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POP CULTURE IMAGES AND CONTEMPORARY MYTHMAKING IN SAM SHEPARD'S TWO PLAYS: *THE UNSEEN HAND* and *COWBOY MOUTH*

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KONYA-2006

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ÖZET

Sam Shepard, modern Amerikan toplumunu başarılı şekilde yansıtan yenilikçi sanatıyla, çağdaş Amerikan tiyatrosunun en önemli yazarlarından biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Oyun yazarlığına Off-Off Broadway adı verilen alternatif tiyatroda başlamış ve akımın hoşgörülü atmosferinde kendine özgü biçemini geliştirmiştir.

Shepard'ın kariyerinin pop kültür evresine ait oyunları, çeşitli pop kültür kaynaklarından seçilmiş mitik figürlerin çağdaş bir bağlamda işlev kazandıkları, çağdaş Amerika'nın kültürel parçalanmışlığını etkili şekilde iletmek üzere çok parçalı olarak yapılandırılmış, fantastik ve pop ögelerin karışımından oluşan kolaj benzeri oyunlardır. Bu oyunlarda mit, modern bireylerin bölük pörçük deneyimlerini, bütünsel Amerikan deneyimine bağlamaya yarayan bir güç olarak ele alınmaktadır.

Bu araştırmada, bir yandan Shepard'ın pop kültürel oyunlarından *The Unseen Hand* (1969) (*Görünmez El*) ve *Cowboy Mouth* (1971) (*Kovboy Ağzı*) adlı eserler, çağdaş mitler yaratmak üzere kullanılan pop kültür imgeleri açısından incelenmiş, bir yandan da, çağdaş Amerika'nın, pop kültür imgeleri, mit ve çok parçalı yapı yoluyla nasıl eleştirildiği ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır.

Çalışma sonucunda, Shepard'ın pop kültür oyunlarından bu iki önemli örneğin, çağdaş Amerikan toplumu, siyaseti ve yaşam biçimine yönelik ciddi eleştiriler sergiledikleri; bilim kurgu, Eski Batı mitosu ve 1950'lerin ergenlik dönemi pop kültürünün bir karışımı olan *The Unseen Hand*'in, çoğu zaman tüketim ve bilimsel diktatörlükle tanımlanan modern dünyada, geçmişiyle bağını koparmış, ruhsal olarak tükenmiş bir toplumu yansıtırken, müzikli, metinlerarası bir yapı sergileyen *Cowboy Mouth*'ın, yabancılaşma, belirsizlik ve güvensizlikten dolayı acı çeken, parçalanmış modern dünyada tutunacak birşeyleri olmayan modern bireylerin umutsuz hallerine odaklandığı kanısına varılmıştır. Ayrıca, Shepard'ın, *The Unseen Hand*'de mitik kovboy, *Cowboy Mouth*'da ise rock-and-roll yıldızı imgelerini modern Amerikan toplumundaki olumsuzluklara karşı bir çıkış yolu olarak ele almasına karşın, modern insanın mitlerle olan bağını çoktan koparmış olmasını neden göstererek, her iki oyununu da, mitin çağdaş kültürel ortamdaki geçersizliğini vurgulayarak sonlandırdığı söylenebilir.

ABSTRACT

Sam Shepard is reputed as one of the most prominent playwrights of the contemporary American theatre due to his innovative drama that has brilliantly reflected the contemporary American experience. He started writing plays Off-Off Broadway and developed his own distinctive voice in the tolerant environment of the movement.

Shepard's plays of his "pop culture" phase are a blend of fantastic and pop elements where mythic figures chosen from diverse pop cultural sources such as movies and rock music are set to function in a contemporary context. These are collage-like plays constructed in a fractured structure so as to communicate the cultural fragmentation in the contemporary America. "Myth" is meant to serve as a unifying force that will connect the fragmented encounters of modern individuals with the whole American experience.

