of the resistances and hindrances to a smooth analysis are removed and replaced by a feeling of liberation.

Working-through is a labor to be accomplished by the analysand with the guidance of the analyst. Just like the audience who recognize their own conflicting emotions through their representation by the character on the stage, the analysand acquires insight into the motivational forces behind his/her actions, behavior and thoughts. The relief working-through establishes is essentially no different from the one the cathartic relief offers in a theatrical play. Both working-through and cathartic relief provide the

analysand and the audience with a capacity for insight into their mental or emotional conditions and difficulties by shedding light on and helping solve them. The analyst and the character bring understanding to the analysand and the spectator. The audience and the analysand leave the theatre and the psychotherepautic session with a feeling of enlightenment and relief.

Another element that suggests the resemblances between psychoanalysis and drama is language and the inevitable use of dialogue. Fundamentally, psychoanalytic therapy intends to illuminate mental struggles through the use of language and the interaction between the physician and the patient. What distinguishes this interaction is the fact that it is built on a dialogue between the two. Being basically a "talking cure" achieved via an effective dialogue between the analyst and the analysand, psychoanalysis cultivates consciousness through the diagnosis of the unconscious repressed. Similarly, the most powerful tool of a dramatic play is a series of dialogues that communicate the characters' thoughts in the medium of language. In Shepard's plays, the function of language and dialogues is overtly to verbalize the elements that are only symbolized symptomatically. The acts and behaviors of the characters which are relatively covert and which can be read in the language of body gain clarity through spoken language. Language, states Shepard, is "the only ingredient" that "retains the potential of making leaps to the unknown" (1981 216).

One may be inclined to claim that Shepard's theatre is a theatre of fragmentation and absence. The dominant feeling in the three plays is the sense of loss. Lack or loss of any type accompanied by the symptomatic desire to find a compensation for what is absent to fill in the loss is the overriding orientation in Shepard's plays: the loss of the child in *Buried Child*, or the absence of the father in *True West,* the loss of dreams as a result of the impossibility of achieving the American Dream in *Curse of the Starving Class*, and overall the loss of a harmonious and stable family in all of these plays. C. W. E. Bigsby states that Shepard is predominantly concerned with "the inner life of the individual, the suppressed world of desires, images, myths" and with a "poetic sensibility turned into prose by the process of daily experience and with the expression of that experience through a language drained of symbolic content…" (1985 223). It is true that in his family trilogy, Shepard chooses to dramatize the fractured worlds of the fractured families and their lives in the light of the inner visualization of his characters, yet he goes beyond the limits of individual psychological drama and deals with the transpersonal sense of fantasy and collective psychology as well. Bonny Marranca claims that Shepard's characters possess a peculiarity of their own; the major characters "already have an inner life" and they are far from typical realistic characters, since they act out "fragments, gaps, transformations— the breaks in continuity" rather than performing only the lines of the dramatic text (1981 14). The sense of fragmentation, which is fed by the figures of loss, however, oscillates between pessimism and optimism. Up to the end of the plays, the fragments are bound in a sort of tension. The fluctation between

pessimism and optimism is however predominated by a tendency towards rejuvenation and continuity.

Shepard takes as his immediate subject matter the family. All of the three families in the plays are devoid of intimacy and integration due to the sense of loss and fracture. The characters stand aloof from one another, a sign of the loss of unity. The reason for the distance between the characters lies in either a problem left unsolved in the family or the loss of one of the members and in general finds its roots in a memory that makes the characters yearn melancholically for the absent figure in the family. The melancholic yearning is not experienced only for the dead family member, but also for those who are separated away from the family, though still alive, and those whose absence deepens the sense of loss and disintegration in the family. In *Buried Child*, Dodge develops a strong melancholia for the child which he himself has killed and buried in the backyard of the house. Its memory is connected not only with the sense of loss but also the longing for wholeness in the family. Though it is a repressed traumatic memory, deep inside the characters, it recurs and is repeated symptomatically in the objects on the stage.

Buried Child will be examined with an emphasis on the loss of the buried child and with respect to its preservation in the memory as a form of repression, and how its loss is dealt with through the mechanisms of melancholia and working-through. The play is resonant with "surrealistic

stage images" which display "compelling motifs of decline" (Wade 1997 98). The setting is a gothic portrayal of the declining American family. Nearly all of the furniture is decayed as if signalling the family intimacy that has deteriorated along with the rotting corpse of the buried child. The crucial dramatic question of the play involves the function of memory: whether Dodge will be expunged of the melancholia, through which he has internalized the buried child, or whether he will remember his grandson, Vince, whose homecoming serves as an evocation of the past trauma. The family suffers from a willful tendency to forget the buried child. To acknowledge Vince as a grandson and as a part of the family is to shatter the mechanism of forgetting and accept the buried child and its traumatic memory. The trauma of the dead child is so strong that noone, even Tilden who is Vince's own father, recognizes or at least seems to recognize Vince. However, Vince's return signals the return of the repressed, and the revival of the buried child in consciousness.

Shepard connects the sense of loss experienced on the individual level to a level that portrays the loss of national ideals in *True West*. Shepard treats the West as the Eden of America which stands in sharp contrast with the degenerating values of the East. The loss of purity, brought about by the idea of infanticide in *Buried Child,* is examined further in *True West,* where it is connected with both the individual loss due to the absence of the father and the transpersonal level of fantasy about the American nation. Images of the nation and America found in Shepard's works evoke a strong sense of the

mythology of the American West. Benedict Anderson's influential essay *Imagined Communities* (1983) examines how imagined, constructed and even arbitrary belief structures in a community create and give a shape to that community. Shepard's interest in national imagery is embedded in the period of his career that coincides with the Vietnam War. It was the time when Shepard felt this need to redefine and reintroduce the American images and communal values to Americans.

In *True West*, Shepard breathes a new life into the Western mythos. Despite the seemingly distinct characteristics of the two brothers, Austin and Lee, who represent the West and the East of America, they become doubles each of which uncannily reflects the other part of itself when the father is the case. The strongly felt yearning for the father is inextricably intertwined with the nostalgia felt for the pristine West, where the absent father lives. In the play, the myth of an undiscovered and uncontaminated America is juxtaposed with the capitalist social and economic structure rapidly growing in the cities of the East. The East has become the new West with its illusory images and promises of easily gained wealth and success. The idea of the New World, as envisioned by the first European settlers in America with a religious connotation of virginity, has turned into an ideal which is only dreamt of by the alienated individual of the East. In this context, Shepard's view of the loss of an innocent America, along with the absent father, presents the sense of melancholic fantasy of a lost nation.

Just like the families in the plays, the loss of the innocent America means the disintegration of America by the social and economic deterioration prevalent in its big cities. Shepard's perception of the West as the last resort for survival and rejuvenation determines his stance against the corruption in the East. This stance of Shepard's blends nostalgia for the pure old America with the two brothers' longing for the father, and lets the audience view the individual loss through a wider perspective of a national fantasy. For instance, throughout the play, the only feeling Austin and Lee share is their desire to go to the desert in order to see their father. The desert symbolizes a separation from the city and its corruption, and at the same time a union with the father and a rejuvenation with the pristine West. Lee, in his desire to quench his thirst for the father, thinks that the only way to reach the father is to write a movie script for Hollywood and earn a great deal of money. The loss of the father and the West is therefore romanticized and verbalized through the movie script Lee writes with Austin's assistance. However, the play ends with the implication of sibling murder, and leaves the question of resolution and/or a reconciliation open. The end of the play intensifies the melancholia in the fantasies about home as well as the nation. Thus, the rivalry between the two brothers, which illustrates the dynamics of the tension between the clashing sides of the West and the East, and then their fight at the end of the play produce a symbolic representation of collective and national as well as individual fantasies.

In Freudian terms, the longing for a lost ideal is another form of melancholia. It construes the lost ideal as part of the ego ideal in the mind of the melancholic. The absent father in *True West* is regarded as the ego ideal by Austin and Lee just as the West is considered to be the ideal part of America. In *Curse of The Starving Class*, too, the father plays a central role in terms of the disintegration of the family. It is the father who shatters the integrity of the house by breaking down the door of the house and trying to sell the house. The house again represents the American nation that is corrupted by the "American Dream" metastasized into the minds of the American people who seek to take their privileged position in the capitalist social and economic order to the detriment of the West.

In *Curse of The Starving Class,* the family faces the threat of being torn asunder from the inside. The mother and the father try to sell the farm house to different people while neither is aware that the other is selling the house for monetary reasons. The play begins with an image of debris in the middle of the family house, an image that puts the contamination and impurity on display. Shepard in this play is more concerned with the social or elements of trauma. He criticizes the contamination and corruption in the society caused by the illusory dreams that are collectively maintained. The American Dream, which promises uncorrupted dreams of success and wealth, in fact produces a corrupt system which leaves the majority of the dreamers dissatisfied and unhappy with the leftovers of their fabricated dreams. In *Curse of The Starving Class,* Ella and Weston's selling the house to the bosses of capitalist

companies and the gamblers enhances this sense of downfall, since not only the house but also the farming land, which represents the American agricultural and rural prosperity, is sold. The agrarian America is hence replaced by an industrialized nation based only on the circulation of capital. The house divided against and within itself reflects a nation that is made corrupt and greedy by its own citizens.

Some of Shepard' s plays, like *True West* and *Curse of The Starving Class,* have deep resonances in the nation's social and cultural imagination. By suggesting the house as a structure of fantasy upon which the ideals of the American nation relies, Shepard reminds the audience that there is a change for the worse in the social structure of America. He jogs the memories of the audience that the agricultural innocent America, an earthly Garden of Eden, is destined for a downfall in social terms. And, the West, which generated the earliest national and ideological fantasies of the American, is now a mere romance. Shepard's plays in this sense serve as a mirror that informs the audience of the social and economic processes in America, and induces them to recognize a larger collective trauma.

Shepard's critique of the changes in America reveals that the crisis of loss can be read not only in terms of purely individual but also some larger social and cultural conflicts. It thus transcends the individual pleasure derived from the cathartic relief in Aristotle's discussion of tragedy and addresses the issues

and problems lying beneath the national traumas and social instabilities. By creating his own version of myth in *True West* and *Curse of The Starving Class,* Shepard presents Hollywood and the American Dream as the biggest betrayals of the untainted vision of America. He not only reintroduces the changes that have been taking place since the fantasies of the ancestors of what is now known as the American nation but he aims to revive a collective awareness in the audience by subjecting them to these changes as well. Ultimately, Shepard portrays social processes that have psychological components by bringing the audience face to face with the representation of national fantasies and their loss.

1. From Loss to Hope of Integrity: Buried Child

You who are not here
You who are missing in my body
Holes in my body
Places like holes
Like bullets made
Patches of agony
Swimming
From my feet
To my hands

Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaikin, *Absence*

And certainly "reparation" will not answer the question: how to bury the unburied, how to settle in and for ourselves the lot of the unburied dead?

Maria Torok, "Theoretra"

Sam Shepard's most famous and gripping, 1979 Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Buried Child* begins with an epigraph taken from Pablo Neruda. The epigraph reads: "While the rain of your fingertips falls,/ while the rain of your bones falls,/ and your laughter and marrow fall down,/ you come flying". Neruda's effusion of wit in these very lines treats concisely of Shepard's major concern,

the consciousness of an apprehension of the disintegration of the self and the family. The recurrent image of rain in the play and in these lines performs the role of representing the feeling of decomposition and fragmentation. The idea that everything is falling like fingertips, laughter and marrow is commensurate with Shepard's aim in the three domestic plays analyzed in this thesis: to show, on the one hand, the atmosphere of incoherence, fragments, and tensions of the past memories that are still powerfully affecting the present. These fragments are connected with the loss of domestic integrity as a consequence of the loss of a member of the family in this play. The unrest in the house is therefore a material remnant of this loss that still perpetually haunts the present. On the other hand, however, this sense of loss and disintegration, as Bigsby states, is balanced "by a desire to identify and even urge a return to the consonance" (221). In between these two tendencies, Shepard illustrates familial unrest and the shattering of integrity by establishing the connection between the past and the present through the link provided by the loss of the child, and carries this connection over to a possible reconciliation and harmony.

The curtain in Act One of *Buried Child* rises on a dimly-lit house and "the sound of light rain" is heard. Although it is daytime, the inside is rather dark. The light emits only "a faded yellow shade". There is an old- fashioned T.V. and a flickering blue light coming from it. Being the only sources of illumination, the lamp and the T.V. are the means of seeing the "marrow", to return to the metaphor of the epigraph from Neruda, which has fallen down

out of the bone, namely the center. The marrow in this family is the child buried long ago. Just as the marrow is disconnected from the bone, the child has been detached from the family by its burial. It is a loss that can hardly be compensated for; it is a memory, the erasure of which is impossible. The sense of falling down, of things detaching, disconnecting and even dissolving illustrated in the epigraph by the use of the symbolism of "marrow" intensifies the atmosphere of decay established in the beginning of the play. *Buried Child* can be considered a play of memory and preservation, mourning and melancholia; its characters are involved consciously or unconsciously in the process of variously denying, seeing and acknowledging the past. Due to this attachment to the past, the previously mentioned loss of the little baby remains a traumatic case for the rest of the family. For this reason, the choice of overwhelming darkness as a lighting technique allows the audience to perceive a sort of prospective unrest. Like in *Oedipus Rex,* light that stands for the essence or the truth is a significant symbol in *Buried Child* too. The truth that is searched for or evaded because of the dangers associated with the enigma of the child is suggested by the symbolism of the light.

The light hardly illuminates the inside of the house, which shows signs of decay. The wooden staircase is "old"; the carpet on it is "frayed"; there is an "old, dark green sofa with the stuffing coming out in spots", and the elm trees are dark (Shepard 63). Things seem to have been damaged amid the little light that barely penetrates the darkness at the beginning of the play. The audience is captured by the feeling that everything is in a state of decay and

buried under darkness. In the middle of this visual schema laid out in the stage directions, there is one person, Dodge, sitting on the couch, buried "in an old brown blanket". Dodge is the father of the house, who is supposed to be the holder of power. Yet, he is shown in his worn-out clothes lying on his sofa as if lifeless. He looks "very thin" and "sickly". Dodge's sickly look and his intentional burial under his blanket in darkness is the first sign of the burden of the memory of the lost child. His compulsion to cover himself under his blanket might well be a symptomatic corollary of the lost child.

Buried Child is a play about an American family which lives on a farm in Illinois, in the Midwest of the United States. As will be revealed, within the history of the family lies a buried secret, a little baby, which was born into the family as a result of an incestuous relationship between Halie, the mother, and Tilden, the son. This little baby is said to have been murdered by Dodge in the same house. Hence, the buried child can be said to be the agent of disintegration and disconnection in the house. It is the trauma shared by all of the members of the family. In addition to the individual history of each member, the buried child is the one single traumatic history that brings all members of the family together as well as linking the past to the present. The decay inside could also be explained as a legacy of this shared traumatic memory. In other words, the wounds in the psyche are projected onto the inanimate objects on the stage.

If the buried, unnamed child might symbolically be regarded as the light that is smothered in darkness as the child itself was once buried, then obviously it is the unwanted truth. It is the "dark shadows of the elm trees" and the traumatic memory beneath the "blanket" Dodge uses as a shield to protect himself. The symbolic representation of the light gives a vague sense of what is absent. The staging and the lighting suggest the failure of vision for both characters and the audience. If the amount of light falls short, vision becomes endangered, so the truth remains in darkness. By dint of lighting, stage directions, and their metaphoric representations, Shepard illustrates the psychological features of his characters. As Jim McGhee says, for Shepard, the writer's task is "not to regurgitate reality but to 'penetrate into another world'" (214). It can then be stated that Shepard is playing with the light in his attempt to establish an image or symbol as a means of transmitting the meaning, the story, and the action to the audience. These are, in other words, the modes of expression that clarify words and language and that "complement, support, and intensify the fantastic affects of theme, character, and structure" in Shepard's theater (McGhee, 217). Therefore, before the action of the play begins, the thematic concerns like the representation of memory might be traced in the use of imagery and stage devices. The audience is already convinced that the interior atmosphere is not of joy or merriment. The overwhelming darkness is nothing but an indication of some unrest; the flickering blue light signals something disturbing.

Within such a dark atmosphere and alongside the physical decay in the living room, even the rain outside by its very act of falling evokes a feeling of disintegration. The physical decay in the house is likewise analogous to Dodge's spiritual decay. The first person seen on the stage is Dodge. He sits on his sofa, an image which will appear again at the end of the play, but this time with Vince, the grandson, taking the place of the grandfather. The sofa thus serves the completion of a circular pattern in the play. An overview of the story between the beginning and the end will reveal what kind of fissures have impinged on the integration of the family. From the outset, every element of the house implies that no considerable change has been made to the house since "1935", presumably the time of the burial of the child. It is as though the entire setting is frozen in time, which indicates stagnation rather than a forward movement. Any potential for renewal inside the house has been stifled, and there seems to be no sign of fertility nor any hope for familial unification or harmony.

Coughing frequently and drinking from his whiskey bottle, Dodge is seen at the beginning of the play talking to Halie, his wife, who is offstage, and whose voice is coming from the upstairs off left. Halie remains unseen for a while, as she keeps on talking to Dodge. The distance between Dodge and Halie points to a state of alienation between the husband and the wife. It is obvious that the familial harmony has been disturbed for rather a long time. Even when Dodge's coughs become more frequent and Halie asks him if he wants a pill, Dodge at first remains silent. When they begin to talk, the audience gets to

know about their three sons, Tilden, Bradley and Ansel. The youngest of them all, Ansel, has died in a motel room on his honeymoon. Bradley has become an amputee and now wears an artificial wooden leg. With the absent half of his leg, he is a figure of horror and mystery for Dodge in Act One and then for Shelly in Act Two. Halie says that Bradley will come to cut Dodge's hair as he has once done in the recent past, and this idea aggravates Dodge to a great extent. Tilden makes his first appearance with corn husks in his hands from the kitchen door. He is the oldest of the sons and is about fifty. He is also slightly mentally retarded. He has just recently come home from New Mexico, to which he had moved years ago. After the talk between Halie and Dodge, a dialogue between Dodge and Tilden presents the first mention of the child:

> Dodge: Are you having trouble here, Tilden? Are you in some kind of trouble?
>
> Tilden: I'm not in any trouble.
>
> Dodge: You can tell me if you are. I'm *still* your father.
>
> Tilden: I know you're *still* my father.
>
> Dodge: I know you had a little trouble back in New Mexico. That's why you came out here.
>
> Tilden: I never had any trouble.
>
> Dodge: Tilden, your mother told me all about it.

Tilden: What'd she tell you?

(TILDEN pulls some chewing tobacco out of his jacket and bites off a plug.)

Dodge: I don't have to repeat what she told me! She told me all about it! (70)

[italics mine]

Though Tilden says he has not had any trouble in New Mexico, he has come home because he is in need of a secure place to stay. The more important motive for his homecoming is after all his need for his own home, where he will return to his roots. Dodge remembers why Tilden went to New Mexico, but the subject is for the time being evaded and actually veiled in order to be unwrapped in the second and third acts through the verbalization of the child. While Dodge and Tilden keep talking, there is an atmosphere of tension about the buried child. Whereas Tilden shows signs of inclination to talk about the child, Dodge avoids any mention of it. Even before Tilden appears on the stage, when Halie says that Tilden is there at home, Dodge gets angry and does not accept his homecoming at first. Dodge's unwillingness to accept this idea originates from a fear of coming face to face with the issue of the child. Tilden's return arouses in Dodge a feeling of intimidation as he identifies Tilden with the buried child in the Freudian sense of 'the double'.

Freud discusses “the phenomenon of the double” in his seminal 1919 article “The Uncanny” as an element creating the uncanny and as a sign of the repressed in the psyche. Freud argues that the idea of the double may be produced by characters who are to be regarded as

> …[i]dentical because they look alike. This relation is accentuated by mental processes leaping from one of these characters to another – by what we should call telepathy-, so that the one possesses the knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other. Or it is marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self. And finally there is the constant recurrence of the same thing – the repetition of the same features or character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations (234).

The process described by Freud is exemplified through the (hi)story of the child in the play. The buried child is the undesirable and therefore the repressed. Dodge has seen, touched and murdered the child. Thus, he once knew the child very intimately despite the fact that this intimacy ended up with a horrible infanticide. Following this terrible experience, Dodge has hidden the same experience inside his mind and made it alien and foreign so

as not to remember it again. Metaphorically speaking, the child is now preserved and disguised in the psyche as something unfamiliar. But the act of burial in the literal sense is supposed to bring about the elimination or removal of the buried object from the mind. Nonetheless, now that the subject preserves the object which he had intended to get rid of, he is faced with an uncanny condition in which the object associated with an unpleasurable memory becomes inseparable from the internalization of that object. The idea of the uncanny is delineated by Freud in the same article, as following: "The uncanny [unheimlich] is something which is secretly familiar [heimlich-heimisch], which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfils this condition" (245). In the light of this explanation, Dodge's annoyance on seeing Tilden (and later on, in Act Two, Vince) can be read as his confrontation with the double of the buried child. Secondly, what Freud calls telepathic mental processes may shed light on the secret Dodge and Tilden share deep inside, and in this respect Dodge considers Tilden to be his own double, or to be a potential and prospective return of the repressed. Dodge does not want to verbalize the secret as can be seen in the above quoted dialogue, but deep within he feels the threat posed by Tilden. Dodge's annoyance amounts to a desire to kick Tilden out of the home. This desire is another attempt to repress the child within the home, supposedly the most familiar place where a family feels most comfortable. But, Freud writes: "...among its different shades of meaning the word 'heimlich'exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, 'unheimlich'" (345). Freud bases this presumption on "the two sets of ideas" which he says the word *heimlich* (homely) belongs to (345). The first meaning of the word given

in its dictionary explanation is “belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly, etc.” (342). The second meaning of the word surprisingly turns out to be quite the reverse: “concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know about it, withheld from others” (344). Therefore, when Dodge tells Tilden that he should be on his own and independent of his family, he is trying to preserve the repressed inside and is fighting against any violation from outside now that the house for him has become a place of concealment and suppression. Dodge’s words can be taken as apparent excuses. In both cases, confrontation with Tilden is a confrontation with the buried child and is uncannily the “doubling, dividing, and interchanging” of Dodge’s self.

The second act, like the first, begins with rain, but this time it is dark. Vince, with his girlfriend Shelly, is on his way to New Mexico, where they are planning to go to see Tilden, Vince’s father, after a short stay in Vince’s grandparents’ place. They enter into the dark house and assume that the house is empty. Shelly likens the house to a Norman Rockwell cover picture and makes fun of the place and cannot help giggling. Vince, on the other hand, is determined to see his family after a 6-year absence. His determination more strongly to reconnect with his “heritage” in his family house produces the outbreak of the past into the present. Like Tilden’s search for a secure haven in his home, Vince needs to reclaim his identity and his roots, his family. However, at this point the notion of the past, especially a shared past which ensures family bonds, is threatened by a succession of

failures of recognition that are challenged by Vince's efforts to secure his past by forcing Dodge and Tilden to recall their shared memories. Dodge cannot recognize Vince though Vince endeavours to make him remember the fact that he is Dodge's own grandson by means of filling the 6-year gap with his childhood memories. In this manner, Vince shows his urgent need to safeguard and reassure his heritage.