The dissertation aimed to study two of Shepard's pop cultural plays, *The Unseen Hand* (1969) and *Cowboy Mouth* (1971), regarding the pop culture images that were used to create contemporary myths. It also sought to demonstrate how a critical reflection of contemporary America was presented in the plays through pop culture images and the myth as well as the fractured construction.

In consequence of the study, it may be stated that these two significant examples of Shepard's pop cultural plays display a serious criticism of the contemporary American society, politics and way of life; *The Unseen Hand* – a blend of science fiction, Old West mythos and adolescent popular culture of 1950s – reflects a spiritually dead society who has lost its connections with its past in the modern world that is largely defined with consumerism and scientific totalitarianism, and *Cowboy Mouth* – an intertextual assemblage with music- focuses on the desperate situation of the modern individuals, who suffer from alienation, uncertainty and insecurity for having been left in a fractured modern world without something meaningful to cling on to. It may also be asserted that although Shepard suggests the mythic cowboy in *The Unseen Hand*, and the rock-and-roll star in *Cowboy Mouth* as a remedy for the ills of the modern society, he ends the plays by highlighting the irrelevance of the myth in the contemporary cultural environment since the modern man's connection to it has already been broken.

INTRODUCTION

Sam Shepard has gained reputation as one of foremost living dramatists of the contemporary American theatre being defined by the phrases that underline his genius as a playwright and his being one of the most distinctive American voices of his period. Wade (1997) points out his having ascended to the "rank and stature accorded such figures as Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller" due to his career that has spanned decades, and his "hypnotic drama of American anxiety and ambition" that created great fascination among audiences. Wade also labels him as "the latest Great American Playwright". (p. 1) King (1998) regards him as one of America's "most inventive and prolific playwrights" on account of his career with more than forty plays. (p. ix) Shewey (1997) claims that "there has never been anyone else in American culture like Sam Shepard" drawing attention to his "original voice" - his "…making up his own rules for theatrical action and a language that popped and crackled with the modern sounds of a society…" (p. 3)

In originating his own unique influence, Shepard owes much to Off-Off Broadway movement that led theatrical activities towards liberation encouraging them to explore "recombined or alternative modes of outlook enjoying a release from conventional hierarchies." (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 121) Shepard was timely to have come to New York City in the early sixties to meet the start of the Off-Off Broadway theatre, and thus he found a tolerant environment to create his early works with an individual style. Shepard's one account of his early plays reveals that they well corresponded to the demeanor of the movement that endorsed new experiments in form and content:

> …I didn't really have any references for the theatre, except for the few plays that I'd acted in. But in a way I think that was better for me, because I didn't have any idea about how to shape an action into what is seen – so the so-called originality of the early work just comes from ignorance. I just didn't know. (Chubb, 1981, p. 191)

Shepard also stated that he is glad for having initiated playwriting in line with the advent of Off-Off Broadway theatre: "I was very lucky to have arrived in New York at that time, though, because the whole Off-Off Broadway theatre was just starting – like Ellen Stewart with her little café, and Joe Cino, and the Judson Poets' Theatre and all these places," (Chubb, 1981, p. 192) probably for he was involved in "a special sort of culture" that was developing on the Lower East Side, and which embraced people coming from different parts of the country establishing a new community. (Chubb, 1981, p. 193)

Shepard's career as a playwright that began in the significant atmosphere of Off-Off Broadway, is often studied in two main categories: his "early" stage that included the plays produced between the mid 1960s and the late 1970s, and his "late" stage "family dramas" which started in 1978 and has been continuing. (Tekinay, 2001, p. 52) It is also suggested that *States of Shock* (1991) may be the onset of another period in Shepard's career. (Geis, 1996, p. 45) The plays that belong to the early stage may also be divided into two subcategories as "metadramatic experimental plays" of the period from 1964 to 1967 and "rock plays" written between the years 1967 and 1976 – a period that is also called the "pop culture phase" of Shepard's career.

His earliest plays were in tune with the avant-garde art practices of the time, and the bearings of Off-Off Broadway which sought to bridge the gap between art and performance. (Bigsby, 1992, p. 176) He was strongly influenced by Joseph Chaikin's Open Theatre, especially the "transformation" exercise of the company – he used the technique both in his earliest and pop cultural plays. Accordingly, his writing dispensed with the conventional drama in respect of character and plot. His early plays that were written "very quickly; on the inspiration of the moment" (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 45) are considered as "abstract collages, consisting of lyrical monologues, stunning imagery, and a sense of paranoid despair," (Shewey, 1997, p. 45) The "unidentifiable" characters that shift "through the actor" as defined by Shepard himself, (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 45) always move in real time, at present, in contrast with the traditional drama that consists of a time span. Having been influenced by the Beat poets and jazz musicians, Shepard also interweaved a "seemingly improvised jazz-like rhythm" into his earliest plays. (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 130)

In the pop-culture phase of his career, Shepard, remaining to make use of avant-garde art practices of his era in his one-act pieces for Off-Off Broadway venues, led his writing to a quite different direction from that of his earliest plays. In an interview in 1969, he explained his new inclination as, "Now I'm dealing more with mythic characters, a combination of science-fiction, Westerns, and television." (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 52) Geis explains such a blend as follows:

> All, or nearly all, of the plays of this period reveal an apparent infatuation with the contemporary mythology that the American collective unconscious has populated with images of cowboys, gangsters and detectives, movie stars and rock stars, and even creatures from outer space. (Geis, 1996, p. 57)

According to Wade (1997), Shepard's will to use pop culture imagery was due to his interest in "mythic" characters. (p. 36) By employing such characters that were usually collected from pop cultural texts, he aimed to "create art that can generate a kind of unifying experience which – in the skeptical twentieth century- social conventions and religion are no longer able to provide." (Bottoms, 1998, p. 8) Proctor (1988) reports Shepard's own words about how he takes myth: "By myth I mean a sense of mystery and not necessarily a traditional formula. A character for me is a composite of different mysteries. He's an unknown quantity. If he wasn't it would be like coloring in the numbered spaces." (p. 39) Shepard has faith in the mysterious to provide for a unifying force; the unknown may bear the power to remedy the ills of the modern society.

Bottoms (1998) observes that "Shepard's concern with achieving some kind of universal resonance in his work also helps explain his fascination with the musicality of language." (p. 8) The influence of jazz on the earliest plays shifted to rock music in the pop culture phase. Beginning with the *Melodrama Play* (1967), he produced a series of "rock plays" including *Forensic and the Navigators* (1967), *Operation Sidewinder* (1970), *Mad Dog Blues* (1971), *Cowboy Mouth* (1971), and *The Tooth of Crime* (1972). Shepard in these plays, both wrote about rock music and used it as a means of theatrical activity. He included live rock performances into the plays, and some of them even contained speeches about the "merits of rock." (Bottoms, 1998, p. 66) Shepard also

favored the attitude of rock-and-roll treatment of language in these plays; the speeches in his rock plays acquired a musical quality when they were attended by the "driving, linear tempo of rock." (Bottoms, 1998, p. 67)

In the period of his pop cultural plays, the influence of abstract expressionism was replaced by Shepard's interest in pop-art. His works emerged as "high-speed, cartoon-color pastiches" which came out of a practice that exhibited "a bold interweaving of heterogeneous texts and images" such as rock music, movies and folklore. (Wade, 1997, p. 36) Many of Shepard's dramas of the late 60s and early 70s involve this "intertextual assemblage in a kind of postmodern collage" including *The Unseen Hand* (1969), *Cowboy Mouth* (1971), *The Tooth of Crime* (1972), and *Angel City* (1976). (Geis, 1996, p. 59)

The core of this dissertation is to examine two plays of Sam Shepard that belong to the pop culture phase of his career, *The Unseen Hand* and *Cowboy Mouth*, in respect of the popular culture images used in the plays to create contemporary myths. The study will analyze the significance of the images as well as the popular sources which they are selected from, in their contribution to the creation of the myth and also to the overall effect of the plays. It will also try to comprehend why there is an urge for the myth, and what issues or ideas are surfaced along with the attempt for its creation. The study also bears a concern for the form; how different texts such as music, movies and folklore are interwoven into the plays to produce a kind of postmodern collage.