First Tilden's and then Vince's returns expose the return of the repressed. Vince, the grandson and Tilden's son, comes as "the constant recurrence of the same thing", as "the repetition of the same features or character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations" (234). If Vince is to be considered a reflection of Tilden whose crime is being passed on to the next generation, he is also another double that reminds Dodge of the unwelcome repressed child. Vince is shocked and disillusioned by Dodge's complete failure of recognition. Vince's efforts to convince his grandfather and the ensuing revelation of the gaps or blurs in Dodge's memory not only leave Vince helpless but also transform Shelly from a carefree joker into a scared girl. Vince feels all the more desperate when Tilden does not recognize him either. Now, for Tilden, Vince appears as his double, and for Dodge as a repetition of his experience with Tilden's return and as a double of Tilden. Vince tries to jog Tilden and Dodge's memories by acting out jokes and tricks from his past. If there had been any shared past just to be recalled by means of Vince's tricks, then his tricks prove of no avail, for neither Dodge nor Tilden identifies or

acknowledges any affinity with Vince. Act Two in this sense stages the harsh confrontation with the past and a memory once denied and still resisted.

As the agent of disintegration and as a reminder of a traumatic memory, the child remains a mystery in conversations at the beginning of the play. It is only reflected symbolically through specific objects, like Dodge's blanket, his coughs, his hair, the corn husks, the carrots, Bradley's prosthetic wooden leg, Halie's photographs preserved upstairs and the house as a whole. That the story of the child is never wholly spoken up to a certain point in the play enables the enigmatic nature of the issue to be manifested through objects and through the transference embodied in the transmission of these objects from one character to another. This transmission of the objects, which symbolically stand for the loss or the buried child, takes the place of speech. Yet, as the play progresses the child is verbalized. By the time the child is explicitly spoken of in the house, it is repetitively projected onto these objects as if they were casting the shadow of the loss and causing it to appear. The reflections of these can be read primarily in Dodge's and secondly Halie and Tilden's acts, words, or behaviour.

In the beginning of Act One, while Halie is addressing Dodge, Dodge drinks his whiskey, watches the T.V. and pulls the "blanket" up to his neck. Dodge leaves the impression from the beginning that he is the ruiner of his own health. While he is taking sips secretly of his whiskey, his pills remain in their

bottles on the other side of his sofa. In fact, with his whiskey, cigarette, blanket and the T.V., Dodge, in Freudian terms, is engaged in an act of narcissistically turning his libidinal interest back upon himself. He invests libido in whatever he derives pleasure from. Although it undergoes many changes in Freud's writings, the concept of libido is delineated in Freudian terms as the energy or desire invested in a specific object or in the ego itself, and hence the term is divided into two forms: one is object libido and the other is ego or narcissistic libido. Laplanche and Pontalis in *The Language of Psychoanalysis* propose a clear comparative definition of the two forms of libido: "the libido can take as its object either the subject's own self (ego-libido or narcissistic libido) or else an external object (object-libido)" (150). The antithesis between the ego-libido and the object-libido lies in whether the libido is directed inward or outward.

The transference of the libido only onto the self as the sole source of satisfaction constitutes narcissism. Narcissism can be construed as self-love or an exclusive self- absorption. Freud defines narcissism in 1914 "On Narcissism: An Introduction" as " the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated" (73). In this way, the link between the self and love is established upon the libido theory which sheds light on the concept of narcissism. For Freud, the withdrawal of the ego back into itself in a self-loving fashion, and the elevation of the ego against the outside world manifest the original libidinal cathexis of the ego that generally occurs in infancy. The opposition

between the ego-libido and the object-libido appears when one part of the ego cathexis is allocated to objects outside, so that the former grandiose status of the ego may be shattered by an admirable object. Those who maintain healthy mental lives are able to "pass beyond the limits of narcissism and [to] attach the libido to objects" (85). But, in narcissism, the libido is transferred back onto the ego and the ego turns into a place of object cathexis. Dodge's narcissistic inclination develops when his use of alcohol becomes habitual and when his dear blanket becomes inseparable from him. The drink and the blanket turn out to be symptomatic of a constant attempt to incorporate the loss, for they help him assimilate the fantasy of the loss, namely the child, within. To be more precise, Dodge narcissistically incorporates the lost object safely in his ego by means of the fantastic preservation of that loss instead of completely removing it from his mind. The more he cloaks himself under the blanket, the closer he draws to the narcissistic venue he has libidinally created for his self and the incorporated object.

Thus, Dodge saturates his ego with the objects which would otherwise leave him impoverished. Dodge's object choice and his preservation of the phantasy of the lost object can be understood better in the light of Freud's schema with respect to the narcissistic object choice:

> A person may love:
>
> (1) According to the narcissistic type:

(a) what he himself is (i.e. himself),

(b) what he himself was,

(c) what he himself would like to be,

(d) someone who was once part of himself (90).

Dodge's narcissistic object choice, including the incorporation of the liquid, his whiskey, and his desire to be covered under his blanket, an inclination which essentially bridges between Dodge's relationship to his own self and the lost object, mostly derives from the fourth article of the schema. Dodge, because he has killed and buried the child in the backyard of his own house, is grieving over the horrible traumatic memory. The point to be focused on, however, is that the notion of trauma as a part of Dodge's narcissistic incorporation of the child necessitates a sharp distinction between the unwanted child and the child whose fantasy is replaced by Dodge with the love he once used to feel for his own sons. Dodge, by forming a narcissistic bond with the loss, attempts to turn an unpleasurable situation into a pleasurable one, an attempt which reinforces Freud's argument in his "Beyond The Pleasure Principle": "the course taken by mental events is automatically regulated by the pleasure principle" (275). On the one hand, for Dodge, this child had to be killed and expelled since it could not be a part of the family. He feels betrayed as his own son, Tilden, is the father of this child, and replaces the love he feels for his own son with the baby he killed. Though the child is a product of the incest between Halie and Tilden and therefore is

not his own, Dodge has surprisingly taken possession of it after its burial. Now that Dodge's own son, "someone who was once part of himself" (90), cannot be his own now, he chooses to take the possession of the innocent child as a substitute for what he has lost in his own son. This weird possession of the child, or intriguingly, possession by the child, also is an example of Shepard's concern "with the instabilities of memory, personal as well as cultural" (Malkin, 115). What might be called an instability in terms of memory in *Buried Child* is the representation of the loss. This being the case, Dodge's acts can be said to be seeking pleasure in an attempt to cover over the traumatic memory which is full of unpleasure.

Dodge's state can be seen in further detail in Freud's definition of melancholia as a possible response to the loss of a loved object. In his influential 1917 article "Mourning and Melancholia", Freud suggests that the subject may react to the loss of a loved object in two different ways. The first one is mourning, and the second is melancholia. According to Freud, both mourning and melancholia are responses to loss. These two states of mind do not display grave differences as they are both reactions to something lost; still they are dissimilar in the way they are experienced. The work of mourning comprises a "reaction to the loss of someone who is loved", a "painful frame of mind" and the "loss of interest in the outside world" (Freud 252). Similar signs may be observed in melancholia as well; nevertheless, the latter encompasses a wider spectrum of reactions, the treatment of which, in psychoanalytical terms, is relatively difficult.

Traumas resulting from loss occupy a vital place in psychoanalytic theory. When the trauma of loss remains enclosed in the memory, the loss is internalized in the ego, which consequently becomes alien to itself. The alienation of the ego in melancholia is a process through which the melancholic is unaware of the shattering of her/his own ego whereas the process of mourning takes place on a more conscious level. The object loss creates in the work of mourning the feeling that the whole world has become "poor and empty" (254). In contrast, the process in melancholia continues backward into the ego in a destructive manner, whereby the ego becomes alienated to itself. Thus, in melancholia it is the self that turns out to be poor and empty. The loss in melancholia, contrary to mourning, is "of a more ideal kind" (253). To be more precise, the crucial point to a thorough understanding of melancholia, in Freudian terms, is not only the melancholic's awareness of "whom he has lost" but his inability to perceive "what he has lost in him" (254). Accordingly, by his words, acts and behaviour, Dodge is shown to have been traumatized by the infanticide. On the one hand, he tries to repress the experience of infanticide and the thought of incest, and therefore renders one part of his ego foreign to himself. On the other hand, however, he has internalized and taken possession of the child and now is grieving over the absence it has caused.

Dodge's internalization of the child highlights the significance of the mechanism of incorporation in relation to melancholia. According to Nicholas

Abraham and Maria Torok, incorporation refers to "introducing all or part of a love object or a thing into one's own body, possessing, expelling or alternately acquiring, keeping, losing it..." (126). Abraham and Torok's argument of 'incorporation' maintains objectal dependency as a consequence of the subject's strong desire to keep the lost love object alive in her/his sphere of fantasy so that it can serve as a constant refuge from the world of reality. In other words, the subject denies the loss of the love object and is willing to preserve the lost object carefully in his mind. In Abraham and Torok's words,

> ...[I]ncorporation of the object creates or reinforces imaginal ties and hence dependency. Installed in place of the lost object, the incorporated object continues to recall the fact that something else was lost: the desires quelled by repression. Like a commemorative monument, the incorporated object betokens the place, the date, and the circumstances in which desires were banished from introjection: they stand like tombs in the life of the ego (114).

Dodge denies the loss of the love object and incorporates it. The fantasy of the child flourishes in a remote part of the psyche, but it is still buried. It is 'installed' in what Abraham and Torok calls a tomb or a psychic 'crypt' to be enshrined and concealed. This fixation on the lost object of love in such a fashion resists a binary opposition between preserving and burying it. The

purpose of repression accordingly refers to both putting something out of sight and providing it with a shelter simultaneously. The most striking illustration of this state of mind can be seen in Dodge's drinking whiskey. It is a symptomatic act of a desire for unification of the buried child in his body. The child's preservation expressed in the act of taking some liquid inside supplies Dodge sustenance, a shield against the repressed. Dodge incorporates the child because it is libidinally and narcissistically nourishing. The whiskey replaces the loss and in this manner creates a fantastical sustenance, and so it realizes "the fantasy of incorporation" that "merely simulates profound psychic transformation through magic: it does so by implementing literally something that has only figurative meaning." (Abraham & Torok 1972 128). By means of taking any type of food or liquid into one's body, the loss is swallowed and is made a part of the self. Dodge's pills serve the same purpose, but he does not take them in spite of Halie's frequent advice, and prefers drinking whiskey. This liquid's being an alcoholic drink intensifies the fantasy of incorporation as it has the power of blurring the hurtful truths and of numbing them.

Contrary to this, as Abraham and Torok make clear in a discussion of Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia", this act or need to clothe the hollow place of the lost love object with a source of sustenance relates to "the wound the melancholic attempts to hide, wall in, and encrypt" (1972 135). And Dodge represses it since it is to be buried because it is the "open wound", which attracts "the whole of the counter-cathecting libido" (135). With the purpose

of concealing the truth, Dodge preserves the repressed and includes it in one part of his psyche and subsequently produces a derivative of the fantasy of incorporation (Abraham & Torok, 1972 135). The reason for his refusal to talk about the child is hence most likely his need to conceal the truth of infanticide. In line with Abraham and Torok's arguments, Dodge's 'preservative repression' is a process recreating

> ...in a single psychic area, system, or agency, the correlate the entire topography, isolating the wound and separating it (with a multitude of counter-investments) from the rest of the psyche and especially from the memory of what had been torn from it. Such a creation is only justified when reality must be denied along with the narcissistic and libidinal import of the loss (135).

Therefore, Dodge's psychic state can be said to be fluctuating between an impulse to repress the unwanted child and the desire to incorporate narcissistically what has been dear to him.

For Abraham and Torok, Freud's conception of melancholia "hovers between love and hate amid archaic unconscious representations that are unable to reach consciousness. The issue in this struggle seems to be whether or not one should keep investing the love object despite disappointments, ill treatment,

and ultimately despite the loss of the love object" (1972 135). The melancholic's ambivalent response to the loss includes both a tendency to keep the loss inside by incorpation and adopting a lowness of spirits or mental depression due to the disappointments occasioned by it. The relationship between melancholia and the lost object reveals a rather complex opposition in terms of the reaction to that object. Freud writes about melancholia in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917):

> The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment (252).

Before these symptoms appear, the desire not to detach from the lost object is the predominant feeling. Though once united, the melancholic and the object are now separate from each other. Melancholia carries out a more traumatic internal work in the mind of the melancholic as in Dodge's case of incorporation of the dead child. In view of the distinction between Dodge's reaction to the incestuous child and his narcissistic incorporation of the child as a replacement for the love he once felt for his son Tilden, one may state that the stimulus exciting the trauma is the very fact of the child's being killed

and buried. Because of this fact, Dodge lowers his self-regard by insulting himself. Further, instead of accepting and acknowledging the fact that the familial harmony is disturbed, Dodge prefers to become "invisible", an adjective that is recurrently used in the play regarding the physical as well as pyschological effects of this change from innocence to fragmentation. In Act One Dodge employs the word "invisible" when Halie says Bradley, their younger son, will come to cut Dodge's hair. Dodge resents this: "My appearance is out of his domain! It's even out of mine! In fact, it's disappeared! I'm an invisible man!" (68) Dodge accuses Halie of provoking Bradley to cut his hair. "You tell Bradley that if he shows up with those clippers, I'll kill him!... Last time he left me almost bald! And I wasn't even awake! I was sleeping! I woke up and he had already left"(67). Dodge's words point to the disturbed state of connectedness and loss of closeness between the father and sons. Denying this accusation, Halie tells Dodge that it is Dodge himself who had better warn Bradley about the hair cut, simply because Bradley is his "own" son, but Dodge does not accept any closeness to either Bradley or Tilden.

Following Halie's claim that Bradley feels responsible for Dodge's appearance, Dodge keeps humiliating himself, saying that no one should care about his appearance. According to Freud's conceptualization of melancholia as a denial of loss, the melancholic manifests "an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale" (254). These psychological traits, which are not observed in mourning, devastate the ego

due to the fact that the ego is under attack. However, Dodge's anger mounts to a great degree because he thinks that Bradley's approach is offensive and deliberate and that it is Halie who has urged Bradley to cut his hair:

> Halie's Voice: That's not my fault!
>
> Dodge: You put him up to it!
>
> Halie's Voice: I never did!
>
> Dodge: You did too! You had some fancy, stupid meeting planned! Time to dress up for the company! Lower the ears a little! Put up a little front! Surprised you didn't tape a pipe to my mouth while you were at it! That woulda' looked nice! Huh? A pipe? Maybe a bowler hat! Maybe a copy of the Wall Street Journal casually placed on my lap.
>
> Halie's Voice: You always imagine the worst things of people!
>
> Dodge: That's not the worst! That's the least of the worst! (67, 68).

Dodge assumes that this is an act planned by Bradley and Halie to insult him. He is aware that hair is a part of self-image. These words make him think of his son and wife as his gravediggers. Bradley plays the role of Delilah, who emasculates Samson. Bradley likewise deprives Dodge of his power and strength. Bradley cuts Dodge's hair unevenly and leaves some part of his scalp

bleeding. Dodge humiliates himself; he calls himself 'invisible', yet he cannot stand Bradley's insults. He mocks himself by comparing his appearance to a corpse, and he accuses Bradley of robbing him of respectability. Dodge talks of some items which can be associated with ideas of male respectability: a pipe, a hat and a Wall Street Journal. He thinks that such items would hide his hair cut. But the cuts are there, and they leave Dodge all the more desperate. Coupled with the horror caused by Bradley, the cuts remind Dodge of the wound preserved inside. This is the reason why Dodge wants to be invisible. To be a corpse would make Dodge invisible, together with the pyschic wound resulting from the loss, and therefore would relieve him of the burden of the loss.

Dodge feels that Halie and Bradley are plotting against him, but in fact he is verbally terrorizing himself. He grows melancholy in his speech and shows signs of being self-destructive. Dodge is well aware of the fact that the happiness and feeling of unity enjoyed in the past have been replaced by a set of disconnected and fragmented family relationships. He in return develops a self-destructive sense of alienation from his ego by thinking "the least of the worst" for himself. The subject in melancholia adopts an air of inferiority as a result of dissatisfaction with the ego. Given the harsh self-criticisms, the ego splits into two parts, one of which controls the other. The acute critical eye observing the ego may draw the subject closer to "a correct description of his pyschological situation" (Freud 256). Freud interrogates the reason why someone should ever become sick when s/he gets to know so much about

herself/himself. According to Freud, the subject has reasons to lose his self-respect. It might be inferred from Freud's argument that the ego, as a means to handle the object loss, establishes the other split-off part as a critical force and thus sets a surveillance system over itself. Therefore, one part of the ego becomes the victim and the other part becomes the tormentor. This also means that the ego loses some part of itself in melancholia, and the object loss turns into an ego loss. In Act One, Halie draws an abstract picture of Dodge: "I don't know what's come over you, Dodge. I don't know what in the world's come over you. You have become an evil man. You used to be good man… You sit here day and night, festering away! Decomposing! Smelling up the house with your putrid body! Hacking your head off till all hours of the morning! Thinking up mean, evil, stupid things to say about your own flesh and blood!" (76). Halie's fierce criticism of Dodge reveals that Dodge has become a very different man. After the trauma of the infanticide, Dodge has given up caring about himself. He has been captured by the trauma so fully that he has withdrawn into himself. This is also the reason why Dodge does not care about Bradley or feel love for his own sons. Dodge says that Bradley does not belong to their family and shouts: "He's not my flesh and blood! My flesh and blood's buried in the back yard!" (77). These two statements place the emphasis on the impact of the loss on Dodge's psyche. As aforementioned, after the murder of the child, the family has disintegrated. The incident has left behind nothing but a traumatic memory. The feeling of betrayal Dodge has once experienced with Tilden, recurs once more with Bradley's attempts to cut his hair. Not only the child but the integrity of the family is lost as well.

However, Dodge has been influenced by the event most since he himself has committed the crime.

As can be observed, the current state of the family rests on the traumatic experience of the killing of the child. Dodge and Halie have become estranged from each other. Halie's question, "What's it like down there? Dodge?", after she has described the view of the rain from upstairs as coming down in "blue sheets", illustrates the distance between them (64). The spatial relationship, the division of the stage into upstairs and downstairs, is indicative of the dissimilar stances of Dodge and Halie. At the very beginning, Dodge does not reply to Halie's insistent calls and repeatedly drinks from his whiskey and stares at the television. Halie succeeds in breaching the silence by attracting Dodge's attention to the rain and to the bridge. She says, "The bridge is nearly flooded" (64). Halie's mention of the bridge metaphorically refers to the gap in their relationship. That the bridge is nearly flooded symbolizes the very little space and time the husband and wife share together. Dodge and Halie's domestic spheres are too distant to overlap each other, though they are living in the same house.

The division of the stage functions additionally as a symbol of a struggle for power between the husband and wife. Halie insists that Dodge must not drink alcohol, but Dodge lies to her and hides his whiskey bottle under his blanket. Halie knows for sure that he is drinking secretly downstairs. Though this is

Dodge's way of handling the loss, a way of trying to forget the memory of the past experience and to incorporate the lost object as a way of making up for the loss, it creates a visual as well as a physical boundary and moreover an area of deception between them. Halie's certainty concerning what Dodge is exactly doing downstairs enables her to take control of the household. Dodge is manifestly not the traditional male figure of authority. Halie's control of the household can be compared to the controlling power of the super-ego. In *The Ego and The Id*, Freud analyzes the super-ego and characterizes it as an unconscious, independent psychical system, which includes the function of repressing ideas. Freud does not include the super-ego in his first model of psychical topography mainly because he suspects that the super-ego may originate from the ego in that duties attributed to the super-ego such as censorship and self-scrunity are linked to the ego even before he has formulated the term super-ego. In his later accounts, however, he locates the topographical status of the super-ego above the ego, arguing that it is the system that carries out the work of repression. Halie is convinced that Dodge is drinking even when she is upstairs. She keeps contol of downstairs by frequently asking Dodge various questions and tries to prolong the conversation she is having with Dodge. Halie does not let Dodge forget her existence upstairs and in this way reminds him that she is always there watching over him.

In contradistinction to Halie's powerful posture upstairs, Dodge's fallen father status due to his passivity on his couch downstairs also evinces the fact that

Halie is obviously not a traditional self-sacrificing wife. In the first part of Act One, a huge silence interrupts Dodge and Halie's conversation following Dodge's question about the horse breeder. Dodge cynically comments on Halie's tendency towards dissoluteness: "I bet he taught you a thing or two huh? Gave you a good turn around the old stable!... And he never laid a finger on you I suppose? (*long silence*) Halie?" (66). Dodge wants to be certain whether the horse breeder has made advances to Halie or not. The sexual overtone of this remark is a direct reminder of the reason for the burial of the child, and this is yet another moment that explains the distance between Dodge and Halie. In Act Two, while talking to Shelly, Dodge suggests that Halie's disloyalties resume in her old age too, "She won't be back for days. She says she'll be back but she won't be. (*he starts laughing*) There's life in the old girl yet! (*stops laughing*) (88). Halie is not a character that can be confined to the conventional role of the self-denying mother. Rather, notwithstanding the social norms, she is a (m)other who shows less fondness and love for her family and who is dedicated to her blissful memories as a source of happiness.

Halie's adherence to her past may be another way of shunning the memory of the buried child. Contrary to the expectations of the audience, Halie seems to have recovered from the murder of her own flesh. She is a woman who lives among the cheerful memories of her past. All of the blissful moments of her past substitute for her loss.

Throughout the play, memory comes in fragments. If memory is considered a patchwork waiting to be pieced together as in the case of the anamnesis carried out in therapy, the play can itself be seen as a therapeutic process whereby necessary associations are to be collected from the remembrances of the characters. The memories of the characters as they themselves articulate them in speech are the most explicit means for the audience to get to know about the characters and their past. The first piece of the patchwork is Halie's fond remembrances of her past, a time in which she gets lost even while she is narrating the days when she used to go to horseraces and when the "sun was just gleaming" with "flamingos", "bougainvilleas", and "palm trees" (66). In appearance, she is supplementing the loss with an attachment to memories of bygone days. In the play, there is no mention of her mourning over the literal death of the child in the past, and if she has indeed experienced a grieving process, it appears on the surface that she has long ago recovered from it. Halie's joy and seeming recovery, nonetheless, gives rise to the possibility that her true grief persists under the cover of her memories so as not to be noticed.

As the memory of the buried child has long disturbed the integrity of the house, it is a shared loss for every family member. The surprising point is that Dodge seems to have internalized the loss much more than Halie. It might be supposed that it is Halie who is supposed to be mourning for the loss of the baby she has given birth to. It is as if she and Dodge have exchanged roles. Nevertheless, Halie's case is different from Dodge's state of melancholia. Although there are no manifest symptoms of melancholia in Halie's situation,

though she is thought to have been relieved of the burden of loss by completing a successful mourning and replacing the loss with new objects or with the cheerful memories that seem to sustain her, there are signs that indicate that what may be a seemingly successful mourning may surprisingly be a continuation of an underlying melancholia.

Melancholia, as seen in Dodge's case, typically includes reproaches directed by the subject against himself as well as a narcissistic identification with the lost object instead of withdrawing love from the lost object and seeking another, whereas Halie has superficially gone through a process of what Freud calls working through, during which one severs emotional attachments to the lost object through the labor of memory. Halie's cheerful remembrances might be seen at first sight as a magical restoration of the lost object. Halie seems to have terminated all attachments with the loss through the mediation of the labor of memory as Freud suggests in his description of mourning:

> Each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it... The fact is, however, that when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhabited again (253).