The study consists of two chapters. In the first chapter, out of a need to expose Shepard's significantly taking part in the Off-Off Broadway theatre which allowed to develop his own distinctive voice, an account of the emergence, and characteristics of the movement will be given under the topic, "Contemporary American Theatre: 1960s and 1970s." In the next part, "The Theatre of Sam Shepard" will be outlined, in order that his remarkable position in the contemporary American theatre, and the distinctive features of his art may be clarified. In the last part of this chapter, "Pop Culture Phase of Shepard's Career" will be explained in detail for the period is significant in the context of the dissertation.

The second chapter is reserved for the analysis of pop culture images and Shepard's contemporary mythmaking in two significant plays. The pieces were deliberately chosen so as to exemplify a collage-like play – *The Unseen Hand* – and a play with music – *Cowboy Mouth*- that reveal two important characteristics of Shepard's pop culture phase.

The Unseen Hand, which is a blend of science fiction, Old Western myth and heroics, and high school vanities, will be discussed in the first part of the second chapter, drawing attention to the pop sensibility, and bricolage practice of the play. Also, an argument of Shepard's criticism of the contemporary American society, mainly in respect of consumerism and scientific totalitarianism will take place with detailed reference to the text.

The second part of the chapter will try to analyze Shepard's self-referential play written in collaboration with Patti Smith, *Cowboy Mouth*, which is based on their affair in a hotel room in New York. Through discussion of the play, Shepard's criticism of contemporary American society in which individuals suffer from alienation, hopelessness and loneliness will be discerned. The piece will also be treated as one of Shepard's rock plays with music. Other pop cultural images and tendencies in the play will also be detected.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THEATRE: 1960S AND 1970S AND THE THEATRE OF SAM SHEPARD

1. 1. CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THEATRE

Until the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 60s American theatre was largely produced on Broadway in New York City and American dramatists were almost merely measured by Broadway success. The history of theatre in the United States is in large part an economic history, and Broadway has been the locale of commercial theatre. (Wade, 1997, p. 13) In Broadway theatres, frontal stage was designed exclusively for theatrical performance and the audience was carefully separated from the players by the curtain representing the fourth wall establishing an illusion of reality. Dramas performed were kinds of light comedy, musicals, and serious "war" or "family" plays that dealt in social criticism or psychological exploration. Despite the fact that American theatre had produced important dramatists like Eugene O'Neil, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and Edward Albee, it is agreed that American drama had been importing its plays – "man-chasing women" comedies or "serious plays informed by a debased Freudianism"- from London until the 60s. (Herman, 1987, p. 4) Broadway theatre was most popular in the jazz age of the 1920s, when there were more than eighty theatres offering over 200 productions each season. Post-World War II America, however, could not sustain such an enterprise. Inflation, union demands, real estate prices, and competition from film and television, began to weaken Broadway. By the mid-sixties only about forty Broadway theatres were in operation, producing fewer than seventy shows per season. Due to its financial stakes, the Broadway market grew increasingly dependent on commodity plays directed towards mass entertainment. (Wade, 1997, p. 14)

The great events and the radical intellectual and cultural currents of the 50s and 60s combined to change things in the American theatre. Theatrical activity began to take a new shape. Off-Broadway, which had begun in New York in 1915 with the

anticommercial revolt of the Washington Square Players in New York and of the Provincetown Theatre on Cape Cod, began to blossom with new companies, new talents in acting and directing and playwriting, and new ideas. The Circle in the Square Theatre began to come together as early as 1950 and proved the standard-bearer of the movement, and its 1952 production of Tennessee Williams's *Summer and Smoke was* a success. The Living Theatre opened in 1951 and the Phoenix Theatre began to operate in 1953. In 1953, Joseph Papp began his New York Shakespeare Festival, an enterprise that by 1970 employed more actors than any other theatrical enterprise in the United States. Papp's festival also presented some radical new works, and new playwrights such as Charles Gordone, David Rabe, Ed Bullins and David Mamet were introduced to the audience in Central Park. (Hermann, 1987, p. 4-5)