Mourning, whether as a reaction to actual or symbolic loss, entails an exposure to grief that is worked through by a process of nostalgic fixation. Ironically, this process enables the subject to resuscitate the lost other and replace the loss with a new object. In this way, there emerges a tension between the return to the remembered object and the goal of discovering a new object. Halie attempts to compensate for the loss her ego has experienced and to reconstruct her ego through remembrances of her dear past. In Halie's case, this is simply an effort made to hide her sorrow. Halie's memories exclude the time she has shared with Dodge in her youth. She has unmistakably not made her peace with those times when they were in fact a couple. One noteworthy example of this is that the setting in Halie's narration of her stories from the past does not match Dodge's accounts. She states that the horseraces were held in California, while Dodge claims that it was in Florida. Furthermore, her past hardly shows any spatial or temporal correspondence with that of Dodge's. The concept of the past for Dodge begins from the date of their marriage, whereas for Halie, if there was a past full of joy, it belonged to the times when she used to go horseracing with the "wonderful" horse breeder before her marriage (66). Halie narrates her memories not as a whole but in fragments. These fragmented accounts of memory do not exhibit any sign of a shared past betwen Halie and Dodge. Halie's perception of the past, a time prior to the period of their marriage, may simply be a way of shunning the times she has shared with Dodge because of the memory of the child. It can be concluded that not only Dodge, in his explicitly discerned melancholia, but also Halie fails to successfully

manage the trauma. What Halie is doing through the work of memory can only be a screen that conceals the ongoing melancholia beneath the surface.

The concept of the screen in psychoanalysis derives from the idea of a screen memory, and it can be construed as a curtain that both hides and represents the repressed material. As Laplanche and Pontalis explain, "Like the symptom, the screen memory is a formation produced by a compromise between repressed elements and defence" (411). The screen is then a system in itself that mediates between the repression of the lost object and its representation. Thus the screen is also comparable to the symptom in its binary relation to the mechanism of repression and the repressed unconscious materials' being projected to a certain extent out of the unconscious area. The concept of the screen can specifically be identified in Halie's monologue in which she is seemingly mourning for her late son Ansel. Her monologue, which is about the loss of a son, takes place near the end of Act One. The idea that Halie is mourning only for Ansel, not for the buried child, may later be a surprise for the audience when in Act Three they learn about the buried child Halie herself has given birth to.

Ansel is a cover that serves to conceal and shelter Halie's real grief for the buried child. He operates as a screen that maintains the secret of the infanticide since Halie does not even mention the buried child. This, just like Dodge's burial under his blanket, may be a protection against the traumatic

memory of the loss. For this reason, she focuses all her attention on Ansel as the only lost beloved son. For Halie, Ansel would have been a figure of success, and he would have earned lots of money if he had not died so young. She says he was pretty smart and even the smartest brother (73). In Halie's praise of Ansel, her anger with Tilden and Bradley manifests itself. She is angry with Tilden for all the trouble he has caused back in New Mexico and resents Bradley as she thinks that Bradley himself has chopped off his leg with a chain saw. As Halie goes on with her monologue, she reminds Tilden that it is their responsibility to take care of Dodge and Bradley. Halie behaves like a caretaker rather than a truly responsible wife. She says if they had a lot of money, they could send Dodge away. She has always hoped that Tilden, the oldest son, would be the one who would take responsibility for the family in times of hardship. However, Tilden has changed a lot and now is very different from the way Halie describes him. She says that Tilden was an All-American and a fullback. Halie imagines him as a father or a leader figure. The idolized portrayal of Tilden at the same time epitomizes the myth of the self-made, independent and successful American. Tilden used to be both skillful in physical terms as a sportsman and also very brave. But, now he is the American Adam who has fallen from grace and lost his privileged place in heaven.

Tilden's previous privileged position in Halie's mind might be a fantasy, a question which is inseparable from the question of mourning and melancholia: an object exists in so far as it is recalled as a loss. It is rendered a

statue-like figure, and therefore precious in the mind of the mourner. Tilden is remembered by Halie as though he is a figure, a monument in memory, and a loss. In her imagination, he is the genuine, "authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities" (Lewis 1). This image can be said to be the image of the mythical American Adam, on whom all kinds of hopes have rested and who has disappointed them by eating the apple from the tree of knowledge. This image may also be a reference to Tilden's incest and to Halie's sexual attraction to his own son whom she glorifies so much. Tilden's failure in New Mexico where he was jailed turns Halie's attentions to Ansel as her favorite son and places him above the three brothers.

Ansel is a hero for Halie, a strong and brave hero. Like Tilden, he used to be a sportsman, a basketball player. Halie, in her black dress, is now mourning for Ansel. He is the lost object of love, whose statue, Halie says, is to be erected as a tribute to him. Halie feels that the whole family has been abandoned since Ansel's death. She glorifies Ansel to such a degree that, according to her, it is a pity that Ansel did not die in action. Halie does not disclose how and when Ansel died. The only thing she says about his death is that he died on his wedding night:

> "It's not fitting for a man like that to die in a motel room. A soldier. He could've won a medal... Of course, he'd be still alive today if he hadn't married into the Catholics. The Mob... Catholic women are

> the Devil incarnate... The wedding was more like a funeral... All those Italians. All that horrible black, greasy hair. The smell of cheap cologne. I think even the priest was wearing a pistol. When he gave her the ring I knew that he was a dead man" (73-74).

Even this part of the monologue reveals lots of things about Halie. She is portrayed as a sectarian, who despises Catholics simply because Ansel married a Catholic Italian girl. Her xenophobic attitude mounts to ethnocentrism as she directs her insults towards Catholic Italians. Her words depict a biased, bigoted character in her unjust indictment of the whole religion and the entire ethnic group. Halie's love for her sons fails to explain her accusations. Her words further evoke another suggestion of incest as they sound more like the jealous attacks of a lover than the mourning of a mother: "I kissed him and he felt like a corpse. All white. Cold. Icy blue lips. He never used to kiss like that. Never before. I knew that she'd cursed him. Taken his soul. I saw it in her eyes. She smiled at me with that Catholic sneer of hers" (74). Halie sees her daughter-in-law as her enemy or a rival who has dispossessed Halie of her son or a love object. Halie's anger may seem absurd to the audience but, considering the known instance of incest, the implication of another potential incest does not seem so far-fetched.

Halie is caught up in repetitions of what she cannot clearly express in her speech. In relation to Ansel, the earlier traumas of the buried child and her

incestuous relationship with Tilden remain unspoken. Halie is in fact trying to deal with the trauma of the buried child and the memory of her incest with Tilden by using Ansel as a shield. One significant question poses itself: is Halie fabricating truths that help her forget about the realities of her past? Or may she be trying to take refuge behind the screens which are the products of her own imagination? Or is Ansel also fabricated by Halie? As one prominent Shepard critic, Lynda Hart suggests, Halie lives in an estranged world in her upstairs bedroom, taking refuge there and filling the gaps in with the photographs from the past (76). Hart further asserts that Halie's "interests are in refurbishing the past with glowing images of a blissful home life" (77). So it is possible to infer that it is only through a screen that Halie feels secure against the repressed memories of the murder of the child and her incest with Tilden. She desperately needs to cover over the things she cannot express easily. Accordingly, the seeming process of mourning itself may be another screen, enabling Halie to survive in the midst of the unhealed melancholia. Therefore, as in Halie's case, what appears to be successful mourning may astonishingly turn out to be melancholia. As for the fabricated objects, they are the substitutions for the lost object which could provide nothing more than a facade of self-delusion for Halie to live in. Ansel is her obsession, Tilden is a failure, and Bradley is a residual. Father Dewis is yet another object, another substitute, whose hypocrisy coincides with Halie's make-believe faith in religion. She seems to be religious in Act One when she says, "they shouldn't race on Sunday", referring to the horseracers. The one who preaches these words is Halie, who leaves the house to flirt with Father Dewis. In religious terms, this manner can be regarded as an act of adultery. All of

Halie's behaviour reinforces the idea that Halie makes up screens of various sorts, including being religious, in order to quench the pain of loss. This is at the same time a cover over her melancholia which shows itself in the constant, hidden repetitions of the repressed. Ultimately, the various forms of screens Halie uses supplant the loss while they disclose the fact that there is an ongoing process of repetition of the loss that leads to the failure of repression just like the unsuccessful preservation of the buried child in Halie's mind. The substitutions or the different forms of screens function as a compromise between repression and remembering, and they eventually reveal the repressed as a result of the repetitions of the repressed elements.

As has been noted earlier, certain objects represent the traumatic memory of the child. Though these objects are sometimes intended to cover the feeling of loss like Dodge's blanket or like the various types of screens Halie uses to resist the repressed elements, as a matter of fact they conjure up that absence every time they are repeated. At this point, the role of the mechanism of repetition and its relation to remembering becomes clear. The characters in this house, especially Dodge and Halie, assume that they are blocking the unwanted stories of their past just by means of covering them over and substituting what they have lost with other things that will narcissistically nourish them. In other words, objects of subtitutions come to be forms of repetition of a past that is repressed and forced to remain buried. But, in fact, these objects are threats to the preservation of the repressed and in the same manner to Dodge's narcissistic tendency to keep the lost child alive in his

fantasy because they also help the characters remember the loss each time they are repeated. With each repetition, the mechanism of repression is undermined and gives rise to the return of the repressed. And when the repressed returns, remembering takes place. From this perspective, for instance, the periods of silence, that represent Dodge's refusal to articulate the repressed, that in other words are signs of repression, might also be seen as the eruption of the past and of the memory of the child. Both Halie and Dodge are robbed of speech when they feel that the course of the conversations draws them closer to the issue of the buried child. However, the periods of silence have become a habit whereby Dodge thwarts the threat of reliving that past experience. Further, Dodge's coughs violate this silence at frequent intervals. The child repressed returns as the lump in Dodge's throat where speech fails to function as a reminder or an articulation of the repressed. Coughing appears as a symptom, and disturbs Dodge not only psychologically but physically as well. This somatic reaction inscribes the repressed on Dodge's body in spite of all the efforts he makes in order to avoid talking about the child and past events. As somatic responses, the coughs are joined by another symptom, deafness. Whenever Dodge wants to avoid any mention of the child, he refuses to answer Halie's questions and pretends to be deaf. Dodge resists the memory by trying not to remember it and in this way shuns possible feelings of unpleasure. His silence in the face of Halie's frequent questions makes him feel secure against the threat of remembering what he has struggled to forget.

Dodge attempts to master the loss by incorporating and covering it over, for both mechanisms provide him with some distance from the agony of the lost object, even if he is unable completely to forget the lost object. The absence triggered by the loss in the house as a whole is replaced by objects which are in fact intended to aid forgetting that absence but which actually cause it to reappear. Above all, the concern to conceal things becomes a way of escaping the truth. First, the blanket over Dodge and then the corn husks Tilden brings inside from the backyard, the place where Dodge had buried the little child years ago, suggest some inexpressible problem. The instinct to preserve concrete things like Dodge's body with the blanket seems to stem from an agreement made silently to cloak the issue of the child. Dodge buries himself under his brown blanket whenever he seeks refuge from an expression that suggests the child's presence. The traumatic experience of the murder and the burial produces displeasure as it is pronounced more and more. Dodge has created a narcissistic sanctuary full of pleasure and libido inside for himself and the child, and is not willing to abandon that seemingly consoling pleasure.

The spatial arrangement of the house contributes significantly to the meanings the objects convey. The backyard is a forbidden zone and is treated like a far away land though it is adjacent to the house. It is no longer the fertile land it used to be in the past. Since the burial of the child, it has become a graveyard for the family. Dodge's choice of the backyard as a graveyard is indicative of his weird connectedness to the child. His replacement of his love

and care for his own sons with the child renders the backyard a monumental place, signifying that the memory is both preserved and denied. However, the harsh reality of the infanticide renders it an area of no trespassing. Dodge does not want to remember that part of the past; as his name suggests he dodges any remembrance or acknowledgement. Yet, this time fertility erupts when Tilden arrives in Act One with an armful of corn. Dodge does not believe Tilden when he says he has picked it in the backyard. Tilden says: "It's picked. I picked it all in the rain. Once it is picked you can't put it back" (70). As Tilden affirms, the past lingers longer than expected, and once it has erupted, it cannot be left behind. Tilden places all of the corn in the middle of the living room and begins to remove the husks on the floor. Halie is disturbed by the disorder and the mess caused by the corn. The past insinuates its way back into the present with the corn, and it is not the corn but the metaphoric return of the child in the form of the corn that contaminates the house. Halie raises the alarm the moment she sees the corn on the floor of the living room. That the house is now full of corn figuratively represents the first return of the repressed child, and prophesies the unburial and the real return of its corpse at the end of the play. Moreover, when Dodge asks Tilden what kind of corn it is, he tells Dodge: "You planted it. I don't know what it is" (71). What Dodge is trying to disown is now right before his eyes. The child is hence embodied in objects that cruelly remind Dodge of his infanticide.

Each object is then another repetition of the repressed. The past does not belong only to the past. Though it is silenced in many ways, it reveals itself

through repetitions and therefore leads to the failure of the repression. The more the characters try to conceal the truth, the closer they come to it through its repetition and its reappearance through the objects. The process of repetition becomes mechanical and compulsive, consequently defeating all the attempts to bury the repressed. Every attempt to seal off the truth through an object at the same time functions as an attempt to preserve the repressed. In this play, the question of coverings and preservation is central to the play's handling the loss, its memory and its return. The memory of what cannot be articulated disturbs the mind and in particular the eye like Bradley's prosthetic leg, and draws more attention to the loss. The loss metonymically shifts to Bradley's prosthetic leg, every creaking sound of which echoes the loss. Moreover, the fact that it is a prosthetic leg, a substitute for the loss, further symbolizes the refusal of the loss that is exercised by the entire family. One other important return of the loss is achieved through the rain. The rain anticipates a sense of purification at the end. All forms of lack of speech represented in the embodiment of the objects of memory and their ritualistic repetition in the course of the play, in particular in Act One and to some extent in Act Two, take the place of a clear explanation of the things that are unresolved and about which it is forbidden to speak in the family.

Another element foregrounding the loss in the play is speech. An inclination not to talk about the child is what characterizes the first act in terms of the representation of incorporating and burying the loss. The absence of the child is reinforced by the lack of a substantial explanation of the mystery of the

child. Objects take the place of language that would have clearly explained why and how a child is murdered and buried in this very house where the family still continues to live. From the second act on, however, the more the characters need to put into words the repressed element they keep inside, the more unburied the child becomes. As Shepard himself says, "language is a veil hiding demons and angels which the characters are always out of touch with. Their quest in the play is the same as ours in life—to find those forces, to meet them face to face and end the mystery" (quoted in Hayes, 134). It is Tilden who begins to unbury the repressed child in the form of speech. He feels that there is a bond between the repressed child and himself. He does not express it, but his constant peeling of the corn husks and the carrots announces that he is desperately in need of an acknowledgement of the issue of the child. He seems to be almost always comtemplating the child in his mind, especially when he goes out to the backyard and picks the corn and carrots. Though Tilden is increasingly aware of the fact that noone wants to talk about the child, he speaks his mind and unveils the enigma of the buried child through speech in the second part of Act Two. In this sense, Act Two can be likened to a ritual in which repetitive patterns of speech represent a therapeutic movement forward and thus provide a path from the acting-out of the repressed and the hidden through speech to an ultimate working-through.

Tilden's contemplation of the child and his peeling the corn husks and the carrots he brings into the living room are both ways of acting out the trauma of the child. In his 1914 article "Remembering, Repeating and Working-

Through", Freud discusses the term "acting-out" as a process whereby the subject "does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (150). In respect of this account, the trauma has not yet been resolved; instead, certain acts speak for the trauma. Acting-out includes the unconscious repetition of one act or similar acts. Each repetition substitutes for real remembering while giving overt expression to the repressed by gestures or words. Tilden acts out the trauma of the infanticide by husking the corn and by peeling the carrots. It is as if he is playing a game through which he seeks the clear expression from which Dodge and Halie have abstained for years. The trauma is therefore staged not in speech but in gestures or movement up to a certain point in the play. These gestures and movements pave the way for a smooth transition to the final working-through of the repressed and the revelation of the truth beginning from the second act to the end of the play.

Act Two is full of examples of acting-out and the working-through of the repressed material. It begins with Vince and Shelly's arrival. First, the question of homecoming raises the question of identity, a need to be identified and recognized according to one's roots. But Vince is a figure of the repressed, the uncanny, and the double of the undesired repressed. For this reason, his need to be recognized by his own family is related to the possibility of reunion and reconnection which is what Vince hopes for. Vince's thirst for recognition is left unsatisfied by Dodge's failure to recognize his own grandson.

Surprisingly, noone, including his own father, acknowledges any relationship to him. Shaken, Vince endlessly talks about himself; he introduces himself to Dodge saying that he has just come home and that, because he has not been home for six years, he does not know anything that has happened (88). Vince's expectation of being welcomed by his family is always negated by Dodge, "Well that's good. That's good. It's much better not to know anything. Much, much better"(88). For Dodge, it is essentially much better not to talk about anything. No matter how much he says that it is better not to know, he is acting out the thing he does not want to talk about. As will be disclosed in Act Three, Dodge is in fact playacting in his failure to recognize Vince. Act Two can be considered to be a repetition of Tilden's earlier homecoming. Dodge regards Vince as the double of Tilden and the repressed child and does not want to remember the fact that he has murdered a child. However, by being verbally aggressive in his approach towards Vince, he "reproduces it (the buried child or the act of killing it) not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (Freud 150).

Dodge first mistakes Vince for Tilden, who is, for him, another double of the buried child, and he accuses Vince of leaving him alone. He shouts, "You left. You went outside like we told you not to do. You went out there in back. In the rain" (87). In this way he also repeats the repressed. Dodge unconsciously recalls the scene of burial lying secretly in his mind, and he repeatedly refers to that scene. He remembers that he has buried the child in the backyard and now feels distressed by seeing Vince, a figure from the past, trespassing the

limits he himself has imposed. Secondly, when Vince asks him where Halie is, Dodge again looks back to the past and indirectly charges her with infidelity: "Don't worry about her. She won't be back for days. She says she'll be back but she won't be. There is life in the old girl yet!" (88). Dodge is hence caught up in repetitive cycles in which he enacts the scene that reminds him of the trauma of the infanticide.

It can be assumed that Vince and Shelly activate the memory of the repressed child that Dodge avoids putting into words and that they orchestrate the stage for Tilden's subsequent revelation of the truth. The repressed will soon be worked through and subsequently verbalized as it is transferred from one character to the other. Freudian psychoanalysis defines the process of working-through as becoming "conversant with the resistance with which he (one) has become acquainted, … , to overcome it, by continuing, in defiance of it, the analytic work according to the fundamental rule of analysis (1914 155). Here, Freud defines the term working-through as a process achieved as consequence of the acting-out of the repressed materials within the clinical context of psychotherapy. In this process a kind of interaction that is called 'transference' takes place between the analyst and the analysand. Transference is a process of "actualization of unconscious wishes" and "[i]ts context *par excellence* is the analytic situation" (Laplanche and Pontalis 455). Therefore, the unconscious wishes or repression, which escape being remembered, are played out in the immediacy of the analysis, and for this play in the immediacy of the transmission of the objects and the exchange of

words between the characters. In this immediacy of analysis or in the process of transference itself, Freud maintains that the subject (or clinically speaking the patient) resists remembering the trauma which has caused the psychological disorder s/he is suffering from. Further, according to Freud, those parts which regress from reality may be precisely the essential part of the repressed and the patient is "obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience" (Freud 1920 36). In the course of the transference, the subject inclines to preserve the memory of the loss and to repeat it compulsively as opposed to remembering it.

In "The Dynamics of Transference" (1912), Freud explains the role of transference as the "strongest weapon of the resistance" during the treatment (104). The resistance is at work so as not to reveal the repressed. The resistance takes the shape of repetitions of various sorts that replace remembering. The transference therefore embodies a representation of the emotions and situations from the past that are repeated compulsively. Ironically, repetition as a series of compulsive acts produces a transference leading to the lifting of the repression. This coincides with the aim of working through: to provide a therepeutic end for the treatment and ultimately liberate the repressed.

The ritual-like scene begins the moment Vince and Shelly enter the house: Shelly asks Vince one question after another about the house; she makes jokes

and giggles. Vince is disturbed by her jokes and laughs and becomes worried about the idea that his family will think something is wrong with her; he shouts and threatens to leave if Shelly does not stop giggling. When Shelly apologizes, they finally get into the house. All of their words and sentences are short and are spoken as if in haste. The overall picture of the conversation between Vince and Shelly is like the rehearsal of a ritualistic representation which marks a bold transition from the stagnant nature of the previous act. Their arrival and Shelly's interrogation of the members of the household enliven the stage in contradistinction to the first act and herald a movement from the obscurities of the first act. The stage is enlivened by the power of speech to reveal the hidden; language itself activates the repressed. Michael J. Hayes, in his study on Sam Shepard states that in Shepard's drama "language becomes an end in itself—language is action" (1992 133). Language used especially in the service of Vince's search for identity will symbolically articulate the presence of the repressed child in a way that assists in the development of the transference between the characters. Vince's quest for identity pushes the process towards the articulation of the repressed and looks forward to an ultimate relevation and relief. Dodge has to articulate, explain and acknowledge the repressed child first and foremost so that he can affirm Vince's identity and his role in the family, and can thus leave behind the fragments of the trauma. If he does not make his peace with the repressed he will continue to see Vince as an inseparable double of the repressed. In other words, Dodge's attitude towards Vince is in psychoanalytical terms the projection of what he refuses to recognize in himself. He projects the

unpleasurable feelings and emotions produced by the repressed onto Vince as a defense against the uncanny double of the repressed.

Dodge shows no inclination to reveal the truth about the child when he tells Vince it is better not to know anything, but, when Shelly becomes frightened in the face of Dodge's aggressive manner and asks Vince to spend the night in a motel room and come back in the morning, Dodge teasingly asks them what they are talking about: "What are you talking about? Do you know what you're talking about? Are you just talking for the sake of talking? Lubricating the gums?" (89). Dodge mocks the idea of talking just for the sake of talking. However, Vince and Shelly talk in order to find a soluliton to the problem they are now having in the family house. Dodge does not want them to talk about anything at all. All he wants is to see Vince and Shelly leave because they speak a lot and they ask lots of questions about the family. For Dodge, this may pose a threat to the secret of the buried child. Ironically, Dodge's words themselves point to the issues he does not want to talk about. All his words and sentences function as repetitions of the subject of the buried child that he resists remembering. In the first act, just as Tilden is about to disclose the reason for his long stay in New Mexico, Dodge interrupts, saying that he does not have to repeat everything that has happened in the past. However, now he is acting out the memories by repetition and by "lubricating the gums". The word lubricate literally means to make something smooth or slippery. The gum like whiskey is something edible and an object suitable for incorporation. However, lubricating the gum is in sharp contrast to act of swallowing the

whiskey, for it rejects being swallowed and incorporated. Lubricating calls for elucidation every time the gum is chewed. In other words, it symbolizes a mental rumination or a verbal repetition. Dodge's words, which take the shape of repetition, render remembering smoother for him. The more he acts out the repressed, the more the opposition between repetition and remembering collapses. Dodge pretends not to remember Vince. Yet, by claiming that he does not remember his own grandson, he actually resists remembering the repressed memory and falls into the trap of the compulsive repetition of the repressed:

Vince: I'm Vince! Your Grandson!

Dodge: Vince. My Grandson.

Vince: Tilden's son, Vince.

Dodge: Tilden's son, Vince.

Vince: You haven't seen me for a long time.

Dodge: When was the last time?

Vince: I don't remember.

Dodge: You don't remember?

Vince: No.

Dodge: You don't remember. How am I supposed to remember if you don't remember?

.....

Vince: (crossing toward Dodge) Grandpa, look—

Dodge: Stay where you are! Keep your distance! (89).

Dodge's harsh warning forces Vince to take a step backward. The moment Vince steps backwards, the repressed child inside the mind of Dodge regresses into its place. The repressed material Vince is excavating through his questions is coming too close to consciousness to be bearable for Dodge. Dodge in return commands it to stay where it (you) is (are), and represses it back to its unconscious place in his mind. Vince is the projective return of the repressed material. The more Dodge represses the memory of the child, the more it pushes back, since it is uncannily buried in the psychic tomb Dodge has created.

The buried child has still not been articulated but is being brought into the light as the characters reveal more of the repressed material and as the shift in the stage lighting from darkness to a more illuminated stage suggests. Things are becoming clearer as the repressed is acted out even though Dodge does not "remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed" (150). The process of acting out, according to Freud, involves a compulsion to repeat the forgotten past since it "replaces the impulsion to remember" (151). At the same time, a resistance develops to guard the repressed against any threat to

the unfolding of the repressed. Resistance inhibits and obstructs a healthy remembering and gives rise to the repetition of the repressed not as a past event but "as a present-day force" (151). Such a process can be traced bit by bit when Tilden says, "I had a son and we once buried him" after he comes in with carrots in his arm. Shelly asks Tilden whether he is Vince's father or not (92). Dodge immediately interferes and tells Tilden to shut up. The power of his resistance forces Dodge to tell a lie: "You (Tilden) don't know about that! That happened long before you were born! Long before!" (62). Repetitive patterns of speech gradually relocate the buried child in the present. This argument shows that repetition and remembering meet at the same point when repetition becomes a transference occasioning the lifting of repression.

The lighting that dimmed the stage in Act One now glimmers as though welcoming and greeting the return of the repressed. It signals that it will be eventually spoken out. Another prominent function of language in this play is that it supports the characters' action in making the enigma known. The sense of familiarity disintegrates when Dodge fails to recognize Vince. The house which Vince thinks belongs to his family seems weird and uncanny, including the whole household. Before they enter the house, Shelly compares the house to a Norman Rockwell cover. Rockwell is an American painter, famous for his joyful portrayal of children, animals and men and for his absurdly idealized images of the American family. Shelly says, "This is the house?... I don't believe it.... It is like a Norman Rockwell cover or something. ... Where's the milkman and the little dog? What's the little dog's name? Spot. Spot and Jane.

Dick and Jane and Spot" (83). The facade of the house seems more comforting than the inside. Shelly's uneasiness in the face of this discrepancy shatters the comfortable image of home. The home is now all the more uncanny for Shelly when Dodge learns that Shelly is "originally" from L.A. and insults her, saying that all those people from "Sunshine States" like L.A. or Florida are "smart-asses" (90). Shelly is truly hurt and "turns her back to Dodge, crosses to staircase and sits on bottom step" (90) :

Dodge: She wants to go. She just got here and she wants to go.

Vince: Well you weren't very polite.

Dodge: She's insulted! Look at her! In my house she's insulted! She is over there sulking because I insulted her!

Shelly: (*to Vince*)This is really terrific. This is wonderful. And you were worried about me making the right first impression!

Dodge: (*to Vince*) She's a fireball isn't she? Regular fireball. I has some a' them in my day. Temporary stuff. Never lasted more than a week.

Vince: Grandpa—

Dodge: Stop calling me Grandpa will ya! It's sickening. "Grandpa." I'm nobody's Grandpa!

(DODGE starts feeling around under the cushion for the bottle of whiskey. SHELLY gets up from the staircase.) (90).

This house is haunted by the memories of the loss and the repressed child. *Unheimlich*, it keeps the past in the present. From the beginning, the play shows the interior of the house as a decayed place. It turns all the expectations of Shelly's Norman Rockwell house upside down. After the above quoted discussion, Shelly wonders whether they are at the wrong house: "(*to Vince*) Maybe you've got the wrong house. Did you ever think of that? Maybe this is the wrong address!" (90). Shelly grows more frightened and begs Vince to leave, "Can't we just drive on to New Mexico? This is terrible, Vince! I don't want to stay here. In this house. I thought it was going to be turkey dinners and apple pie and all that kinda stuff"(91). The facade of the house is deceptive both for Vince and Shelly and for the audience. The uncanny house and the uncanny characters also makes more difficult for the audience any identification with the scene or with what is happening on the stage. There is no hope of recognition and intimacy between the characters for the time being. The failure of recognition is *unheimlich*. Dodge defends himself from the uncanny by projecting his feelings onto Shelly. He believes that Shelly is insulted. However, it is Dodge himself who is insulted in the first place simply because Vince appears as the double of the repressed in his mind. The double rises uncannily out of nowhere, and the imaginary, the fantasy of the loss, ceases to function since it is taken over by Vince as the embodiment of the double.

Dodge's projection of his feelings onto others is a herald of the unburial of the repressed child. Dodge is obviously afraid of the secret of the buried child, and in turn insults Shelly and denies any sense of relation to Vince. Dodge in fact continues to reject the return of the repressed. This is also the reason why he immediately looks for his alcohol bottle under his blanket. His efforts to conceal the loss in his fantasy still persist. This is a need to numb the pain of the loss and to prevent a confrontation with the repressed child. That Dodge so openly projects his insult and his rejection is a way of acting out the anger he feels towards the repressed child, for Halie and for Tilden. Though the issue of incest is not the whole concern of the play, it includes all family members in its circle, and ultimately Vince and even Shelly. Failure of recognition is an obstacle to the emergence of the truth, but Dodge brings to light his feelings by projecting them instead of keeping them to only himself as he previously did in Act One.

Dodge mistakes Vince for Tilden, "Did you bring the whiskey?", and complains because he has left him alone and has gone out "...there in back... In the rain" (87). It will be soon understood, when in Act Three Dodge easily recognizes Vince, that it is not a real failure of recognition but a pretence that Dodge sticks to in the face of the uncanny double of the repressed child. Dodge is playing a game; he is acting a role, a role which despite Dodge's intentions digs up the repression buried under the coverings. Dodge asks Vince, "Who are you to expect anything? Who are you supposed to be?"(89).

Dodge is reacting to the return of the repressed that his mind refuses to see. In fact, Dodge supposes Vince to be a threat to him. Otherwise, if he had really failed to recognize him, he would probably have asked the question, "Who are you?". Vince's homecoming provokes Dodge's memories, and Dodge's words become his acts. His silence is eventually broken.

Dodge's speech includes different forms of repetitions of the repressed: His regarding Vince as the double of the buried child, then the insult he projects onto Shelly and his fake failure of recognition all refer to a past, a memory that is now springing up through speech. Furthermore, he teases Vince and Shelly when Shelly grows desperate:

> Shelly: Vince, why don't we spend the night in a motel and come back in the morning? We could have breakfast. Maybe everything would be different.
>
> Vince: Don't be scared. There's nothing to be scared of. He's just old.
>
> Shelly: I'm not scared.
>
> Dodge: You two are not my idea of the perfect couple! (88).

In order to maintain his role play as a grandfather who does not recognize his own grandson, Dodge now attacks the relationship between Vince and Shelly. Just a few lines above, Dodge talks about Halie as an old woman who is still full of life unlike him. Conscious of his powerless position on his couch as opposed to his wife's mobility that renders her powerful, Dodge channels his uneasiness and restlessness about this subject into his criticism of Vince's relationship: "There's something wrong between the two of you. Something not compatible" (89). If there is indeed a question of compatibility, it is among all of the members of this family, and essentially between Dodge and Halie.

In the meantime, the repressed element resists returning to consciousness. The unconscious desires or secrets resist being brought from the unconscious part of the psyche to the sphere of consciousness. Dodge narcissistically clings to his whiskey bottle. When it runs out, he is left destitute:

> Anybody in this house could get me a bottle. Anybody! But nobody will. Nobody understands the urgency! Peelin' carrots is more important. Playin' piano on your teeth! Well I hope you all remember this when you get up in years. When you find yourself immobilized. Dependent on the whims of others (96).

Though Dodge has so far given hints of the repressed child in his speech, he is still overwhelmed by the resistance applied by the repressed. The bottle of whiskey shows his urgent need to return to his cocoon full of pleasure. Dodge's desire to remain comfortably estranged from the rest of the family, especially from Vince, turns into an urgency to protect himself. He cries for help to hold together the threads of the cocoon shattered by Vince's homecoming. Dodge cries out his pressing need to cling narcissistically to a cocoon spun out of bottles of alcohol. The bottle of whiskey is another object that resists articulation and substitutes for speech. It is pleasure-giving as opposed to the hurtful reality. Dodge's addiction to alcohol is a symptom which becomes a source of pleasure. Therefore, the symptom helps maintain the repression. A symptom that provides pleasure helps the repressed material to be 'immobilized' just like Dodge himself.

Vince agrees to go out and buy Dodge a bottle of whiskey. His intention is not of course just to satiate Dodge's desire for alcohol, but to exploit this pleasure-giving addiction to get Dodge to recognize that he is his grandson. Like an analyst, Vince will get Dodge to reveal the repressed by exploiting his narcissistic addiction. Meanwhile, Shelly transforms into an insider from a frightened guest. She undertakes the job of peeling the carrots that have been dug up from the garden in order to keep herself busy while Vince is out buying the bottle of whiskey. Shelly is destined to be intrinsically bound to the *unheimlich* place when she holds Dodge's cap she finds on the floor. She picks it up and puts it on her head (86). A few seconds later, she touches the cuts on

Dodge's head. The cuts symbolize the wounds left over by the loss. Once she has touched the wounds of the family, her fate is irrevocably woven in this place. Shelly wanted to escape when they first arrived at the house. Yet, later she seems willing to stay and find out what has really happened to the household. Shelly is the second analyst after Vince: she is willing to face what she fears so as to seek the truth. Seeing that Tilden is more liable to speak, she deals with him. Tilden, like Dodge, does not recognize Vince. Shelly is truly puzzed, "This is supposed to be your son! Is he your son? Do you recognize him! I'm just along for the ride here. I thought everybody knew each other!" (92). Tilden immediately replies, "I had a son but we buried him" (92). Everybody on the stage looks at one another. This is a great shock. Shelly's interrogations trigger Tilden's memory. Though not explicitly, Tilden reveals the secret first in this statement. Dodge interrupts Tilden's speech and commands him to stop talking.

Vince, Dodge, Tilden and Shelly are all on the stage. Tilden brings an armful of carrots and dumps them into Shelly's arms. Shelly comes closer to the members of the household. Tilden is obssesed with the vegetable not as a palliative to the pain of the loss of the child but as a means of foregrounding the loss. Tilden wants the truth to be spoken openly. In Act One, while he is peeling the corn husks, he chews tobacco but constantly bites off a plug of it (70). Obviously, Tilden refuses to incorporate the loss, since incorporation equals the rejection of healing. Healing lies in the working- through of the trauma of the repressed child. Shelly, the analyst, waits for things to take their

course, expecting Tilden to become conversant on the topic of the secret of the child.

Tilden: (*to Shelly*) Back yard's full of carrots. Corn. Potatoes.

Shelly: You're Vince's father, right?

Tilden: All kinds of vegetables. You like vegetables?

Shelly: (*laughs*) Yeah. I love vegetables.

Tilden: We could cook these carrots ya' know. You could cut 'em up and we could cook them.

Shelly: All right.

Tilden: I'll get you a pail and knife.

Shelly: Okay (93).

Shelly strikes up a friendship with Tilden. Between Tilden and Shelly, there grows a transference of feelings that make Tilden feel more comfortable. Tilden compulsively associates the vegetables with the loss. He takes care of them very well as if each of them were his child. They are the masked forms of the buried child, and help Tilden act his attachment to the child out by transferring the intensity of his feelings on to Shelly. Shelly too handles the carrots with great care and obeys Tilden's requests. Tilden brings the knife and Shelly cuts and cooks carrots. Shelly's analysis progresses after Vince

leaves the stage. Tilden and Shelly begin to talk about Vince. Shelly asks him whether he was really unable to recognize him. Tilden says that he thinks he has recognized Vince, but he is not sure where he last saw him. Shelly eases Tilden's remembering by asking questions gently so that he can easily speak out the repressed materials.

Tilden keeps the story of the child in his mind, yet he is afraid of telling it. He asks Shelly, "What does he tell you?" (100). He wants to learn if Vince knows about the buried child and has told Shelly. In the meantime, Dodge interrupts frequently and tells Tilden to make him some coffee. Dodge also feels that Tilden may divulge the secret. But Tilden and Shelly go on. Shelly gently encourages Tilden to talk:

> Tilden: You mean you can't *tell* me anything?
>
> Shelly: I can tell you some things. I mean *we can have a conversation*.
>
> Tilden: We can?
>
> Shelly: Sure? We're *having a conversation right now*.
>
> Tilden: We are?
>
> Shelly: Yes. That's what we're doing.
>
> Tilden: But there's certain things you can't *tell* me, right?

Shelly: Right.

Tilden: There's certain things I can't *tell* you either.

Shelly: How come?

Tilden: I don't know. Nobody's *supposed to hear* it.

Shelly: Well, you can *tell* me anything you want to.

Tilden: I can?

Shelly: Sure.

Tilden: It might not be very *nice*.

Shelly: That's all right. I've been around.

Tilden: It might be *awful*.

Shelly: Well, can't you tell me anything nice? (101) [italics mine].

There is a very intimate conversation taking place between Shelly and Tilden. Shelly is very successful in gaining Tilden's confidence by empathizing with his feelings. As for Tilden, he is transferring his emotions to Shelly in a way that includes Shelly in the same experience. Tilden wants to touch Shelly's coat to confide more in Shelly. Shelly's coat stands for the only obstacle to the truth. Perceptive enough to see Tilden's need to come closer, Shelly lets him touch her fur coat. Tilden is on the verge of working through the repressed memory of the child. First, he remembers Vince as an uncanny "face inside his

face" (100). And the repressed returns gradually. Tilden wanders around the stage, wearing Shelly's fur coat and stroking it as if it were a living creature. Tilden's care for the fur coat foreshadows his intimacy and parental affection towards the stiff body of the buried child at the end of the play. Tilden just fears that Shelly will take her coat back when he tells the truth. The fur coat is like the dead child to Tilden. Tilden wants to preserve it. Shelly promises not to take the coat back. The long awaited remembering takes place when Tilden reveals, "We had a baby. (*motioning to Dodge*) He did. Dodge did. Could pick it up with one hand. Put it in the other. Little baby. Dodge killed it. … Never told Halie. Never told anybody. Just drowned it" (103). Shelly is shocked. Dodge overhears his words and shouts at Tilden to shut up. The repressed is remembered, spoken out and worked through. As for the repressed in Dodge, it still resists in its somatic avowals. Dodge begins to cough again and is still covered under his blanket. Having revealed the truth, Tilden takes off the coat. He has now completely relieved and therefore no longer needs the coat.

Bradley appears on the stage. Shelly sits on the stool trembling, affected by the collossal truth. It is not so easy for her to face such a secret. What is worse for Shelly is Bradley's arrival. Bradley's fierce look and his squeaking leg freeze her to death. His questions as to who Shelly is and why she is there in their house intimidate her all the more. He humiliates Tilden, saying that he used to be "an All American" but now is a good-for-nothing. Bradley's prosthesis is inseparably linked to the past. It is the materialization of the deformation of the wounds inflicted on the family in the past. He draws

attention to loss by alluding to the drowning of the buried child when he suggests that they could drown and even shoot Dodge. Bradley's antagonistic reactions lie in his disowning the fact of infanticide. Bradley wants to retaliate by drowning Dodge as he drowned the buried child. As Halie states in the first act, Bradley is obsessed with order in the house. At the end of Act Two, it turns out that Bradley's method to bring order is to return like for like. He says, "Everything's turned around now. Full circle" (106). He is fierce and full of vengeance for the perceived wrong. Further, Bradley does not want the secret to come out. His desire for orderliness stems from a need to keep the secret covered. Shelly is a violation to the order because she is an outsider and may stumble across the hidden truth. However, Bradley himself is slightly conversant with the truth when he alludes to the drowning of the child. The audience knows this fact while Bradley remains unaware of the incongruity in his own words.

Bradley's need for privacy concerning family secrets is objectified in the penetration of his fingers into Shelly's mouth. He forces Shelly to open up her mouth and keeps his fingers in her mouth for a while. This is a rape and a desire to shut up Shelly's mouth so that she will be offended and will not speak again. Still, this is a symptomatic reaction to a potential threat from the outsider. Dodge's somatic coughs are now represented metonymically through Bradley's fingers in Shelly's mouth. Like Dodge's coughs, this is again an inarticulate form of expression of the trauma. This violation unexpectedly makes Shelly feel more at home. She has the uncanny feeling that "nobody

lives here but me. I mean everybody's gone. You're here, but it doesn't seem like you're supposed to be. (*pointing to Bradley*) Doesn't seem like he's supposed to be here either. I don't know what it is. It's the house or something. Something familiar. Like I know my way around here. Did you ever get that feeling?" (110). Shelly uncannily feels that she belongs to the house even as the members of the household have evaporated. After his intentional penetration of his fingers, Bradley's hygienic tendency at home is violated too. Whereas his obsession with order and hygiene can be read as a reaction to the inappropriate sexual relation between Halie and Tilden that has contaminated the house and spoiled its order, now he himself contaminates it with his rape. Bradley can be thought of as an enemy of the truth. Like Halie, he is concerned with the maintenance of the facade of the truth, especially when he is angered by Shelly's detective-like interrogation in Act Three, "Nothing's wrong here! Nothing's ever been wrong! Everything's the way it's supposed to be! Nothing ever happened that's bad! Everything's all right here! We're all good people!" (122).

As Lynda Hart claims, there is a voice "particularly suited to spiritual rebirth" (1987 11) in most of Shepard's plays. This inclination is manifest in the feeling of relief that pervades the scene with the emergence of the truth in the second act. At the opening of Act Three, the stage is cleared up. There are no husks or carrots left on the stage. Now that the truth is out, the rain has fulfilled its task and stopped. The sun is out now. The sound of birds is heard. Bradley is seen asleep on the sofa under Dodge's blanket. He has taken Dodge's place without

his permission. Bradley's prosthetic leg, separate from his body, stands against the sofa with the shoe left on it. What is certain is that he will not be able to walk without the leg just as the family cannot go on without admitting and seeking reparation for the loss of the child. Dodge is now on the floor. Shelly's fur coat covers him. The fur and the leg attract the eye more than ever after Tilden's confession concerning the buried child. Every missing element now is indicative of the loss.

Shelly feels more relaxed after her talk with Tilden. She knows everything that has caused the restlessness in the house. Thanks to this knowledge, which she has attained even before Vince, Shelly feels more at home. Shelly perceives Dodge's uneasiness clearly now, and thinks that she should get Dodge to speak out the truth like a detective who is seeking to illuminate the darkness. She says, "I'm glad it stopped raining", and Dodge replies, "See, you're glad it stopped raining. Now you think everything is gonna be different. Just 'cause the sun comes out" (110). For Shelly, the sun refers to relief from the burden of the secret. She adds, "It's already different" (110).

The detachment of the prosthetic leg from Bradley's body is another cause of Shelly's relief. Dodge tells Shelly that Bradley is helpless as long as he is detached from his artificial leg and that all Shelly has to do is to "take his leg and throw out back door" (110). Shelly thinks that this is a terrible thing for a father to think in relation to his own son. Dodge says, "There's nothing a man

can't do. You dream it up and he can do it. Anything." (110). This reply horrifies Shelly, but it is the response for which Shelly is in fact waiting in order to verify Tilden's confession. This response starts the process of transference that leads to the working through of the trauma of the repressed child in Dodge's psyche. That Dodge has made a statement like "one can do anything one imagines" is the first step Shelly has taken forward in her analysis. The second step concerns Halie's room with all the pictures from the past:

> Shelly: That room up there with all the pictures. All the crosses on the wall.
>
> Dodge: Halie's room.
>
> Shelly: Yeah. Whoever "Halie" is.
>
> Dodge: She's my wife.
>
> Shelly: So you remember her?
>
> Dodge: What d'ya mean! 'Course I remember her! She's only been gone for a day – half a day. However long it's been.
>
> Shelly: Do you remember her when her hair was bright red? Standing in front of an apple tree?
>
> Dodge: What is this, the third degree or something! Who're you to be askin' me personal questions about my wife!

Shelly: You never look at those pictures up there?

Dodge: What pictures?

Shelly: Your whole life is up there hanging on the wall. Somebody who looks just like you used to look.

Dodge: That isn't me! That never was me! This is me. Right here. This is it. The whole shootin' match, sittin' right in front of you.

Shelly: So the past never happened as far as you're concerned?

Dodge: The past? Jesus Christ. The past. What do you know about the past? (111).

Shelly offers Dodge snapshots from the past and tries to reactivate his memory. Dodge remembers the past but rejects those parts he does not wish to remember. What is at stake is the issue of remembering, since it will bring about a possible renewal. As they speak, Dodge will become more conversant with the repressed child, and it will slowly come to light. Dodge asks for Shelly's coat and later his blanket. The blanket and now Shelly's coat are the objects Dodge needs most so as to supplant the loss. Shelly, on the other hand, is trying to break up the resistance. She refers to the baby in the pictures and a woman who is holding the baby and "looking down at the baby like it was somebody else's. Like it didn't even belong to her" (111). Dodge is furious, but Shelly asks the crucial question: "What's happened to this family anyway?... Was Tilden telling the truth?" (112). The more Dodge faces some

fragments of the truth, the more the resistance of the repressed material is overcome. He hysterically asks questions about where Tilden is. He feels destitute in response to Shelly's question, and when Halie and Father Dewis enter the stage, he does not want Shelly to leave him alone. Halie is also disturbed by the state of the home: she apologizes to the priest for the disorder of the household. Her need to cover over the unwanted truth the family shares is materialized in her whipping the blanket Dodge wants off Bradley and throwing it on Dodge. Secondly, when she returns, she brings a bunch of yellow roses and says, "They almost cover the stench of sin in this house"(116). On the one hand, she is sure that Bradley will keep the secret as she does. On the other hand, she wants to secure the secret by means of covering Dodge with the blanket. Halie knows for certain that Dodge will retreat to his cocoon and will not succumb to a threat to the secret. Halie, like Bradley and Dodge, tries to cover over the wounds Shelly intends to open up.

Shelly's sleuthing eases up when Halie does not remember Vince and Bradley says that she is no longer welcome in the house. Shelly blurts out the fact that the family has a secret and that they are "all convinced that it never happened" (122). All of Shelly's words touch so nearly on the repressed material that Dodge at last yields to her provocations:

> She thinks she's going to get it out of us. She thinks she's going to uncover the truth of the matter. Like a detective or something. ...

> She wants to get to the bottom of it. (*to Shelly*) That's it, isn't it? You'd like to get right down to bedrock? You want me to tell ya'? You want me to tell ya' what happened? I'll tell ya'. I might as well. … I remember the whole thing from start to finish. I remember the day he was born (122).

Despite Halie and Bradley's warnings, Dodge is no longer determined to lead a life of secrecy. He announces to everybody that they had a very beautiful life on their farm in the past and that Halie got pregnant out of blue though they had stopped sleeping in the same bed for a long time. Halie and Bradley are deeply infuriated at Dodge's declaration. Halie wants to go upstairs but stays on the stairs. Bradley threatens Dodge, saying that if he had his prosthetic leg, he would not be saying all these things. The ironic point is that it is Shelly who takes Bradley's prosthesis away from him. Shelly clears the obstacles on the way to a complete working-through and performs her role as a detective excellently. Dodge's working-through of the trauma of the repressed child continues as he tells more of the details:

> Halie had this kid. This baby boy. She had it. I let her have it on her own. All the other boys I had had the best doctors, best nurses, everything. This one I let her have by herself. This one hurt really bad. Almost killed her, but she had it anyway. It lived, see. It lived. It wanted to grow up in this family. It wanted to be just like us. It

> wanted to be a part of us. It wanted to pretend that I was its father. She wanted me to believe in it. Even when everyone around us knew. Everyone. All our boys knew. Tilden knew. … Tilden was the one who knew. Better than any of us. He'd walk for miles with that kid in his arms. Halie let him take it. All night sometimes. He'd walk all night out there in the pasture with it. Talkin' to it. Singin' to it. … We couldn' let a thing like that continue. We couldn't allow that to grow up right in the middle of our lives. It made everything we'd accomplished look like it was nothin'. Everything was cancelled out by this one mistake. This one weakness. … I killed it. I drowned it. Just like the runt of a litter. Just drowned it (124).