Meanwhile regional theatre expanded at a great pace. Instead of "Little Theatre"s in a few cities and road stops for touring Broadway attractions, new theatres encouraging new writers as well as performing classics were being established in cities like Seattle, Houston and Washington. (Hermann, 1987, p. 5)

While Off-Broadway also presented many works of Europe's foremost playwrights, including the absurdist writers Beckett, Ionesco, and Genet, it provided little encouragement to emerging American playwrights. By the mid-sixties, Off-Broadway had become increasingly unionized and productions ranged in cost from $10,000 to $40,000. Many younger performers and writers felt that institutionalization gave movement's original spirit away to the box office. (Wade, 1997, p. 14)

A new order of performance practice was urged by the counterculture energy of the sixties. The new movement differed remarkably from the work seen on Broadway or Off-Broadway stages. Considered under the umbrella term "Off-Off Broadway", this theatre did not emerge as a self-conscious, coherent movement but as the spontaneous blossoming of many diverse theatrical activities. One thing was common to all Off-Off Broadway undertakings that they dismissed commercial or establishment theatre and its middle-class fare. (Wade, 1997, p. 14)

The new venue of Off-Off Broadway was born when in 1959 Joe Cino began producing plays in his coffee bar, Caffe Cino. In 1962 Ellen Stewart opened her Café La MaMa and likewise offered new playwrights a nurturing and low-budget platform for public performances. (Wade, 1997, p. 14) Café Cino introduced the work of Lanford

Wilson. Writers such as Paul Foster, Jean-Claude Van Italie, Sam Shepard, Ross Alexander and Wilson were given playing space in Café La MaMa. (Hermann, 1987, p. 5) In the early 1960s a number of groups flourished under the guidance of several noted figures – including Al Carmines (Judson Poets' Theatre) and Ralph Cook (Theatre Genesis). The use of alternative spaces was common. Theatres sprang up in churches, cafés, galleries, lofts, storefronts and anywhere suitable to take in an audience. Theatre Genesis, which produced Sam Shepard's first plays, was in the basement of the ancient St. Mark's in the Bowerie. The initial emergence of the Off-Off Broadway movement depended upon a handful of strong-willed figures who sustained a performance space, and often a stable of favored writers, through shrewd resource management and passionate personal commitment. Unlike the commercial theatre and its high-figure production costs, Off-Off Broadway survived on low budgets, and artists received little or no pay. (Wade, 1997, p. 14-15)

The complex but fertile era in the life of the nation in the early 1960s had a great effect on the work of the experimental theatre of the day encouraging it towards liberation. It also reflected the eagerness of the period for the exploration of recombined or alternative modes of outlook enjoying a release from conventional hierarchies. Off-Off Broadway and the alternative theater encouraged new experiments in form and content for many reasons: alternative theatre had younger and more sophisticated audiences; challenging new European dramatists such as Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco and Jean Genet were discovered and there was a revival of interest in Bertolt Brecht, the new theatre was a rebellion against the commercial theatre of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, and non-commercial alternative theatres made more afford to take chances than Broadway did. Accordingly, some new dramatists of the 1960s rejected domestic realism and sought to expand the stylistic vocabulary of the American drama. They were convinced that their new ideas or perspectives required new forms beyond the domestic realism of Miller and Williams and attempted to discover what else drama could do. (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 121-122)

The movement also appealed to the peculiarities of the era, thus welcomed by the nation. In January of 1964, Arthur Miller's *After The Fall* was presented as the inaugural production of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre. The play, which in fact drew massive radio, television, and newspaper coverage, was viewed as a failure on

most accounts. This event signaled the passing of the great American playwrights of the 1950s. This occasion also sent out tacit invitation for new blood, for new forms and ideas to invigorate the American theatre. (Wade, 1997, p. 15-16)