This baby was a colossal wound. It hurt everybody in the house. It is denied and killed, but the painful memory it has left remains the same. Dodge says he killed the baby because it could not be a part of the family. The fact that it was Tilden's son has destroyed the family and has made Dodge an enemy to Tilden. Yet, it has also rendered the buried child more intimate to Dodge as a way of recovering his sons and as a substitute for them. Dodge pronounces every single thing that has repressed the buried child. Now everything is clearly spoken and the repressed has truly returned. This revelation is reinforced by Vince's return, which can be regarded as the metaphoric return of the child. Vince's timing is perfect in this respect. Vince returns home, having realized that he is inseparably connected to something larger than he could ever imagine:

> I was gonna run last night. I was gonna run and keep right on running. I drove all night. Clear to the Iowa border. The old man's two bucks sitting right on the seat beside me. It never stopped raining the whole time. Never stopped once. I could see myself in the windshield. My face. My eyes. 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 same breath. In the windshield, I watched him breathe as though he was frozen in time. And every breath marked him. Marked him forever without him knowing. And then his face changed. His face become 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. Changing. Clear on back to faces I'd never seen before but still recognized. Still recognized the bones underneath. The eyes. The breath. The mouth. I followed my family clear into Iowa. Every last one. Straight into the Corn Belt and further. Straight back as far as they'd take me. Then it all dissolved. Everything dissolved (130).

Vince's experience of running is an uncanny one: recognizing faces that change into other faces. This experience serves as an epiphany which reminds him of his ancestral line and his roots as he sees himself in the windshield.

The windshield uncannily reflects the faces of his grandfather and his great grandfather. Seeing them in the windshield leads Vince to the dissolution of the knots in his mind. Vince has transformed a lot. This transformation has taken place offstage, but nevertheless it has been accompanied by the rain and its purifying power. The rain has purified the infanticide that has become the guilt of ancestry. Everything is finally solved and dissolved. Dodge makes his last will and testament. As the youngest member of the family, Vince inherits the family house. After his speech, Dodge passes away unnoticed on the stage. Vince covers Dodge's body with the blanket and sits on the sofa Dodge has been sitting on for most of the play.

The secret that has been walled in the house has been acted out and worked through in the behaviour and speech of the characters. All necessary speech has been delivered by Dodge and Vince. The transference and working-through have served as elements that bring emotional cleansing and purification both for the characters and for the audience. Like a clinical patient who is relieved of the emotional burden after having undergone a process of transference and working-through, the characters on the stage and the audience in their seats are purged of all kinds of unpleasant emotions. As discussed in the Introduction, the consequence of such liberation from uneasiness brings with itself a restoration and revitalization. In this respect, the remaining parts of the play, beginning from Act Two up to the end of Act Three, provide a catharsis-like reconciliation with the repressed as it is resonant with ritual-like repetitions of the repressed in the characters'

mouths, and a prospective renewal as a consequence of the revelation of the enigma of the buried child.

Leslie A. Wade suggests that "*Buried Child* is at its core a play of reunion" (100). Vince's taking the place of his grandfather draws a full circle and offers a hope for renewal. Shelly leaves the stage shaken and puzzled after she has accomplished her duty as an analyst. She has enlightened the repressed patiently through the questions that she thinks will unearth the secret of the buried child. Dodge is buried for the final time by Vince. Halie goes upstairs where she feels comfortable. She talks about the corn, carrots, potatoes and peas she sees in the backyard. She says that it is "a miracle" and that the farm is now so fertile just because of the rain. While she is uttering words of joy, Tilden brings in the corpse of the buried child. He is covered in mud and stares down at the stiff body. The buried child is literally unburied now. Halie keeps on talking to Dodge as if he were still alive:

> Good hard rain. Takes everything straight down to the roots. The rest takes care of itself. You can't force a thing to grow. You can't interfere with it. It's all hidden. It's all unseen. You just gotta wait til it pops up out of the ground. Tiny little shoot. Tiny little white shoot. All hairy and fragile. Strong though. Strong enough to break the earth even. It's a miracle, Dodge. I've never seen a crop like this

> in my whole life. Maybe it's the sun. Maybe that's it. Maybe it's the sun (132).

The sun is now out. So is the son, which was drowned and buried years ago. The pun between the words sun and son symbolizes rebirth. Tilden takes the child upstairs, to his mother. As Wade maintains the revelation of the child is "an image of hope and redemption" (102).

2. The Doubling and the Dividing of the Self: True West

> Any move is possible. I've seen it. You go outside. The world's quiet. White. Everything resounding. Not a sound of a motor. Not a light. You see into the house. You see the candles. You watch the people. You can see what it's like inside. The candles draw you. You get a cold feeling being outside. Separated. You have an idea that being inside it's cosier. Friendlier. Warmth. People. Conversation. Everyone using a language. Then you go inside. It's a shock. It's not like how you expected. You lose what you had outside. You forget that there even is an outside. The inside is all you know. You hunt for a way of being with everyone. A way of finding how to behave. You find out what's expected of you. You act yourself out.
>
> Shepard, *Action*

Buried Child portrays the loss in a family, a loss that has left a void of intimacy and love, and loosened the family bonds. The absence for which Dodge is trying hard to compensate is the void of the loss of the child. Still, it

also refers in a more general sense to lost innocence as Dodge himself expresses it near the end of the play:

> See, we were a well established family once. Well established. All the boys were grown. The farm was producing enough milk to fill Lake Michigan twice over. Me and Halie were pointed toward what looked like the middle part of our life. Everything was settled with us. All we had to do was ride it out. Then Halie got pregnant again. Outa' the middle a' nowhere, she got pregnant. We weren't planning on having any more boys. We had enough boys already. In fact, we hadn't been sleepin' in the same bed for about six years (123).

Dodge's speech evokes a portrait of an Eden, out of which innocence has been cast. It is like a story of a fall from grace: the fertility of the land and the productivity of animals have come to an end. Tilden, the All-American, has been exiled to New Mexico where he has been punished for the infamy he has committed. He was once the American Adam, the first man, once pure and untainted but later expelled from Paradise due to his crime. The religious overtones of the idea of being exiled are reflected in this family like a curse brooding over the house. The curse has taken away the most beloved son Ansel for no clear reason at all. It is as if Ansel's death were the price the family has had to pay for the incest and the infanticide of the buried child. All

members of this family are equally influenced by these crimes, and noone is exempt from the consequences. Nonetheless, as stated earlier, Shepard presents signs of recovery through the awakening of the land and productivity. This rejuvenation, represented by the return of the corn, carrots, and potatoes, points to the American mythology of the loss of Eden and the hope of regaining it. This is a cycle that promises to re-establish the pure, untrodden lands of Eden out of the fragments of loss. Historically speaking, this mode of thought is in fact a legacy handed down by the Puritan fathers of the American nation, and maintained and revised over the intervening centuries.

Dodge's words are descriptive of the myth of a pure America maintained since the first perceptions of America as the New World by European settlers. Following the break Henry the VIII caused with the Roman Catholic Church in sixteenth-century England and the establishment of the Church of England, Protestanism began to gain ground in England. As a result of religious conflict and persecution, several religious groups searched for a new life in what they called the "New World". Rumors of the "New World's plenty" depicted by Captain John Smith in his *A Description of A New England* persuaded the English reader that there was a hope of becoming "reborn" Christians (Gottesman et al. 1). Some of those who could afford the voyage across the Atlantic ocean left their home for a promised land of freedom where they felt they would be able to preach and practise their religion freely. These people, Pilgrims and Puritans, were the founders of a national myth concerning the

New World. Established in the New England, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was the first colony founded by Puritans.

Prior to the arrival of the new settlers from Europe, America was formerly seen as the land of barbarians. Nature portrayed as benign by the new settlers was not formerly viewed so, as Michel de Montaigne reveals in his essay "Of Cannibals" (1580). The narrator indicates the disparity between the facts and the misconception about the natives of the land. On the one hand, the indigenous society of America was condemned by the Europeans, for they were seen as savage people. On the other hand, as Montaigne professed, "there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting, that every one gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in his own country" (1580 72). But the question lying beneath this incongruity becomes evident in these statements of Montaigne's:

> We ought rather to call those wild, whose natures we have changed by our artifice, and diverted from the common order. In those, the genuine, most useful and natural virtues and properties are vigorous and sprightly, which we have helped to degenerate in these, by accommodating them to the pleasure of our own corrupted palate" (72).

America, for Montaigne, encapsulates the sharp opposition between the savage and the civilized. He thinks that what is perceived as savagery is the opposite of European artifice and degeneration. According to Montaigne's argument, the savage is the pristine, and therefore it is good. It is moreover possible to assert that this essay written as late as 1580 might have fueled Europeans' admiration of and search for purity in the New World.

The search for a new land of promise was motivated by the Puritan wish for salvation. Puritanism, a strict and authoritarian sect, followed the teachings of Calvinism. The Puritans believed in man's complete depravity because of the original sin in the face of the absolute sovereignty of God, and they recognized the supreme authority of the Bible. Just as Adam and Eve were expelled from the Heaven, after having experienced the original sin, so the Puritans felt they too had been driven out of their homes in England. Now on a new soil, they pursued salvation, the eternal hope of regaining the grace of God within an earthly paradise. The vision of this religious sect for the New World was a harmonious Christian community which would be ruled by the principles of Christianity. John Winthrop, who came to be the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, wrote a sermon entitled "A Model of Christian Charity" in 1630. In this sermon, Winthrop described the purposes of settlement according to the Scripture. He declares, "Now if the Lord shall please to heare us, and bring us in peace to the place wee desire, then hath hee ratified this Covenant and sealed our Commission, [and] will expect a strict performance of the Articles contained in it" (1630 45). According to

Winthrop, those who neglect this opportunity and fail to practise the Articles, and those who "shall fall to embrace this present world" and shall fail to live in harmony in the communities will pay the price for disobeyance (46). As is apparent in this sermon, there was always a threat of punishment and fall from grace inherent in the Puritan belief. This was, at bottom, a warning against any potential threat of expulsion from the promised land. If they succeeded in living up to the demands of the Covenant, says Winthrop, the place where they lived would be "a City upon a Hill" (47). The implication is the anticipation of paradise in the air of the new garden.

The perception of America as the New World metaphorically denotes the search for newness and a vision of innocence. As Samuel Purchas describes it in *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas's Pilgrims* (1625), it is the "virgin" land, and deserves "the wooing and loves of the best Husband" (65). Calling the land the New World marks the strong sense of a quest for innocence and the break from the Old World and its sins. The optimistic comparison of the New World to an earthly paradise was best expressed in "Letters from an American Farmer" in 1782 by Jean de Crèvecoeur, who was a French immigrant first to New France and then to New York. Crèvecoeur reworks the idea of an earthly paradise according to the values of the Enlightenment and a nascent nationalism. Crèvecoeur offers observations on how America provides a remedy for the misfortunes of the Old World. The narrator, James the farmer, in Crèvecoeur's letters recounts his opinions of the natural beauties and

perfections of his new homeland as an insider rather than a European newcomer. He describes the pleasures with which nature has endowed them:

> My farm, my house, my barn, presented to my imagination objects from which I adduced quite new ideas... . I felt myself happy in my new situation, and where is that station which can confer a more substantial system of felicity than that of the American farmer, possessing freedom of action, freedom of thoughts... (93).

In Letter III, Crèvecoeur raises the question "What is an American?" and maintains: "The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labour, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence" (95). The American is the "new race of men" born of "all nations" "melted into" one pot (95). The point to be emphasized is, however, the fact that it is nature or specifically American nature that brings to life the new man. Crèvecoeur portrays America as a land which gives the American "bread, protection and consequence: Ubi panis ibi patria, is the motto of all emigrants" (97). This motto means "where there is bread, there is my country" and refers to people in desperate economic conditions who flee their homeland in search of a better life in the New World. Crèvecoeur depicts the American character, the American farmer as a skilled, hard-working individual, blissful in his family

and home. Hence, Crèvecoeur defines the identity of the new man on the American soil, celebrating the amplitude and the fertility of the land that Shepard deals with in *Buried Child* through the symbolism of the dead backyard and the unexpected fantastic growth of corn and renewal of hope in the same yard, images of which return in *True West* and *Curse of the Class,* too.

Blended with the geographical facts and natural features of North America, the foundation of the American nation commenced in the light of a mythic vision. However, this mythical understanding of America has not been a fixed, immutable entity. National ideas of the American nation introduced by romantic writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson in the nineteenth century challenged the religious ideas that motivated the early settlers. American nature was reviewed from a deistic and humanistic point of view as opposed to conventional religious teachings. Emerson, the founder of American Transcendentalism, and who provided a powerful argument for the formation of a national literature, construes nature as a cure for individual and social ills. And religion, for Emerson, was based on an intuitive belief in an ultimate unity, which he called "over-soul". Though the optimistic approaches to nature are replete in nineteenth-century literature, there have been social and economic cracks within the idealized and unspoiled image of America. American society has shown a great inclination towards materialism, which in turn has attracted the harsh criticism of Romantic and Transcendentalist poets and philosophers. The myth of purity is undermined when the idea of a

supposed spiritual purity is contaminated by social and economic changes in society. Innocence, as Lewis asserts, has replaced sinfulness as the attribute of the American character (28). Emerson criticized the inequalities caused by the unbalanced economy, and praised the beauties of nature as opposed to the city life that corrupts the vision of an innocent America.

As the centuries progressed, the myth of America has been constantly reworked by its authors. This reworking of a myth that aims to characterize a nation has encapsulated in itself an oscillation between an ideological emphasis on the good and bad sides of the national qualities and social development of America. The idyllic quality of American nature and land in the eyes of the early European settlers and later romantic writers has been negated by the booming capitalist and consumerist society in the cities beginning from early nineteenth century. Jay Martin, an American scholar, argues, "From a country that was essentially still agrarian in 1865 and, indeed, still contained large unsettled areas, America became, by 1914, bound to cities and city needs. By the time of the First World War, only about 30 percent of Americans were involved in agriculture ..." (1967 4). The tendency to materialism has created a parade of wealth in cities of America; the city came to accommodate "new aspirations and new ways of satisfying them" and turned into an embodiment of "evil" in America, where, Martin maintains, "man, in the tradition of Jefferson, Emerson, and Whitman, conceived of American destiny in terms of the regenerative frontier ..." (3-4). Changes brought about by capitalism and consumerism in the cities have been seen as

causing chaos and decay, connected inturn with the idea of a new loss of grace.

Emerson's perception of pure American nature clashes with the rapidly rising materialist society in the cities, and this clash indicates a return to the Fall which the Puritan fathers struggled to leave behind by adopting America as their new, unsullied homeland. The Fall from purity is repeated this time with the rise of a society greedy for consumption and material wealth. Emerson was the most passionate advocate of the pure good old natural America, and condemned the chaotic, complicated city life, believing that it corrupts the natural graces of America and Americans. This change from the pure, harmonious society to a corrupt social structure damaged the image of America as an earthly paradise as well as suggesting that innocence is vulnerable and may at any moment beget corruption. The recognition and critique of all these forms of social and economic deterioration and modernity have led to the transformation of the vision of a national promise from a pure land to a land housing a machine of consumerism which is fundamentally another form of Fall, not unlike the Puritan fathers' Fall from grace.

Thus, America has possessed a continually reinvented myth through the course of its history. This myth was primarily established on the purity of the land and has been made a source of national hope. It was an attempt to see the American character as unique and to constitute a national identity over

time. An emphasis was placed on a national promise, the content of which has later shifted on the opposition between the simple, pure new land and the growing waves of materialism. Wherever the emphasis falls, the significance of this national myth lies in its inherent quality of change.

In the twentieth century, Shepard's version of the myth can be observed in his specific stress on the West as the last resort of the American myth. It is helpful to consider the myth of the West in the light of the arguments made by the distinguished nineteenth-century American historian Frederick Jackson Turner. Turner is well-known for his theory on the American frontier ideal and the consequences brought about by the expectations placed on it. Turner associates American development with the colonization of the Great West and the vast free lands it offers (1). He explains that American institutions and constitutional modifications have been shaped by

> the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life. ... Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This

> perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion to the westward with its new opportunities, its continous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating the American character (2,3).

The idea of the frontier makes the West into a kind of ideal ego for the East. It came to be seen as the "outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Tucker 3). Beginning from the seventeenth century, the early settlers were fascinated with the West as the door endlessly opening to freedom and as a fertile land promising abundance and investigation. The geographical features of America have embodied a collective fantasy of a developing nation. Though westward expansion was the overruling desire of the European settlers, the split the frontier has created remained a dividing line between the East and the West. It was the civilized European who wanted to civilize the primitive West while the Native Americans declined being transformed into what the civilized man called the refined urbanities. Futhermore, a division or a contradiction between being settled and being mobile westward lies at the heart of this collective fantasy created of the West and the frontier. The West as the great destination for national progress and growth thus emerged both as an idea and a geographic fact, or a blend of national fantasy with physical reality.

True West, like *Buried Child,* is another family play by Shepard. *Buried Child* represents the consequences of loss on the individual level. In *Buried Child,* the dream of harmonious family life is the dream lying behind Dodge's longing for a heaven-like home. The missing child has caused the fall from heaven and brought with itself the maladjusted, pathologic family members. In *True West,* too, there is an individual loss which can be viewed through a wider perspective of the nostalgia for a lost America. It is in essence individual due to the absence of the father and the mother. The mother and the father in the play are separated. A unity in the family is absent. On the whole, the lack of harmony and intimacy among the family members, like in *Buried Child*, creates problems for the family. The missing father functions as the source of unhappiness for the two brothers, who can be understood as melancholic as a result of their father's loss. Like in *Buried Child,* the restored family becomes a fantasy in *True West* too. In *True West*, fantasies about home are at the same time fantasies about the American nation and its loss. In terms of nationhood, what has been lost is the mythic American West, a collective fantasy composed of collective myths, the loss of which may produce collective traumas.

From the Freudian perspective, melancholia, as a response to the loss of someone dear, may also be produced as a reaction to the loss of some abstract concepts like "one's own country, liberty, an ideal, and so on" (252). This means that dispossession of an ideal may plainly be the cause of melancholia. In *True West*, the abstract loss of America as a nation and the values

attributed to it since the early European settlers is strongly felt by the characters and is embedded in the background of the play. But, this loss is foregrounded particularly by dint of the absence of the father. As Martin Tucker remarks, the father is "the apex of the triad of the West, with the two sons, or two sides of the son, at each angle of the triangle" (140). These two sides of the triangle start and reinforce the dramatic action. *True West* is the tale of two brothers. Lee is a vagabond and a thief about forty who has an inordinately high opinion of himself. He speaks like a stereotypical Westerner in his ragged and dirty clothes. He is unshaven, and looks wild and primitive. He says he has spent the last three months in the California desert, and in fact has gone to the desert to see his father who lives there. By contrast, Austin is a successful writer in the film industry and has a settled family with a wife and two children in Los Angeles. Because his mother is on vacation in Alaska, Austin has come to the family home upon his mother's request to take care of the house and water her plants.

Though the two brothers seem quite the opposite of each other, their yearning for their father is the common feeling that binds them together. The father is the agent that helps the opposition between the brothers disappear into an uncanny double identity as the play progresses. In line with Tucker's argument, the father stands at the apex of a triangle, surrounded by the feeling of loss that causes the production of melancholia on the part of the sons. No more than a page after the start of the play, Austin asks Lee, "So, you went out to see the old man, huh? (6). Lee says that he has seen the old man

in the desert and that he has told him a lot about Austin. When Austin points out that he too has once gone to the desert to see him, Lee shouts, "What d' ya' want, an award? You want some kinda' medal?" and initiates the rivalry between them. The desert is the place where the longing for the father is materialized simply because the father lives there. The two brother's tender melancholia for their father situates the father's place at the center of their lives. Even when they say to each other that they have seen their father on the desert, they compete for the sympathy of their father. The father and the struggle to achieve his favor is what characterizes the psychology of melancholia of Lee and Austin. Just like the West of America, which is as fascinating as distant to the easterner, the father, as Freud explains in his "The Ego and The Id" (1923), is the ego ideal or the super ego that orders the ego: "You ought to be like this (like your father)" (30). The frontier man's ideal of reaching the West and becoming a resident, recovering and being regenerated by its beauty is similar to Lee and Austin's desire to be loved and accepted by their father. Freud maintains that "the super-ego retains the character of the father" (30). Therefore, the father is the ideal to be reached at the expense of the ego that bewails the loss of this ideal.

The desert is at the same time the place where Lee has spent a couple of months. Lee's carefree life in the desert, without the restrictions of the moral codes of the modern city life, makes him an outcast just like his father. The desert is the romanticized pristine American frontier. Lee comes from the inside of the myth of the West, and he is the one who evokes the myth of

America at the very beginning of the play when he is distracting Austin's attention from his writing. Although Austin tells Lee to help himself to whatever he likes, Lee keeps talking:

> Lee: I will. Don't worry about me. I'm not the one to worry about. I mean I can uh— (*pause*) You always work by candlelight?
>
> Austin: No—uh—Not always.
>
> Lee: Just sometimes?
>
> Austin: (*puts pen down, rubs his eyes*) Yeah. Sometimes it's soothing.
>
> Lee: Isn't that what the old guys did?
>
> Austin: What old guys?
>
> Lee: The forefathers. You know.
>
> Austin: Forefathers?
>
> Lee: Isn't that what they did. Candlelight burning into the night? Cabins in the wilderness.
>
> Austin: (*rubs hand through his hair*) I suppose (6).

Lee brings the history of the mythic west into the kitchen of his mother's home. Austin's only concern is to concentrate on his script. He has established

his own order and wants to focus on his writing. Lee's questions, however, destroy Austin's concentration. More importantly, these questions reveal the differences between the two brothers. Lee refers to the forefathers of America. He imagines them and their way of living vividly. Lee stands for what Hart calls the "rugged frontier individualist" in contrast to the "urban socialite" represented by Austin (88). Austin knows little about his forefathers. He has no sense of history. The two brothers seem as distinct as the border dividing the east and the west of America. Shepard embodies the confrontation of the east and the west in the characters Austin and Lee. Lee, as the wild and primitive loner on the deserts of the West, poses a threat to Austin's settled life. Austin is tamed and domesticated, and, for Lee, even "stuck" in the protected family home. Another interpretation of this opposition is offered by Leslie A. Wade who suggests that the rupture in the family history, namely the separation of the mother and the father, "informs the play's geographical imagery, with Austin and his mother associated with the north (Austin lives in Northern California) while Lee and the father are aligned with the South (the Mojave and the desert)" (104).

Lee is a Western figure who claims to be familiar with nature and the desert life. The desert life in the West has taught him to tell "the temperature by the number of a' pulses" (9). In Scene Eight, Austin calls Lee "the nature enthusiast", asking him whether he can "tell the time by the light in the sky" or orient himself by the stars (44). Austin is too far from the wild west to be acquainted with nature. Though he is also preoccupied with the desert

because of his father, he is more like his mother in his desire for security and disposition to a more orderly and well-balanced life. In many ways, Austin represents the idea of the fallen American, corrupted by Hollywood artificiality and modernity. He believes that the only agent that would appreciate his work is the Hollywood industry, a vicious system that corrupts the true value of a work of art by considering only its popularity on the television shows. In the world of Hollywood, art as well as the artist is commercialized. Lee cannot understand the way things work in such a world when Austin says that a film producer will come to see his work:

> Lee: He's not convinced? How come he's comin' over here if he's not convinced? I'll convince him for ya'.
>
> Austin: You don't understand the way things work down here.
>
> Lee: How do things work down here? (14).

Lee's ignorance about how things work down where Austin lives points to the question of the artistic endeavor that is undervalued and rapidly consumed in the Hollywood film industry. The myth of consumerism created by the American dream of success and material reward is juxtaposed with the myth of the innocent, agrarian, non-capitalist past of the American nation. Austin names his work "a little research", "a period piece" and "a project", but such expressions sound weird to Lee (6-13). Austin is too self-conscious to call his

film script a work of art. He wants Lee to leave him alone with the producer, Saul Kimmer, who will come over to see him at home, saying that he must convince Saul that his script is a worthwhile story. Shepard is critical of the film industry which sees artistic value only in easily consumed projects. Lee in fact provides a clear insight into the creativity of the artist as understood by movie producers like Saul Kimmer. Power and money reign over imagination and creativity. This is ironically the kind of world where a "wild" person like Lee can easily beat his rivals. Austin is too weak and not assertive enough to achieve prominence in such a pitiless industry.

The romanticized father in the desert is re-incarnated in Saul Kimmer, a typical rich, important and powerful Hollywood movie producer. Since he is perceived by the brothers as a sort of a double of the father who is unreachable, he serves as the surrogate father the brothers are fighting for. Saul is a functional character, in that through Lee and Austin's close interaction with him, he lets them expose their different characteristics as well as their sameness. Saul himself is a symbol of endless wealth and embodies the fantasy of the father as a provider and a wealthy figure. Austin does his best to make Saul like his script. Because he wants Saul to accept his script, meeting with Saul alone is very important for Austin. Austin begs Lee to leave the house for a while. Austin's wish to send Lee away during his meeting with Saul at home offends Lee. Even though Lee accuses Austin of being ashamed of him, he is cunning enough to ask for the car keys in exchange for leaving the house. Lee's agreement to leave the house suggests a desire to be like

Austin when he shows up with the television he has stolen and interrupts Austin and Saul's meeting. The dynamics of oppositions between the two brothers surprisingly reveal a tendency to be like the other. This inclination tells of the dissolution of the split in the characters of the brothers, hence foreshadowing the revelation of the similarities along the psychological boundary that founds this opposition, a revelation that takes place through role reversals of the two brothers.

Tired of Lee's interference, Austin lends him the car. Fearing that Lee may steal his car, Austin does not want to give it to him. However, Austin is forced to give Lee the car keys in order to send him away. Austin receives the positive answer he has been expecting from Saul: "I mean it's a great story. Just the story alone" (15). At this very moment, Lee enters the stage with a stolen television set and strikes up a friendship with Saul, who is greatly impressed by the fact that Lee displays the manners of a westerner. On learning that Lee lives in the desert, Saul is even more impressed by Lee's lifestyle. Lee tells Saul that he has his own "true-to-life western" stories and invites Saul to play golf. All Lee wants to do is to convince Saul of the authenticity of his story. Saul accepts Lee's offer to play golf early in the morning. Lee's ability to adapt himself to the demands of the shallow Hollywood producer shows that he steals not only Austin's car keys but also his career by having himself invited easily into the business, just as he invites himself into the houses of others. The T.V. Lee steals symbolizes Lee's taking Austin's position as he convinces Saul of the authenticity of his own western story. Not only has Lee shattered

Austin's concentration but also he has stolen Austin's chance to forge ahead in his career. Symbolically, the television box suggests Austin's hope of success as a writer in the film industry. It is the sign of Austin's prospective success as the winner of the American dream. Lee ironically remarks: "Just got Austin's color T.V. back from the shop. I can watch a little amateur boxing now" (17). Lee metaphorically steals Austin's television, which will soon lead to "a little amateur" brotherly fight. Austin loses his temper when he hears that Saul has changed his mind and wants him to type Lee's story instead of producing his own.

The T.V. is the token of the huge movie industry in Hollywood; it is the medium through which one can attain the wealth, property and fame lying at the heart of the modern American dream. Lee's theft of Austin's career displays Lee's transition from an authentic man of the desert to a Hollywood artist by adapting himself to the way things work in the Hollywood movie industry. Lee wants more than Austin's car keys. His theft is an act of aggression aimed at Austin's self-contained life as well as an attempt to be the same as his brother. In Scenes Three and Four, in which Lee pledges his western to Saul's liking, he is in fact acting out his desire to be like Austin and his need for a sense of belonging. Like Dodge in *Buried Child,* who wants to incorporate the loss narcissistically, Lee displays his need to be a part of home by stealing the tokens of home and incorporating it as a defense against the fact that he is actually homeless.

Incorporation, as performed in Lee's adoption of the T.V. as a case of libidinal investment in an object, initiates a repetition of the idea of the loss of the integrity of the household, the separation of the parents, and the loss of the home in general. Every element of his behaviour demonstrates a desire to become a part of home and to assert the fact that he is Austin's own flesh and blood. Austin is too embarrassed to introduce Lee to Saul as his elder brother since he does not want Saul to think that Austin is his brother. On the other hand, each gesture and word of Lee's reminds Austin that they are inseparably and doubly divided. The most striking example of Lee's interference with Austin's life is that he knows very well that he is not to be at home until after six o'clock but he does not obey the agreement he reaches with Austin and comes home earlier than expected. It is as though Lee has interrupted the meeting on purpose. A paradox manifests itself between Lee's smooth entrance into the movie business by casting Austin aside and the liberation of his hidden desire to be a member of home and his repressed dream of homeliness.

Before Saul comes into the kitchen, Lee admits his envy for Austin. He expresses his need for a sense of belonging and his dream of homeliness during his description of the houses he has seen around the neighbourhood of his mother's house:

> Just a sweet kinda' surburban silence. ... Like a paradise. Kinda' place that sorta' kills ya' inside. Warm yellow lights. Mexican tile all around. Copper pots hangin' over the stove. Ya' know like they got in the magazines. Blonde people movin' in and outa' the rooms, talking to each other. (*pause*) Kinda' place you wish you sorta' grew up in, ya' know (12).

Lee's words unpredictably exhibit a dissatisfaction with homelessness. The images that have captured Lee's eyes in the houses he recounts form the basis of his desire to steal Austin's livelihood. All of Lee's dreams of a warm home puzzle Austin. Lee's character is in marked contrast to the order the house stands for. Austin's question as to why Lee went out to the desert reveals once again the role of the father in Lee's life, for Lee admits that he was on his way to see the old man (12). Lee's yearning for the father has irrevocably changed the course of his life; instead of settling down in a romanticized suburban house, he has spent months crossing through the Mojave desert to see his father. Each step he has taken to reach the father has also distanced him from his own brother. Nevertheless, this account of a paradise-like home produces a few moments in which Austin and Lee become closer than they could imagine. Austin listens to Lee's observations and story attentively. Likewise, Lee frankly shares his experiences and feelings with Austin.

These moments of companionship are shattered by the rise in tension. Stephen J. Bottoms suggests that the structure of the play is characterized within "a sustained pattern of two-way confrontations, which build, crescendo-like, to peaks of violent intensity before giving way to quieter, more reflective passages, which then in turn begin to become confrontational" (1998 185). Moments of violence occur in the play with lunges aimed to threaten the other, or with the exchange of angry glances from a distance. The more the tension rises as the play progresses, the more the influence of violence is felt. The rising and falling of the tension in the course of the play, according to Kleb, exemplifies "Shepard's major structural principle—character reversal" (118). The principle of character reversal also instigates the transformation of the characters. While describing the houses nearby, Lee takes off his vulgar character and becomes friendly. The paradox Lee experiences heralds the physical and psychological war in the exchange of roles and the rise of tension. By the end of the play, Lee has dispossessed Austin of his career and taken his place as an authentic screen writer. At the end of Scene Three, after Saul exits, Austin looks at the T.V. and back to Lee. The tension rises as Lee does not give back the car keys Austin wants. Austin grows angry, but Lee smiles, feeling that he is the winner of a game. Though the scene ends in silence, Austin's anger is brought to light. He is no more a self-controlled civilized suburban, but turns out to be a person who acts on intuition like Lee.

In Scene Four, Lee surreptitiously begins to take over Austin's life. He takes on not only his brother's role as a screenwriter but also Austin's entire life. Austin is seen typing Lee's story at the table as Lee narrates his story and drinks beer. Lee is now a scriptwriter; Austin only a typist. Since he is extremely uncomfortable with the current situation, Austin's anger increases when he realizes that Lee is keeping him longer than he has expected. Lee insists that they are not writing the outline of the story, but the story itself. Austin continues typing patiently only to get the car keys back. Austin finds Lee's story absurd and unreal. Lee's story is about a man chasing another by car in what he calls the "Tornado Country" (21). The two cars run out of gas at the same time, and one of them realizes that "the guy behind him is the husband of the woman he's been – " (21). From the Texas border, the two men come to the Tornado Country, around which, according to Lee, there is nothing. Austin criticizes the credibility of Lee's story and says that things do not happen this way in real life. However, this is Lee's version of the western. Austin persists that this is a "contrived" story (22). At this moment, the tension rises again when Lee violently throws the beer can at the windows and shouts at the crickets outside for distracting his concentration. Austin wants to take a break, but Lee feels more infuriated and accuses Austin of being a parasite. This insult comes as a slap in the face to Austin. Lee's taking the job of writing seriously and his treating Austin as if Austin were the one who intrudes and takes over his life destroy Austin's sense of order and his whole life. Lee further humiliates Austin by justifying his theft:

Lee: Never mind where I'm goin'! That's got nothin' to do with you. I just gotta' get this done. *I'm not like you*. Hangin' around bein' a parasite offa' other fools. I gotta' do this thing and get out.

(*pause*)

Austin: A parasite? Me?

Lee: Yeah, you!

Austin:After you break into people's houses and take their televisions?

Lee: They don't need their televisions! I'm doing them a service.

Austin: Give me back my car keys, Lee (22) [italics mine].

Although they despise each other, Austin and Lee are each other's reflection. Lee's statement "I'm not like you" ironically manifests his desire to be a person like his brother. Lee's constant need to insert himself into the home clashes every time with Austin's sense of order. Lee ruins the order of home in his effort to integrate himself into it. The meaning of home becomes ambivalent in Lee's unwillingness to give Austin's car keys back and in the light of his fantasies about the desert in his script. For Lee, home turns out to be a means of incorporating the loss of a family. He steals the tokens of home like the television and incorporates them as elements of melancholia in order to feel that he belongs to a household. In this sense, home is a place where the fantasy of a family and the fantasy of the father is embedded. The fact that the

mother's house is a kind of sanctuary of preservation suggests that a restored family is nothing but a fantasy. His arrival at the mother's home makes Lee realize that "... the old lady was so security-minded" (10). He repeats that she has got "locks and double locks and chain locks" on her valuable objects like spoons, plates and antiques (10). Deep within, Lee laments the love displaced by the mother from her own sons to inanimate objects, which are of greater value to her than her own flesh and blood. Lee incorporates home and his fantasies about home by stealing the T.V. and Austin's career.

Lee's theft of the T.V. is the most obvious sign of his yearning for home and a family. However, the ambiguity about home, Lee's being stuck between his fantasies about home and fantasies about the desert, can be sharply observed in Lee's script, the setting of which is the West. The West in Lee's story is full of the dynamics of movement. Fantasies about the frontier are being reconstructed in Lee's "chase scene" across the Panhandle that ends up with two cars running out of gas. Cars chasing one another is Lee's rendition of the modern Hollywood adaptation of the fantasy of the cowboy on his horse. Lee mentions Austin's past wish to be a Geronimo, the leader of the Chiricahua Apache Indian Tribe, and his wish to be a cowboy. Native Americans represent on the one hand the fantasy of being settled, of being native, of being domesticated, and on the other hand of being wild. Being both Native Americans and cowboys demonstrates the conflict between permanent settlement and the mobility of the pristine West, and reflects the collective fantasies of the American frontier ideal. Fantasies devoted to the western part

of America are also indicative of a division or contradiction at the heart of the collective fantasy: being settled and the mobility the frontier offers.

This division on the level of national fantasies corresponds to the paradox Lee faces in terms of the way things work down in Hollywood. He is very passionate about the idea that he may become a scriptwriter like Austin, but he says that the first thing he will buy with the money he earns on his commercial transaction is a house. This fantasy of home is, however, a betrayal of the authentic West, for he prefers to be settled to the endless freedom of the West. Hollywood is, then, the biggest betrayal of the authentic West. What is more, Lee commodifies the desert and the fantasies about it, and tries to make money out of it. Yet, still he wants to "get the old man outa' hock…" and change his father's life as well as his own (25). Lee drags himself into the waves of wealth the American dream offers, but he realizes that this may be a failure:

> You were just tellin' me it'd change my whole life around. Why wouldn't it change his? … That's right. He's not gonna' change but I will. I'll just turn myself inside out. I could be just like you then, huh? Sittin' around dreamin' stuff up. Gettin' paid to dream. Ridin' back and forth on the freeway just dreamin' my fool head off (25).

Lee's fantasies draw a circular line. This line begins at the point where he wants the city life with a big, comfortable house and a well-paid job as a screenwriter and ends up with the inescapable destination, the desert, in which the longing for the father and the dream to reach and change him can be detected. When the issue of the father is at stake, Lee and Austin become intimate and caring. Austin shares his ideas with Lee, while Lee mildly expresses his dreams for homeliness and for wealth and his yearning for the father. Austin keeps his desire to reach the father under control for the time being. Nevertheless, Lee does the work of memory on behalf of his brother and by exposing his feelings about the father to Austin, he makes Austin remember his repressed feelings through his western about the two men as well:

> So they take off after each other straight into an endless black prairie. The sun is just comin' down and they can feel the night on their backs. What they don't know is that each one of 'em is afraid, see. Each one separately thinks that he's the one that's afraid. And they keep ridin' like that straight into the night. Not knowing. And the one who's chasin' doesn't know where the other is taking him. And the one who's being chased doesn't know where he's going (26).

Act One closes with this narrative by Lee. The two heroes of Lee's story are fictive images of Lee and Austin. Both of them feel insecure as they know each other very little. Still, this does not change the similarities that make them identical inside. What Freud calls "telepathy" in "The Uncanny", the mental communication between the self and the uncanny double, lets the brothers perceive the "knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other" (1919 234). The sentiment of resemblance is, however, undermined by the fear of the initial unfamiliarity of the same uncanny double because the other is formerly "concealed and kept out of sight" (1919 235) and long alienated through the process of repression. The two brothers' mutual apprehension of their repressed similarities emanates from the difficulties of articulating the uncanny in their double. Like Lee's fictive heroes, they are afraid of each other as the steps they take and their destination are indefinite. The one who chases is Lee. Austin is the one who is chased. They are in a game, in which the actors will change roles in Act Two. The above quoted passage is descriptive of the double identity of the characters: the two are afraid of the uncanniness they detect in each other. As they explore their uncanny parts, their talk is supposed to become therapeutic. Repetition of the repressed elements, according to Freud, initiates a treatment. Like in *Buried Child,* speech or talking is a therapeutic element that helps the characters expose the repressed in search of a solution to the restlessness at home.

Act Two dramatizes Austin's transformation and Lee's taking Austin's place, especially after Scene Seven. What causes Austin's transformation is Lee and

Saul' s meeting on the golf course. Lee tells Austin that Saul has liked his story very much and has already given him an advance, and that Saul has dropped Austin's story and will do Lee's instead. Hearing these words, Austin is outraged because this is a huge transgression made by Lee into the territories possessed by Austin. Saul wants Austin to be the typist, which means that he will be inferior to Lee. Lee's answer to Austin's question as to the reason for Saul's preference conjures up the issue of the real west. For Saul, Lee's story is "the first authentic Western to come along in a decade", "pure and simple", and it has "something about the land" (30-31-35). Saul explains that he has chosen Lee's story because he "is speaking from experience" (35). Saul seems captivated by what he perceives as the authentic in Lee's story.

The implication made by the playwright as to the essence of the West lies in Saul's descriptions of Lee's story. Martin Tucker's comparison of the father in the play to the West of America raises the question of Shepard's understanding of the true West. Leslie A. Wade maintains that Shepard has always been fascinated with the frontier, and that the title of the play itself is "drawn from a Western-oriented pulp magazine", which is, for Wade, a point that shows Shepard's alertness to the myth and symbolism of the West (105). The point Wade makes refers to the westward movement of the early settlers "first from England, then again later from the New World's eastern seaboard" (105). The myth of unreachable parts, the idea of freedom and geographical fact of infinite lands of the West has characterized and qualified the American nation as Emerson once stated, "the new yet unapproachable America I have

found in the West" (quoted in Wade 105). Shepard's employment of the West is similar to his illustration of the melancholic yearning for a lost fertile and productive farm in *Buried Child*.

Austin's reply to Saul's words materialize the line between the West and the East: "There's no such thing as the West anymore! It's a dead issue! It's dried up, Saul, and so are you" (35). If the implication is that there is no longer a true west, then the whole intention of the playwright can be said to address a sense of lost origins and even a possibility of a renewal. In the largest sense, the issue of the West addresses the loss of innocence that America as a nation suffers from in the middle of the twentieth century as a materialist and consumerist society. Images of the West, which are shown as both lost and preserved in Hollywood movies, ironically present a deteriorating nation and a need to return to the origins. As noted earlier, Shepard's drama characterizes the individual psyche as well as the social psyche mainly in national terms. In Saul's preference, Shepard illustrates the idea that the people of a nation may fall ill of melancholia. They grieve over the loss of values that have formed a sense of unity and connectedness. Such loss leaves behind a nostalgia for what is not corrupt and leads to the creation of a collective melancholia. Any loss related to the values created in the formation of a nation concerns the root of a nation. America was once a Garden of Eden to its people, with its myths and legends. It has been created, romanticized and internalized by its people, and later is corroded by consumerism and modernity beginning from the nineteenth century. The conspicuous

consumerist society has led to the creation of the alienated American self restricted within modern urban life, and erased the "freedom and adventure embodied in the myth of the American West" (Hart 88). In this context, Shepard treats America as if it had an individual psyche. This national psychic structure is not something the people of this nation are born with. It is the social experience itself that causes people to internalize a national ego. And when the national ego, which is made a part of one's self and ideals, is lost, the individual ego disappears too. Within this context, characters themselves have representative functions: to deal with Americanness while they are consciously or unconsciously talking about the traumas inside the pyscho-social processes America experiences.

Lee and Austin's diametrically opposite characteristics become more and more evident in their conversation with Saul. Lee, as the westerner, claims to know the essence of the West with all that is pristine in it. Austin, by contrast, finds Lee's story "stupid". For Austin, a love story would be in more demand than such a "dumb" story. Austin plays his cards according to the needs of modern city life. Although Austin has met with Saul to win his approval, Lee has gambled upon the contract in one golf game. Austin cannot believe Lee and asks him how he has forced Saul to produce his story. Lee says that he has simply convinced Saul. This is nothing more than Lee's aspiration to be like Austin, but also an assault on Austin's life. Lee realizes that screenwriting is Austin's defence mechanism to disavow the fact that their family has long been shattered. Austin's writing weaves a cocoon of fantasy in the family

home which promises protection and composure. Home is in itself a cocoon that embosoms the one who seeks shelter there. Lee incorporates the loss by stealing Austin's possessions and consequently robs him of all the mechanisms of defence and the stability he has established in his own world. Stealing is Lee's way of building a cocoon to shelter himself against the problems he has. In this cocoon, which is ironically the family house, he looks for a means to help his father. Lee tells Saul that their father is a destitute and thinks that he can reach and help his father by means of the money he will earn. Replacing Austin is too good an opportunity for Lee to miss. Austin acts out his anger for Lee by telling how contrived his western is and how he has forced or deceived Saul into an agreement. When Austin repeats his accusations, it is Lee who acts out his anger with a "sudden menacing lunge towards Austin, wielding a golf club above his head" (31). Later, he stops himself and lowers the golf club. Lee is courageous enough to turn the psychological war with Austin into a physical one. Austin's anger stems from Lee's theft of his whole life; Lee's from his will to preserve his new job and life.

Austin cannot accept the fact that he has been deprived of his hopes to be a scriptwriter and of his entire life. He wants the car keys to drive out to the desert. Lee has pushed Austin to reexamine his life, his place in the movie industry, and the efforts he has made in it. Austin has to admit Lee's success in the face of his own failure. Kleb's interpretation of the psychological state of "primary ontological insecurity" succinctly defines Austin's psychology: "In such a state, the individual lacks a firm, central sense of his own and other

people's reality and identity; he doubts the permanence of things, reliability and substantiality of natural processes..." (124). Kleb's is a portrayal of the "psychic state of modern (western) man—homeless, anxious, irresolute, divided", which delineates Austin's shattered identity as a result of Lee's complete incursion into his world (124). In his last effort to get back his job, he tells Saul that he is the one who is in touch with the things the people want to see on the T.V.: "I drive on the freeway everyday. I swallow the smog. I watch the news in color. I shop in the Safeway" (35). The world Austin claims to be in touch with is the world of modern life filled with "suburbs and freeways; toasters and color T.V.s" that is in direct opposition to the uncultivated, simple and pure nature of the old West (Kleb 122). Austin is so accustomed to the environment of the new modern West that deteriorating images of city life are the sole real world for him. In this respect, Austin epitomizes the modern man who has been alienated from the land in his attempt to establish a civilization apart from the purity of the undefiled land of the West. Saul's preference shows that this modern world which has become devoid of the purity of the West still needs to be in touch with the older part of itself. It is this loss of the pure part of the American nation that aggravates the split in the national pathology by triggering the source of the collective melancholia for the West. Saul, a spokesman for the nostalgia for the good old West, voices this sentiment as the need of the American people in his praise of Lee's western "ring of truth" (35). Hence, Lee's story is a piece of the frontier that symbolizes the national pathology of the eastern part of America.

The two brothers dramatize the metaphor of the West in their frequent rebellion and reconciliation. The dramatic action of the play likewise "continually rebels, breaks free, comes back to life" (Kleb 125). The existence of the two brothers is the reflection of the conflict between mobility and being situated in a specific location, between the west and the east. In this respect, considering Shepard's discussion of the double specifically in relation to *True West* sheds light on the vital role the idea of the frontier plays in the larger context of Americanness. Shepard states:

> I wanted to write a play about double nature, ... one that wouldn't be symbolic or metaphorical or any of that stuff. I just wanted to give a taste of what it feels like to be two-sided. It's a real thing, double nature. I think, we're split in a much more devastating way than psychology can ever reveal. It's not so cute. Not some little thing we can get over. It's something we've got to live with (quoted in Shewey, 133).