By 1963 Joseph Chaikin's Open Theater was giving performances in Sheridan Square. The philosophies as well as the practices of some companies such as Open Theatre, which sought to move away from the traditional author and the text dominated drama, had a great effect on the dramatists of the period. (Tekinay, 2001, p. 2) These companies along with directors treated a script as only the starting point for theatrical invention, relying extensively on improvisation and borrowing freely from other arts such as mime, dance and religious ritual. Often their final product resembled only a little to the original text and sometimes the playwright's only role was scribing the final product of the group who had composed a work communally. However, anti-textual these approaches were, they were admired by some playwrights. Sam Shepard and Lanford Wilson were strongly influenced by the style of Joseph Chaikin's Open Theatre. They thought the rehearsal exercises and the skills the company developed in the performers were supportive of their own experiments. Particularly the "transformation" exercise of the company, in which actors playing a scene would suddenly switch roles, jump to a different play, become animals or otherwise make instant changes in the reality they were portraying, was very popular among new dramatist. This exercise offered new and efficient means of characterization for the playwright and allowed him for a cinematic structure of short scenes flowing or jumping into one another. Megan Terry and Jean-Claude Itallie worked closely with the Open Theatre. (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 122)

"In retrospect a miraculous year", 1964 was the year of Amiri Baraka's powerful and influential American play *Dutchman,* as well as the first plays of Sam Shepard. In the same year Susan Sontag published her important essay "Against Interpretation," which spoke out against interposing meaning between an auditor and the direct experience of art. That same year the Actor's Theater of Louisville, which was to bring Marsha Norman to the fore in the late 70s and early 80s, took its first steps. The trauma of Vietnam inaugurated a decade-long theatrical response in the form of street and guerrilla theater. The urgencies of the civil rights movement motivated black theater across the country from Los Angeles and San Francisco to the Negro Ensemble Company and the New Lafayette Theater in New York. El Teatro

Campesino arose in 1965 to support a strike of migrant workers in California. By the end of the 60s, gay theater was alive at the Ridiculous Theatrical Company in New York. Richard Schechner, up from New Orleans and the *Tulane Drama Review,* created the Performance Group on Wooster Street in New York, and a few blocks away the Circle Repertory Company and Woodie King, Jr.'s New Federal Theater were in full swing. (Herman, 1987, 7-8)

"The plays and performances of the 1960s and early 1970s exhibited enormous variety and distinction." (Tekinay, 2001, p. 4) The distinction between Broadway and the new radical branches of the American theatre remained sharp in 1960s and began to fade in the 1970s. It was still possible to identify individual playwrights such as Edward Albee as Broadway or non-Broadway. Among non-Broadway playwrights there were Sam Shepard and Lanford Wilson who both began Off-Off Broadway in the mid-1960s and used the freedom of Off-Off Broadway theatre to explore themes and styles on their ways to finding their true voices. In the very politicized national atmosphere of this decade, some other dramatists such as David Rabe, who most successfully captured the story of the Vietnam War, addressed social or political issues. Black dramatists such as Le Roi Jones and Amiri Baraka dramatized the black American experience to make moral and political statements. There were also many young writers who followed the path of Williams and Inge, using the drama to explore and illuminate psyhchological states. (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 124)

1. 2. THE THEATRE OF SAM SHEPARD

Sam Shepard is regarded as one of the most "talented, challenging and productive playwrights" of the Off-Off Broadway Theatre, and the criticism about his literary success "center on the view that his works have placed him among the major dramatists of American theatre" (Yetginer, 1991, p. 1) such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams. (Wade, 1997, p. 1) Cohn (1991) labels Shepard as the "fortune's child" calling attention to the brilliance of his career. At the age of nineteen his plays were produced Off-Off Broadway, at the age of twenty-three his works were published and he won an Obbie award, he was contracted to write a movie at the age of twenty-five, at twenty-seven he was subsidized at Lincoln Center, and he turned to be a movie actor at the age of thirty-five. In 1979, he won a Pulitzer Prize. (p. 169)