The split that Shepard claims exists in human psychology is represented in the different characters of Lee and Austin. This representation is indeed symbolic of the roles of the two brothers within the context of the opposition between the west and the east. The differences in their characters swap role with one another as Lee and Austin exchange roles with each other. This shift in roles and characters will reveal that the two brothers may in fact be one, a

whole whose conflicts melt in one pot. One becomes uncannily the double of the other, especially in Scene Seven. The idealized modern eastern brother replaces the primitive western brother. Austin is seen "sprawled out on the kitchen floor with whiskey bottle" and Lee is sitting at the table trying to type using only one finger (36). Concentration is now Lee's issue while Austin sings a song that distracts Lee's attention. Lee asks for help as he feels that it is too difficult to complete the script on his own. Austin teasingly tells Lee that Saul thinks that they are "the same person", "one and the same" (37). Saul's words are indicative of this incompleteness of each brother without the other. Lee begs for some advice, but Austin says he is not going to give any advice to him. Austin is in fact very angry about Lee's new role as a screenwriter, and acts out his anger in his words:

> Then do it! Yer on your own now, old buddy. You bulldogged yer way into contention. Now you gotta' carry it through. ... Oh, now you're having a little doubt huh? What happened? The pressure's on, boy. This is it. You gotta' come up with it now. You don't come up with a winner on your first time out they just cut your head off. They don't give you a second chance ya' know (40).

In the first half of the play, both of the characters express their mutual envy. But, now they have been transformed into what they have previously envied in the other. Lee has become the winner in the competition for the American

dream of success by eliminating his brother, and Austin is now a jobless failure. Each now lives the life of the other. Lynda Hart affirms that the motive for the constant opposite stances of the two brothers originates from their envy, "but their actions are held in check by fear. For each brother sees in the other a potential self that lurks within his own psychology, but both are afraid of being overtaken by this unrealized part of their character that could destroy the image that they presently hold of themselves" (1987 92). Hart's comment explores the canny side of the uncanny double: Austin and Lee know that each preserves one part of the other deep in his mind and thus behave cautiously. If, according to Hart's argument, Austin and Lee are intimidated by "the potential self" which constitutes the unspoken yet deeply felt similarities of them, then the threat posed by the "unrealized part" demands fulfillment of the anger caused by the uncanny irrepressible feeling of envy. This realization of anger has affected Lee in Act One and Austin in Act Two. But, by the time Austin loses his job, he becomes verbally and phsically violent towards Lee. Having lost all he has possessed, Austin has been transformed into an angry figure. Whenever he finds the chance in his dialogue with Lee, he emphasizes that Lee has stolen his life. When he says that this business does not give a second chance, he laments for the opportunity Lee has snatched from him.

Playing Lee's part is in itself too uncanny for Austin to tolerate. The dialectic between the uncanny and the canny for Austin and Lee is one of rivalry and intimacy. Austin says that it is the first time since Lee's arrival that he has

enjoyed Lee's company. Nevertheless, this confession is followed by Austin's humiliation of Lee and the fact that he is a thief. Austin's fury persists as he says it is time for him to try his hand at Lee's trade (37). Austin is verbally violent in the expression of his grief. He compulsively repeats how Lee has stolen his thunder and that he is a thief and gambler. Out of rage, now Austin aims to steal Lee's life. Writing was for him a "personal treasure" (38), and for this reason he attempts to outdo Lee's current superior position by stealing toasters from people's houses, which symbolizes Austin's way of stealing in turn a part of Lee's life.

The emphasis on the crucial effect of the characters' transformation can be seen in Austin's statement: "Yeah, well we all sound alike when we're sloshed. We sorta' echo each other" (39). The two brothers are now inseparable. When Lee comes up with the idea of disappearing with half of the money he will earn if Austin helps him finish the script, Austin relates the impossibility of escape with the example of the old man. The father is the unavoidable problem they keep in mind. The question of the father serves again as a mediator between his sons: Lee "sits down on the kitchen floor with Austin" and Austin narrates the story of how their father has lost his teeth one by one and how he has suffered on the Middle of Arizona Highway for eight days, hitchhiking to get to the border. The pain the father suffered is now running through the sons. This story, which Austin calls "true to life", outweighs the stories written by Austin and Lee, since it is the truest history of their family. Now there is no screenwriting or no fantasy that will defend them against the

memory of the father and the fact that the whole family has truly disintegrated. The story of the father is also the most authentic story that reminds Austin and Lee that they are brothers. During Austin's narration, they drink together. Alcohol, as in *Buried Child*, serves as a means of incorporating the loss. It is a compensation, clinging to which is nothing but an illusory cover over the beloved loss.

Lee and Austin by turns are both the analyst and the analysand in the acting out and working-through of their repressed similarities. As terms emphasizing the dichotomy between repetition and remembering, acting out and working-through offer alternative ways of reproducing the repressed memories. According to Freudian psychoanalysis, acting out occurs mostly in the acts of the subject who repeats the repressed materials without full consciousness (1914 150). Significantly, each repetition becomes compulsory and makes it impossible for the subject to escape repeating the repressed material. Eventually, repetition takes the form of remembering itself. In this play, the two brothers explore the uncanny characteristic traits in the similarities they share. First, this effort is revealed by their mutual envy for each other. Secondly, they are connected to each other by their melancholia for the loss of the father. Austin and Lee seem to be opposite characters, but they come closer when they admit that they have wondered what it is like to be the other and during their talks about the father. What remains unresolved is the melancholy for their father, who is at the center of this opposition.

Freud suggests that "forgetting is mostly restricted to dissolving thought-connections, failing to draw the right conclusions and isolating memories" (1914 149). The father is the agent that reminds the two brothers of their sameness. In their speech, each reminds the other constantly of this one single yet very significant common point they share. In the first half of the play, Lee repeats his yearning for the father without being too conscious of this yearning. He repeats it sometimes by being violent in his acts and speech and at times by talking to his brother. Austin repeats Lee's violence, anger and longing for their father with the reversal of roles after Scene Seven. Both of them unconsciously act out their anger and their longing for the father towards the end of the play. By the start of Scene Eight, both are drunk and aggressive. Lee is seen smashing the typewriter "methodically then dropping pages of his script into a burning bowl set on the floor of alcove", and Austin is seen polishing "a whole bunch of stolen toasters" (42). One sign of this aggressive tendency can be observed in the "dead and drooping" house plants as well (43). The house plants are the symbols of order and harmony. The fact that they are now dead symbolizes Austin's failure to keep his promise to his mother. Austin can no longer keep the house tidy. The more they resent each other, the more the house becomes untidy with all the empty whiskey bottles and beer cans on the floor. Robbed of his job by his own brother, Austin takes every word Lee says as a kind of challenge. He breaks into the houses in his neighbourhood and steals a large number of toasters, which are seen at the beginning of Scene Eight near Lee's stolen T.V., as evidence of his superior abilities as a thief. Stealing a set of toaster, a household appliance, and polishing them with a dish towel displays Austin's need to incorporate the

signs of home as a substitute for the feeling of failure in his career. He is narcissistically satisfied with the toasters. By contrast with Austin, Lee's anger derives from his inability to continue writing. And, as a reaction, he breaks the typewriter.

The toasters and the typewriter are the subjects of conversation. The toasters are the new objects through which Austin defines himself, since he is so proud of his theft. He continues despising Lee, asking him whether it is "a prerequisite for a criminal not to have a conscience" (43). Austin thinks that he has won a victory over Lee. In his reply, Lee uses the same words with which Austin has critiqued Lee's western in the first half of the play: "That's the dumbest thing I ever saw in my life" (43) and shows once again that he is playing Austin's role in this part of the play. Further, Lee's smashing the typewriter pushes Austin to highlight the question of art:

> It's a sin to do that to a good machine. ... When you consider all the writers who never even had a machine. Who would have given an eyeball for a good typewriter. Any typewriter. ... All the ones who wrote on match-book covers. Paper bag. Toilet paper. ... Those writers would find it hard to understand your actions (43-44).

The typewriter and the toasters are objects that remind the two brothers of what they have lost in their lives. They are the symptomatic objects through which Austin and Lee try to dull the pain of loss. They also symbolize the loss of innocence and purity in the American lands. Before being smashed, the typewriter was the only means to revive the good old West and the sense of rootedness. The toasters, stolen from the houses of suburban new West, are another reminder of the loss of innocence peculiar to the old West. The typewriter is at the same time a means of articulating the writer's feelings in an artistic form. Austin is unable to understand Lee's action. Writing was of great value to Austin. It was his identity, a way of identifying and knowing himself. That he has lost his job makes him more conscious of his life. His feeling of security is shattered when he has lost his job. Losing his job means for Austin losing his stable urban life.

Austin tries to involve Lee in conversation, but Lee is so uninterested in the question of the art that he ignores Austin's words and tries to call a woman on the phone. Austin cannot figure out why Lee wants to call a woman while his own brother is with him: "Well I don't understand why you'd want to talk to anybody else anyway. *I mean you can talk to me. I'm your brother*" (45) [italics mine]. Talking is what will help to bring about a possible reconciliation between the two brothers. As stated in the Introduction part of this study, talking is used as a cure in psychoanalytic therapy. Talking is fundamentally therapeutic, it has the power to create an atmosphere in which Austin and Lee may act out and work-through the issues that cause a distance between them.

It helps them to produce speech, form an interaction between them and in this way be finally reconciled with the uncanny double. What Austin wants is nothing more than an intimate talk when he says that they can talk because they are brothers.

Austin's sentences show the moment when his need to be close to his own brother reaches its peak. His need for intimacy is coupled in the same scene with his desire to see his father. Austin begs Lee to take him out to the desert and to teach him how to live there:

> There's nothin' down here for me. There never was. When we were kids here it was different. There was a life here then. But now –- I keep comin' down here thinkin' it's the fifties or somethin'. I keep finding myself getting off the freeway at *familiar* landmarks that turn out to be *unfamiliar*. On the way to appointments. Wandering down streets I thought I recognized that turn out to be replicas of streets I *remember*. Streets I *misremember*. Streets I can't tell if I lived on or saw in a postcard. *Fields that don't exist anymore*. ... There's nothin' *real* down here, Lee! *Least of all me!* ... You can let me come with you (49) [italics mine].

Austin articulates his position as the urban man through his own eyes and voices a sense of national nostalgia once again. All he wants is to go to the desert as he confesses that he cannot make it down in the city. As stated earlier, Austin suffers from a "primary ontological insecurity", and lacks a strong sense of his own identity. The reality of urban life with its uncanny development, its once familiar and later unfamiliar highways, its replicated streets that play tricks with memory, is too harsh for Austin to bear, now that he has seen the revival of the pristine West in Lee.

Austin's speech is characterized by repetitions that gradually become a form of remembering. He remembers his long lost childhood, and the feelings of optimism and security of the wilderness in the desert in contradistinction to the uncanny chaos of urban life. Since repression, in Freudian terms, can dissolve through repetitions, Austin's repeating his past in relation to his present life illuminates his life. Having played the role of his brother, he has recognized his need to be with his father. Each repetition of Austin's has shown that there is no room for forgetting the father and the mythic west so long as the two brothers continue repeating these elements. This speech has made Austin more intimate towards Lee and also helped him communicate his desire to reconcile with his brother. This is a process of working-through that promises to relieve the anger of the two brothers. Austin is now more conversant with his repressed feelings and his old image. He sees salvation in the desert, on the frontier line that guarantees, to quote Turner, "perennial rebirths", a new self-reliant identity created by the wilderness in the West

against the one shattered by the big city life. He endeavours to convince Lee to take him to the desert, but Lee tries to take advantage of Austin's need to get him to write his script. The more Austin and Lee clash with each other, the more a hope for a healthy working-through, a therapeutic end to the play is threatened.

This threat takes its source from Lee's sudden explosion when Austin offers him some of the toast he has cooked in the stolen toasters. Lee knocks the plate out of Austin's hand. The toast is scattered on the floor, and so too is the hope for a reconciliation shattered. Offering toast or sharing it with Lee is Austin's invitation to Lee to think over the fact that they are brothers. By throwing the plate, Lee has smashed this hope too. When Austin offers the toast, he tells Lee that the toast is "like salvation sort of. I mean the smell. … It makes me feel like anything's possible" (48). Austin believes that it is possible to be saved from any harm that they will give to each other. Austin's offer is practically an attempt to work-through the opposition between them. He begins to pick up the pieces of toast, a task that "seems a mortification ritual, a final submission to Lee's power and authority" (Kleb 119). This mortification ritual is performed by Austin for one sole end: to reach the father. The pieces of toast that are crushed over the floor also negate the brotherly atmosphere created during Austin's confessions. This negation is followed by Lee's threats. Lee forces Austin to type whatever he says and complete his script in exchange for taking Austin with him to the desert. However, Lee is after the

money. Austin agrees on the deal and Scene Eight closes with Lee gazing into Austin's eyes.

The last scene of the play, Scene Nine, opens with Austin and Lee's cooperative work to write Lee's script. The stage is full of "bottles, toasters, smashed typewriter, ripped out telephone" (50). The change on the stage is the remainder of Austin and Lee's confrontation in the previous scene. Physical violence parallels the psychological violence in the play. The more the set is ravaged, the more the characters become involved in the process of working-through. The more they come closer, the more they let the conflicts deep inside their minds become eloquent and rise into consciousness through speech. The order and cleanliness of the house at the beginning of the play and the destroyed image of it, particularly in the last two scenes, illustrate the distance the two brothers have covered so far. In the beginning of the play, the house is neatly decorated with a refrigerator, cupboards, yellow curtains, a small round glass breakfast table, two matching iron chairs. Austin is seen, bent over the glass table, illuminated by the candlelight. He is writing in a notebook. There is a typewriter on the table, a candle, a cup of coffee, cigarette burning in ashtray and stacks of paper. Austin gives the impression of a writer who is concentrated on his work. Lee stands leaning against the sink, illuminated by the soft moonlight. He is drinking a beer. Lee asks Tilden questions about his mother's trip to Alaska, how concerned she is with the cleanliness of the sink and home, the crickets, the groceries and the coffee. The overall look of the last scene strikingly contrasts with the first scene.

There is no sound heard; no sign of cleanliness. In the stage directions, the overall effect on the stage is described as “like a desert junkyard at high noon” (50). The distance between the two brothers seems narrower than the first scene. Austin is now writing Lee’s script instead of his own. Lee walks around the table, telling Austin his story and kicking the objects that remain on the floor aside.

Both characters are pouring with sweat, which heralds a potential outbreak of violence. They are writing the script together and exchange thoughts, which promises a hope of a reconciliation between them. These signs of reconciliation herald a possibility of the dissolution of the uncanny double and a therapeutic end. The question to be posed here is whether the brothers will be able to reinternalize and reidentify with what has become alienated as the uncanny double. The beginning of Scene Nine shows Lee and Austin in great harmony with each other. Lee wants Austin to repeat the things they have written. They work over a line together and try to make it sound original. The final version of the line they discuss vehemently is “I told ya’ you were a fool to follow me in here. I’m on intimate terms with this prairie” (52). The story they are writing corresponds to the fact that they are now more intimate than ever. Austin and Lee look as if they have overcome the conflicts they have been experiencing since the previous scene. But this harmony hides a danger: Austin makes the corrections to Lee’s story. Though they argue about different versions of one line, it is Austin who decides on the last version. Lee is bound to Austin for his experience just as Austin depends on Lee to go to

the desert. In the job of writing, Lee needs Austin's guidance. When the desert is at stake, Lee's guidance becomes crucial for Austin. The two brothers are now at the boundaries of opposition and dependence. Their dependence on each other's help or guidance reminds them that they are brothers, and as Saul Kimmer says, they are actually "the same".

The arrival of the mother at this part of the play is another sign of hope. However, her relation to her sons appears to be lacking intimacy when she says that she has come because she just started missing all of her plants. Contrary to her expectations, her house looks so different from when she left it, and her plants are all dead. In the middle of "the sea of junk" (53), she stands still with her red luggage, in her white coat. The overall effect of her arrival on the brothers is unsettling: they behave as though they were kids. Lee rushes to take her luggage and asks childishly if she has seen any igloos up in Alaska. Austin tells her that Lee and he are going to the desert to live. And when she asks what has caused the chaos there, Austin says that they are writing a movie script together and that they will go to the desert to see their father. It is at this point that the intimacy between them begins to disappear when Lee is not so willing to take Austin to the desert with him. Lee's disinclination is a great threat to the possibility of a compromise. For Austin, to go to the desert and to meet his father should not be an unattainable dream. Since Lee is the only one who can take Austin to their father, Lee's reluctance means losing the father again.

The father is the most painful wound in the brothers' pysche. The melancholic yearning for him is kept covered by objects like toasters, typewriter, or the bottles of beer which all functioned as a screen to cover over the melancholia for the father. The father is also representative of the larger issues in the American identity. To reach the father is to become a part of the good old pristine West that promises salvation for the alienated modern man. Further, to return to the father means returning to the roots. Therefore, to reunite with the father will also denote rejoining and reinternalizing the West. Such a reunion will at the same time put an end to the sense of loss, and lead to the working-through of the melancholia for both the father and the West.

If working-through necessiates the severing of emotional attachments to the lost object by dint of the labor of memory, then the brothers should reach an agreement on going to the desert together. Lee's sudden lack of enthusiasm to take Austin to the desert thwarts any labor of memory. Saying that the script they have written is "a dumb story" (56), Lee obstructs all the ways to a healthy reconciliation. In doing so, Lee obliterates the intimacy between them. The uncanny double has been on the verge of resolving by means of the cooperation of the scriptwriting, yet it returns as Austin loses his temper. He rushes up to Lee and grabs him by shoulders. Lee in return pushes him back. When Lee declares that he is going to the desert without Austin, Austin takes the cord of the ripped-out phone and tries to strangulate Lee with it. As the intimacy takes the shape of menace, it creates moments which awaken in the audience fear and pity. The more Austin applies pressure on Lee, the more

they draw away from a reconciliation. Austin wants Lee to give the car keys back. In order to stop him from going alone, Austin is killing his own brother.

The mother, who is watching the fight between Austin and Lee, reminds her sons that they are brothers and one of them cannot kill the other. This is the second implication of the sibling murder. The first talk about it takes place in Scene Four when Lee tells Austin that "family people, brothers, brothers-in-law" (24) kill each other the most. The sibling murder is the problem the play cannot solve in itself. Like Able and Cain, Austin and Lee struggle to death with each other primarily in order to reach the father in the desert. Austin's determination to choke Lee deprives Lee of breath and imperils the possibility of a reconciliation.

The dramatic resolution the play reaches illustrates the struggle to overcome the uncanny duality by reaching the father. One implication this conflict poses is the idea that this split might not be overcome in any case. The fact that the process of working-through includes a compromise between repetition and memory problematizes a complete resolution. This whole set of complications makes the possiblity of a therepeutic end difficult. The reconciliation between the brothers would mean reinternalizing the loss and reidentifying with the uncanny double. Further, the fact that the play ends with an image of "a vast desert-like landscape" suggests that the end of the play does not offer a resolution of the problems within the American identity either.

3. Failure of Introjection: Curse of the Starving Class

> Incorporation is the refusal to claim as our own the part of ourselves that we placed in what we lost; incorporation is the refusal to acknowledge the full import of the loss, a loss that, if recognized as such, would affectively transform us. In fine, incorporation is the refusal to introject loss.
>
> N. Abraham and M. Torok, "Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation"

Shepard celebrates the American West as the locus of salvation in *True West*. The play treats the West as a Paradise that promises a hope for redemption for the corruption of the modern east of America. The loss of innocence experienced by the modern American who aspired to climb the steps of the American Dream of wealth and success is highlighted with the incorporation of objects which are considered to dull the pain of loss by substituting an idealized vision of the pristine West. The primary function of the typewriter is to put the long lost West into words, to re-embrace and revivify it in opposition to the spiritual decay of the East. Lee's western, which takes place on the vast lands of the frontier, evokes a sense of kinship with the land. The

toasters Austin steals conjure up the regrets associated with the loss of purity caused by the fast urbanization of the East. These objects have been read as symbolic of a loss to be swallowed in accordance with the concepts of "melancholia" and "incorporation" as theorized by Freud, and Abraham and Torok respectively.

Martin Tucker suggests that Shepard is a "family man, one very much attuned to the concerns of family business and the needs and cries of his family" (155). Many critics, like Tucker, are unanimous in the idea that Shepard's family plays are a blend of fiction and his life. Although autobiographical facts could help no further than giving an idea of Shepard's perspective on the family, his personal experiences and observations link the general themes and motifs to a larger context of Americanness that underlies the dynamics of his family plays. This blend is composed of the ingredients of both his "innovative dramatic technique" and also his appeal to the "American experience that lies deep within the nation's cultural memory" (Wade 2). In this play, Shepard is specifically concerned with the question of the fragmentation of the American family, lack of cohesion among family members due to the physical and the lack of spiritual nourishment provoked by the characters' desire to achieve material wealth and the American Dream.

Shepard, in *Curse of the Starving Class,* illustrates the fragmentation of the family, which is immediately introduced in the first stage directions of the

play: “Four mismatched metal chairs set each side of the table” (135). The mother, Ella, and the father, Weston, are estranged from each other like Dodge and Halie in *Buried Child*. Wesley, the son, and Emma, the daughter, seek a future in between their home and the alienated modern world. The lack of harmony among the family members is reflected in the mismatched metal chairs and the debris in the middle of the house. The debris is caused by Weston who has broken the door of the house in the middle of the night. The fact that the door of the house is broken by the father, who is supposed to be the protector and the supplier of the family, underscores the centrality of the figure of the father once again. In *Buried Child*, the father is an alienated figure. In *True West*, he is the missing one and an outcast. In *Curse of the Starving Class*, Weston, who is drunken and irresponsible, disappears in the beginning of the play after he has smashed the integrity of the house by breaking the door. The door is also Weston’s means of shutting himself outside, thus creating for himself an alienated world beyond the borders of his own family. The broken door, as a sign of the familial disintegration, presents the father as a “threatening intruder” (Hart 69) and renders the whole family vulnerable to the intrusions of the outside world.

Like the two previous plays of loss and melancholia analyzed so far, *Curse of the Starving Class* also stages the vision of a lost Eden and damaged family life. *Curse of the Starving Class* “presents an image of chaos and vulnerability” (Hart 69) by presenting the domestic setting, seen in *Buried Child* and *True West,* this time in its ruined form. In the middle of the chaotic

debris, Wesley is seen "picking up the pieces of the door and throwing them methodically into an old wheelbarrow" (135). This chaotic sense of fragmentation is the basis of the symbolic meanings of the 'curse of the starving class', as the characters understand it in accordance with their own fantasies about having higher standards of living. As Lynda Hart remarks, "The structure of the play, however, continues to rely to a large extent on images, like the opening one, that expand into symbolic expressions of the destructive and disintegrating family bond" (69). The integrity of the household, as destroyed once again by the broken door, opens a gate for the characters' desire to escape from the house.

The broken door of the farmhouse brings the audience face to face with threats of intrusion and domestic menace. The field of corn that heralds the renewal of fertility in *Buried Child* is portrayed in this play as under the 'curse' the characters believes themselves to be inflicted with. The farm has dried up and produces no crops. The central image of loss is the shortage of food in the fridge. The family members constantly talk of this lack as the 'curse' surrounding the family, and when they cannot satisfy their insatiability, they shout at one another. Though it might seem more appropriate to refer to the family's starvation in terms of "lack", "loss" seems more accurately to reflect the family's obsession with the empty fridge. The door of the fridge is repeatedly opened and closed by the family members. Each time it is opened, a family member complains of the emptiness of the

fridge, and they frequently argue over the lack of food and the need to restock the fridge.

The set is the kitchen and, contrary to the complaints of the family members, images of food and eating are recurrent throughout the play. Therefore, the emptiness of the fridge signifies more than physical hunger. As Tucker puts it, "The central metaphor of the play is food, and its lack of it— the food that feeds the sexual, romantic, sentimental, and ideal appetites as well as the stomach. The family in Shepard's play is hungry because they do not have the right food, the kind that nourishes the psyche" (124). The psychic hunger is the expression of the spiritual starvation at the heart of the family. The sort of hunger the characters talk about refers, on a larger scale, to their starvation for a higher social status. They repeatedly state their refusal to be a part of the starving class. This aspiration to climb the social and economic stairs of the American dream, on the other hand, is undermined by the disappearance of American farm culture, and determines the socio-political agenda of the play as well.

The underlying markers of the spiritual hunger and the resulting inner turmoil turn out to be material desires and the discontentment with the 'curse of the starving class' as the dark side of the American dream. It is through this spiritual hunger that the characters express their discontentment with their living conditions and their desire to escape from the family house. Ella

intends to compensate for the starvation of nourishment by selling the farmhouse in which the family is living and dreams of going to Europe; Weston, unaware of Ella's plans, tries to sell the house like his wife in order to pay his debts to Emerson and Slater, two murderers; Emma immerses herself in rehearsals for the forthcoming demonstration at the 4-H fair. Each character, with the exception of Wesley, fabricates various dreams of escape. Ella wishes to change her living condition by selling the farmhouse in order to live in sophisticated Europe:

> Wesley: What's in Europe?
>
> Ella: They have everything in Europe. High art. Paintings. Castles. Buildings. Fancy food.
>
> Wesley: They have all that here (143).

Ella's dream is important mainly because it depicts the betrayal of the farmland that used to nourish the family as well as the reversal of the direction of the American dream, for she seeks it on lands remote from the American soil, back in Europe. The issue of loss and melancholia *in Buried Child* and *True West* pertains both to questions of the family and the larger question of nostalgia for the pristine American West. The selling of the farmhouse in this play refers to the loss of values not only because it symbolizes the "family's basis of cohesion" (Wade 97), but also it represents

the death of the agrarian America and its replacement by the capitalist system. The loss of the house will result in the loss of familial bonds and an estrangement from the land. A similar discontentment can be seen in Emma's aspiration for a higher social status like her mother: "The Thompsons have a new heated pool. You should see it, Ma. They even got blue lights around it at night. It's really beautiful. Like a fancy hotel" (139). These are Ella's and Emma's American dream, the realization of which is always fantasized as an escape from the family's current material and social status.

These individual dreams do not only concern the family, but they are emblematic of the American nation as well. Each dream the characters escape into is at the same time an escape from the farmhouse too. In general, the house in the play symbolizes the American nation. Wesley voices the concern with the loss of national values when he says the selling of the farmhouse "means more than losing a house. It means losing a country" (163). Wesley's words manifest Shepard's concern with economic and social conditions of the United States in the post-war era:

> From the end of World War II until the early 1970s, no other country enjoyed the economic vitality that the United States took for granted … . Such prosperity shaped the national outlook and spurred a psychology of abundance. The most resounding blow to U.S. confidence in the post-World War II era therefore may have

> been neither the John F. Kennedy assassination nor the military's graceless exit from Vietnam but the oil shortage of 1973, an event that gave birth to widespread discontent and a host of key words (depletion, exhaustion) that would come to define this time in U.S. history. ... Between 1973 and 1978, the price of oil rose from $3 to $28 barrel, and the U.S. economy, which had been driven for years to world prominence by the ready supply of cheap fuel, fell into the throes of a severe recession. ... The country was forced to acknowledge its limits, and many questioned if the nation could lay claim to the promises of the American dream any longer (Wade 95-96).

Shepard is thought to be a characteristically post-war playwright by many critics. His awareness of the rising and then rapidly declining economic and social conditions in the post-war era in the U.S. parallels his sensitivity to the loss of the values which were forgotten by the American nation. The dreams fed by the first settlers for the great West are replaced by the desire to possess more and more material wealth and a more prestigious social status. One implication is that the land of the West, which was once a heaven for the newcomers to the United States, is waiting to be rediscovered. However, the fantasies about it has been exhausted by a seemingly more strong alternative, the American Dream, which led the American nation to be greedy and insatiable. The family in the play is an encapsulation of this larger national context: the sense of depletion and exhaustion that pervades the family house

due to the decline in economy is exhibited in the family's encounter with the violent pangs of starvation.

In *Curse of the Starving Class*, the dynamics of the play is determined by the centrality of hunger. The feeling of constant hunger and the phobic apprehension of starvation are conveyed by the repeated attempts the characters make to introject food. Introjection, as theorized by Abraham and Torok, in the largest sense, is a form of mourning which resists incorporation and consequently the effects and processes melancholia entails. Abraham and Torok argue that "incorporation denotes a fantasy, introjection a process" (125), an argument which exemplifies the insatiable hunger of the characters. Introjection primarily denotes the subject's will to work-through the repressed materials. Ella, Weston and Emma endeavor to remove what they think of as the curse of social and economic discontent either through their attempts to escape home by selling it or by fantasizing about a higher social status. The curse is considered by these characters as an element of repression that must be substituted with fantasies in the pursuit of making their fantasies come true. To be more precise, the play itself is built upon attempts to introject as a response to the lack of food and to establish the fantasy of abundance and wealth.

The more efforts the members of the family make to compensate for the loss by means of swallowing food, the more their hunger increases. Therefore, the

mechanism of introjection turns out to be a mask that performs to cover incorporation, since the characters' dreams of higher social standing indicate an escapist attitute more than a realistic assessment of their existing situation. Metaphorically speaking, starving appears to be the constant hunger for spiritual satisfaction. If incorporation means "introducing all or part of a love object or a thing into one's own body" and "implementing literally something that has only figurative meaning" as discussed in more detail in *Buried Child*, eating food constantly is a sustenance of this fantasy of the narcissistic implementation. In this sense, food is a symbolic object that functions as a psychic nourishment, and the characters' talking about food produces a symbolic language of food that may lead to the digestion of loss and the dissolving of the symptom. Although the characters do, in fact, take in food, the fantasies they dream nurture imaginary objects that are swallowed basically because they are libidinal and they nourish the psyche. Incorporation, in this respect, refers to the failure of introjection. Then, every attempt to introject the curse of hunger fails and turns into incorporation, thus intensifying the curse of starvation and the constant feeling of hunger.

The curse is a malediction, the frequent repetition of which is explored through the theme of starvation. The repetitive images of hunger can be observed in the dialogues between Ella and her children. First, Ella boils the chicken Emma has bought in order to give a demonstration at the 4-H fair. Emma is frantic when she hears that her mother has boiled it. She says she has invested labor in the chicken; she has crushed corn every morning for a

year, and changed its water and, in short, taken good care of it. But Ella says that she has boiled it simply because she was starving. In the meantime, Ella keeps eating bread and bacon and is almost indifferent to Emma's shoutings. Emma says that noone in the house considers the others. Ella's answer is direct and sharp: "NOT IF YOU WERE STARVING!" (142). Shepard's use of the capital letters draws attention to the issue of starvation as connected to the dissatisfaction with the characters' socio-economic situation. They long for status and do not acknowledge the existing conditions:

> EMMA'S VOICE: (*off*) NO ONE'S STARVING IN THIS HOUSE! YOU'RE FEEDING YOUR FACE RIGHT NOW!
>
> ELLA: So what!
>
> EMMA'S VOICE: (*off*) SO NO ONE'S STARVING! WE DON'T BELONG TO THE STARVING CLASS!
>
> ELLA: Don't speak unless you know what you're speaking about! There's no such thing as a starving class!
>
> EMMA'S VOICE: (*off*) THERE IS SO! THERE IS A STARVING CLASS OF PEOPLE, AND WE'RE NOT PART OF IT!
>
> ELLA: WE'RE HUNGRY, AND THAT'S STARVING ENOUGH FOR ME! (142).

In the same act, Emma speaks into the refrigerator: “Hello? Anything in there? We’re not broke you know, so you don’t have to hide! I don’t know where the money goes to but we’re not broke! We’re not part of the starving class!” (150). Though all of the characters deny that they are a part of the starving class, they become obsessed with food and the idea of being hungry, not only of starving. Wesley similarly opens the door of the fridge, stares into it and then speaks to the lamb he has brought into the kitchen:

> You’re lucky I’m not really starving. You’re lucky this is a civilized household. You’re lucky it’s not Korea and the rains are pouring through the cardboard walls and you’re tied to a log in the mud and you’re drenched to the bone and you’re skinny and starving, but it makes no difference because someone’s starving more than you. Someone’s hungry. And his hunger takes him outside with a knife and slits your throat and eats you raw. His hunger eats you, and you’re starving (156).

Wesley personifies the feeling of hunger as an uncontrollable inner impulse if it is left unsatisfied. This being the case, it is an inescapable curse both on the physical and the spiritual level. Ella too articulates the inevitability of this curse:

> Do you know what this is? It's a curse. I can feel it. It's invisible but it's there. It's always there. It comes onto us like nighttime. Every day I can feel it. Every day I can see it coming. And it always comes. Repeats itself. It comes even when you do everything to stop it from coming. Even when you try to change it. It goes back. Deep. It goes back and back to tiny little cells and genes. To atoms. To tiny little swimming things making up their minds without us. Plotting in the womb. Before that even. We're surrounded with it. It's bigger than government even. It goes forward too. We spread it. We pass it on. We inherit it and pass it down, and then pass it down again. It goes on and on like that without us (173-174).

Ella's speech is shot through the biological determinism of naturalism, the idea that no matter what happens in the outside world, the dominant role of genetics predestines the life of the individual. The curse Ella defines is passed on from one generation to the other by hereditary means and is what consumes the whole family. The names of the son, Wesley, and the daughter, Emma, in a like manner suggest the role of heredity, which will also be displayed in Wesley's transformation into his father in Act Three. The children's names echo those of the father and the mother; Weston and Ella. The sort of curse in Ella's words underscores the discontentment with middle-class American farming family life. The dark side of the American dream, which gives no opportunities to the loser, dooms the lower class to suffer the

curse of physical and spiritual starvation. It is this spiritual hunger that forces Ella to sell the house and escape to Europe with her children.

Shepard extends the personal and familial conflicts to the presentation of social and national complexities. The characters' search for an escape from their social and economic conditions demonstrates the sense of exhaustion the country is stricken with. The invasion of the lawyers, businessmen, estate agents, namely the "invasion" of the materialist "zombies" epitomizes the power of the capitalist economy over the rapidly disappearing agrarian America. Having been rendered defenceless in the face of invasions from outside by the broken door, the house is frequented by Taylor, the lawyer; Ellis, the bar-owner, and Emerson and Slater. The only one who opposes the selling of the house is Wesley, and in this sense he is associated with the sense of rootedness to one's land. In Act Two, he voices his perceptiveness about the house and the nation: "It's a zombie invasion. Taylor is the head zombie. He's the scout for other zombies. He's only a sign that more zombies are on their way. They'll be filing through the door pretty soon" (163).

Ella's fantasy of escape is a betrayal to the lands she lives on. When Taylor, the lawyer, comes to see Ella, he expresses the changing conditions in American social and economic life:

> Marvelous house this is. The location I mean. The land is full of potential. Of course it's a shame to see agriculture being slowly pushed into the background in deference to low-cost housing, but that's simply a product of the times we live in. There's simply more people on the planet these days. … More people demand more shelter. More shelter demands more land. It's an equation (153).

Taylor's statements are descriptive of the disappearance of the agrarian rural America and the rise of the urban populace. The nostalgia for the land dramatized in the conflicting doubling of Lee and Austin in *True West* is repeated here in Ella's desire to leave the farm land for a better life in a place other than the farmland and therefore eliminate the curse through wealth. Taylor, as a spokesman for or a product of capitalism, expresses the system of the capitalist social order that moves people to live and work in the larger cities to achieve the American dream. He says that the only way to move forward is to sell the house:

> Nobody's waiting! Everything is going forward! … The wheels are in motion. There's nothing you can do to turn it back. The only thing you can do is cooperate. To play ball. To become part of us. To invest in the future of this great land. Because if you don't, you'll be left behind. … and there'll be nothing to save you. Nothing and nobody (179).

The only choice the system offers is to 'play the ball' which accordingly means to become a part of the wheel of capitalist socio-economic order. By selling the house, Ella wants to escape the curse. This is an attempt to introject the familial curse. But selling the house in order to escape runs the risk of coming face to face with a larger problem of the urban life, and the threat of failure in the rat race in which capitalism places the individual to struggle in pursuit of wealth and success. For Taylor, to be left behind is to continue living in the rural area and to be cursed with hunger as well as missing the opportunities of the city life.

The topography of the house is another significant element in the play. The broken door introduces the importance of topography and the question of the nation. First of all, the fact that the father has broken the door creates the ambiguity about insiders and the outsiders. The protector of the house, the father, becomes an outsider whereas some alien elements enter the house. The lamb, which symbolizes a potential savior, is seen by Taylor as a source of contamination due to the maggots. In religious terms, the lamb stands for hope of salvation. However, the fact that the lamb is surrounded by the maggots shows the failure of the agent of redemption. The fact that Wesley brings the lamb to the kitchen sounds more irritating to Taylor because of the threat of contamination of the food. Taylor himself is another outsider who defenses the purity inside the house against the maggots on the lamb. He is in fact an enemy who tries to sell the house. As Emma says, he is the head of the zombies. He is the embodiment of the characters' obsession with invasion. In

the play, there are many references to different sorts of enemies: San Diego is said to be infested with termites. There is also an unnamed war which reveals the unspoken national trauma, haunting at least the male characters. In his long speech in Act Three, for example, Weston refers to air force and bombing. The referance may be to the Vietnam war and reflects the threat of invadors and foreigners to the nation.

The door is the threshold that determines the vulnerable boundary between the inner and the outer paradigm. As mentioned before, since the house is representative of the nation, threats posed to the house reflect the threats associated with the American nation. Weston's references to an unnamed war can be seen as wounds to masculinity and to the power of the nation. The threat of castration introduced by Wesley's slaughter of the lamb is symbolic of the frailty of masculinity. Masculinity is itself a wound, a trauma connected with castration. In the second half of the play, Weston turns out to be less aggressive while Wesley becomes more destructive. Wesley wears his father's dirty clothes and act out his father's role. The father has become powerless and ineffective. Wesley's transformation to his father can be seen as a sort of transpersonal passing on of trauma. This transformation also determines the dramatic resolution of the play. When Ella mistakes Wesley for Weston, Wesley asserts his identity and says: "It's me Mom!" (198). Wesley becomes the father figure in grotesque similarity to his father. Wesley's change can also be read as an attempt to swallow the father and to retain him with the hope that the family may re-integrate and start afresh as a harmonious unit. This

individual attempt is also definitive of the larger attempts to fullfil and satisfy a fantasy of a whole, full and pristine nation. However, to replace the father and to swallow him end up being more lacking. Thus, the attempts to re-establish the family unity by filling in the lack or the loss with a substitute does not guarantee a working-through of the individual or transgenerational traumas.

The character transformation raises the question whether the father or the figure of the father can make the family whole again. Although Wesley is the only one who tries to preserve the sense of wholeness, his transformation is not an optimistic herald of the resolution of the play. His transformation to his father reveals a repetition of Weston's fallen situation when Wesley creates a different version of the story his father has told. Weston told the story of the lamb and the eagle. Wesley tells the story of the cat and the eagle at the end of the play. The story depicts the struggle of the eagle and the cat in the sky and results in the two animals' "crashing down to the earth" "like one whole thing" (200). The end of the story signifies the impossibility to introject and work through the traumas that have been transmitted by the parents to the children. Though the cat and the eagle appear to be whole, they both are destroyed. The impossibility of final integration is therefore illustrated with the story of the cat and the eagle.

The play's dramatic action is based on attempts to introject and overcome the sense of loss and to eliminate the alien powers that threaten to upset the integrity of the house and in the larger context the nation. Only Wesley's efforts cannot help to save the farmhouse and "the miserable planet" (164). The sense of disintegration, depletion and of things being replaced by materialist zombies cannot be replaced by a sense of wholeness due to the frequent penetration into the house by the alien forces. Such an end definitely reinforces the hunger the family feels and leaves the curse without a remedy.

CONCLUSION

This thesis, which analyzes *Buried Child* (1978), *True West* (1980) and *Curse of the Starving Class* (1978) by Sam Shepard, offers a detailed psychoanalytical study of the texts which aims to emphasize the centrality of the issue of loss and the melancholic structure of memory. Psychoanalytic concepts such as melancholia, acting out, working-through and transference have supported the analysis of the ways in which our dramatic texts progress. In the most obvious sense, the term melancholia has been examined as a response to a loss of a member of the family and a national ideal. In *Buried Child*, the loss of the baby as a result of Dodge's infanticide has inflicted wounds on the family as a whole. Certain objects and reactions to the loss of the buried child, which help to cover over the psychic scars, have been presented as the symbolic and symptomatic indications of this individual loss. The play unveils how the characters attempt to substitute this one single yet traumatic loss with various objects in order to quench the pain of loss.

True West and *Curse of the Starving Class* stage the melancholic longing for the loss of the national ideals. The rapid modernization of America due to capitalism and industrialism in the twentieth century has caused the American nation to transform from an agrarian country to an industrialized one. Nevertheless, America was first imagined by the first European settlers as an earthly paradise. In *True West,* the melancholic yearning for the pristine West as the untainted part of America displays a strong parellelism with

Austin and Lee's yearning for their father. The father and the West are two major losses to be compensated for. The dramatic tension of the play is based on the struggle to reach the father and the immaculate West.

The centrality of the issue of loss in *Curse of the Starving Class* is again seen in the importance of the family house, which represents the American nation. The house displays the form the social structure of America has taken in the second half of the twentieth century. The national tendency towards a consumerist culture has been reflected in the characters' aspirations and desire to attain the American Dream. The only character who openly mourns for the past is the son, Wesley. The longing for a lost ideal, as observed in Freud's discussion of melancholia in detail, is what creates the melancholia in this play. The strong yearning for the loss of the agrarian America corresponds to the longing for the West in *True West*. The family house and in the largset sense America stand for the disintegration of the family and the nation which are corrupted by the "American Dream".

Psychoanalysis is essentially a theory of mind, the primary purpose of which is to bring to light the traumatic events lying repressed and unconscious in the memory. Although its roots dwell in the clinical practices of psychotherapy, psychoanalysis has been employed as one of the most productive approaches to literary texts in the twentieth century. The use of psychoanalytic technique particularly as a method of criticism of dramatic texts has also revealed the

mutual influence each field has had on each other. As discussed in the Introduction, Aristotle's early theory of tragedy and some great tragedies of the Ancient Greece have served as a model for Freud's theories concerning the psychic structure of the human mind. Psychoanalysis has made an abundant use particularly of the ancient drama in its theoretical development. As is clear from the connection Freud makes between *Oedipus Rex* and his theory of infantile sexual desires, Sophocles' famous tragedy functioned as a guide and a model for his theory of the "Oedipus Complex".

Especially for the purposes of this study, certain psychoanalytic concepts bear remarkable resemblances with the ways a dramatic play produces a cathartic effect among its characters and in terms of the interaction between the characters and the audience. As early as ancient Greece, Aristotle formed a theory concerning the psychological relief experienced by the audience. He discussed in great detail the ways in which a tragedy creates a cathartic effect, and regarded the role and aim of catharsis as the purification of such emotions as pity and fear in the audience. According to Aristotle's theory, the elimination of the emotions gives way to a pleasurable relief, and in so doing it serves as a medicine that cleanses the soul. Similarly, the objective of psychotherapy is to provide the analysand with a cleansing of soul from the repressed elements residing in the psyche. Both Aristotelian catharsis and Freud's cathartic treatment seek a restoration of a balance and a healthy state of mind after the spectator or the analysand struggle and come to terms with repressions.

The sense of fragmentation and loss prevalent in the three plays on both individual and national levels has presented a predisposition to a cathartic relief, if not an optimistic resolution. This inclination involved processes that include the acting-out and the working-through of the repressed elements that have caused melancholia. Although only *Buried Child* offers a sense of rejuvenation at the end, all of the three plays include attempts to achieve renewal for the conflicts within the families. Nevertheless, psychoanalysis is taken as a theory, the general framework of which includes the analysis of the individual as well as larger social issues. Psychoanalysis in this respect has also shed light on the ways in which the conflicts within the problems of national ideals and the idea of the American Dream are revealed. It has been helpful specifically for the period in which the plays were written. The plays were written in the 1970s and 1980s, namely the aftermath of the World War II. It was a time when a concern for national images reached its peak. It was a time when a search for a sense of rootedness and home was the most prevalent concern throughout America. If melancholia is a universal condition as well as individual, as Freud claims, the specificity of melancholia for these plays is observed in the fact that they verbalize and vocalize the repressed crises in the collective memory of America. The more the sense of fragmentation is repeated in the plays, the more the sense of loss is highlighted. In other words, each repetition of the unconscious social element becomes more important than an optimistic resolution. Hence the plays are more concerned with the repetition of the experience of loss and melancholia in order to remind the audience of the traumas that are shared collectively.

Güzel, Nisa Harika, Staging Loss: Melancholia and Working-Through in Three Plays by Sam Shepard, M. A. Thesis, Advisor: Prof. Dr. Belgin Elbir, p. 183.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to provide a psychoanalytic perspective on the concept of "loss" in Sam Shepard's family plays *Buried Child*, *True West* and *Curse of the Starving Class*. The Introduction presents a discussion of Sigmund Freud's clinical practices and the concept of "working-through" and offers a comparison of his theories with Aristotle's theories on drama. In the First Chapter, the psychoanalytic concepts of "melancholia" and "working-through" are analyzed with respect to the psychology of the play characters and the dramatic movement of *Buried Child*; the Second Chapter presents the analysis of the same concepts in terms of the discussion of the "American Frontier Ideal" and its influences on the play characters in *True West*, the Third Chapter sheds light on the way the play characters see the notions of "curse" and "starving" and shows how the larger issue of the "American Dream" is examined in *Curse of the Starving Class*. The study on the whole focuses on the elements of "loss" in the light of the theories developed by Sigmund Freud. The Conclusion establishes the theoretical connection between the theory in question and the three plays.

Güzel, Nisa Harika, Sahnedeki Yas: Sam Shepard'ın Üç Oyununda Melankoli ve Çözüm İşlemi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Danışman: Prof. Dr. Belgin Elbir, 183 s.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Amerikalı tiyatro yazarı Sam Shepard'ın aile üçlemesi olarak nitelendirilen *Gömülü Çocuk*, *Vahşi Batı* ve *Aç Sınıfın Laneti* adlı oyunlarının hangi bakımlardan yas niteliğini taşıdığını psikanalitik kuram çerçevesinde ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmanın Giriş bölümünde Sigmund Freud'un Psikanalitik kuram içerisinde "çözüm işlemi" kavramı ile ortaya koyduğu klinik gözlemleri ile Aristotales'in tiyatro kuramı karşılaştırılmış, psikanalizin bir kuram olarak tiyatro metinlerinin incelenmesinde ne ölçüde ve nasıl etkin olabileceği tartışılmıştır. Birinci Bölüm'de *Gömülü Çocuk* adlı oyundaki "melankoli" ve "çözüm işlemi" kavramlarının oyun karakterleri açısından bir incelemesi yapılmakta; İkinci Bölüm'de *Vahşi Batı* adlı oyunda yine aynı kavramların oyun karakterleri ve "Amerikan Sınır İdeali" bakımından önemi üzerinde durulmakta; Üçüncü Bölüm'de ise *Aç Sınıfın Laneti* oyunundaki "açlık" ve "lanet" görüşlerini oyun karakterinin nasıl yorumladıkları ve "Amerikan Rüyası" bağlamında oyunda nasıl irdelendiği incelenmektedir. Sonuç Bölümü bu üç oyunun analizinin seçilen kuram açısından ne ölçüde verimli olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

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