Broken into the theatre while a student at Mount San Antonio College, in Walnut, CA, he joined the Bishop's Company Repertory Players on a nation-wide tour in 1962. In 1963, he quit the job in New York to try his luck as a writer while the Off-Off Broadway movement was flourishing. (Callens, 1995, p.157) It is also possible to say that he fell almost accidentally into playwriting when he went to New York : "The world I was living in was the most interesting to me, and I thought the best thing I could do maybe would be to write about it, so I started writing plays." (as cited in Berney, 1994, p. 531) In New York, with a painter friend Charles Mingus, who was the son of the famous jazz musician, he rented an apartment on the Lower East Side. Mingus also got him a busboy job at the Village Gate, a leading jazz club in Greenwich Village. Living was cheap in the area, and from the rest of the country it gathered new arrivals who had come to try to make art. "On the Lower East Side, there was a special sort of culture developing…Something was going on…People were arriving from Texas and Arkansas and a community was being established. It was a very exciting time." (as cited in Herman, 1987, p. 25) In the emerging world of avant-garde theatre on the Lower East Side, Shepard quickly found an interest in writing.

Shepard was very involved in the development of his era that was shaped by a revolution which had overtaken dance, theatre, music, the arts in general. He took drugs, wrote poems and plays. His idols were Jack Kerauc, Alan Ginsberg and Bob Dylan. Ralph Cook, a headwaiter at the Village Gate, asked Shepard to write a play he can

produce at Theatre Genesis, a playwrights' workshop theatre sponsored by St Mark's in the Bowerie. The result was Shepard's first productions – *Cowboys* and *The Rock Garden.* The plays were staged at Theatre Genesis, in October 1964. (Wade, 1997, p. 1) A couple of months later, he began his association with Ellen Stewart and the La Mama Experimental Theatre Club, and he was fully launched on a career of playwriting. His reputation was built with a series of short plays for Off-Off Broadway theater, including *Chicago* (1969), *Icarus's Mother* (1965), *Red Cross* (1966), *La Turista* (1967), and *Forensic and the Navigators* (1967), all of which won Obie Awards.

(Plimpton, 2000, p. 330)

In 1971 Shepard moved with his wife of two years, O-Lan Johnson Dark, and their infant son to England, where he composed a number of well-received medium-length plays, including *The Tooth of Crime* (1972) and *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* (1974). In 1974 he returned to California and began writing the plays that have secured his reputation – *Curse of the Starving Class* (1978), *Fool for Love* (1983), and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Buried Child* (1978). (Plimpton, 2000, p. 330) Since 1975 he has maintained a steady connection with the Magic Theatre of San Francisco – both as playwright and director of his own work. He has subsequently worked with the Open Theatre of Joseph Chaikin and was in collaboration with the writer-director Joseph Chaikin during the seventies and eighties. Shepard wrote fewer plays in the 1990s - just 4 new plays and revisions of earlier plays. Nevertheless, he received the Gold Medal for Drama from the Academy in 1992 and was introduced into the Theater Hall of Fame in 1994. His latest play *The Late Henry Moss* has won a celebrity cast at the San Francisco Theatre.

Shepard has produced more than forty plays, five screenplays, two books of assorted prose and poetry, and a nonfiction work – an account of Bob Dylan's national Rolling Thunder tour of 1975.

Shepard's career as a playwright is often studied in two stages as "early" and "late" plays - the former usually being labeled as "experimental", and "rock" plays and the latter "family" dramas. His early career includes the works that were produced between the mid 1960s and the late 1970s. His late period which started in 1978 has been continuing. (Tekinay, 2001, p. 52) Geis (1996) also considers that States of Shock (1991) may be the beginning of another period in Shepard's career. (p. 45)

Shepard's earliest metadramatic experimental plays seemed in tune with the times. Shepard had arrived in a New York in which writers, directors and actors were determined to bridge the gap between art and performance, and to construct a new drama "in which the unconsciousness was to be liberated and consciousness become a subject." (Bigsby, 1992, p. 176) He was strongly influenced by the style of Joseph Chaikin's Open Theatre during his early period. The transformation exercise of the company was very popular among many experimental groups in the mid 1960s, in which actors would "switch roles or pass to a different play or become animals or make instant changes in the reality they were portraying." Radical shifts of character, tone and dramatic mode in Shepard's earliest plays reveal the influence of transformation technique. (Tekinay, 2001, p. 52) These plays were written very quickly, on the inspiration of the moment, never rewritten or edited. (Shewey, 1997, p. 45) Shepard has said that, these early plays "would just come out", and he wouldn't try to shape them. (Chubb, 1981, p. 191) He would begin the early plays with a powerful stage image, like that of a man sitting onstage in a bathtub with all of his clothes on (Chicago) and take it from there. Visual images in these plays are striking because they are minimalized so as to highlight their strangeness. (Geis, 1996, p.47) Along with the powerful visual images, personal references and symbolic vocabulary, which make the plays almost unintelligible, are carried by a seemingly improvised jazz-like rhythm. (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 130) During this period Shepard was also influenced by the Beat poets and jazz musicians. Shepard applied what he found in jazz and in the Beat poets to his drama: "I've practiced Jack Kerouac's discovery of jazz-sketching with words… following the exact principles as a musician does when he's jamming." (as cited in Tekinay, 2001, p. 53) In line with the practice of jazz-sketching, there appeared no formal structure in these early plays.

The early plays dispensed with traditional character and plot. In contrast with conventional plays where there is a time span which could be two days or twenty years, Shepard's early plays take place in real time- at present. There is no pretense of days or years passing. In that short space of time the characters change a lot, play different roles and go through different moods differing from the traditional characters which stay pretty much the same over the time span of the play. (Shewey, 1997, p.45) On simple but striking stage sets, young men and women act compulsively, without making conventional sense. Cohn (1991) states that in these plays "Shepard's young people flex their lexical muscles in long arias." That is to say, they usually demonstrate "inventive,

associative, syntactically simple but image-laden" monologues that also drive the postmodern impulses of these early plays. (p. 172) Contrary to the way of linear narrative, in the early plays, the character is not conceived along with social experience and nor the language is the means of exposing truth or clarifying relationships.

(Bigsby, 1992, p. 176)

Berkowitz (1992) suggests that one repeated theme of the early plays is "the need of individual to create himself in a world that gives him no particular identity to start with." In the plays such as *Cowboys* (1964), *Melodrama Play* (1967), *The Unseen Hand* (1969) and *Action* (1974), characters often try alternative identities and behaviours to find something that will be real to them. (p. 130)

The plays that were written during the period from 1967 (the year of *La Turista* and *Melodrama Play*) to 1976 (the year of *Angel City* and *Suicide in Bb*) are often categorized as a second group of the early plays which reveal an apparent passion with the popular culture images and mythic characters. Geis (1996) suggests that this period might be termed as "pop culture" phase and calls the plays of this period "rock plays". (p. 57) Cohn (1991) prefers to label this period as "fantasy" since "mythic characters figure in sustained plots, surcharged with incident." (p. 172) Actually, these plays are blends of fantastic and pop elements.

In these plays, characters are usually chosen among figures appeared in the movies, movie stars, and rock stars. "They present the conflict between America's spiritual and cultural heritage and superficial, high-tech aspect of modern civilization," and "the plays of the early 1970s were set against the cultural and social discomfort of the period." (Tekinay, 2001, p.54)

Later in the 1970s Shepard gradually moved away from the style of mixed metaphors and sudden shifts in dramatic mode towards something close to domestic realism. (Berkowitz, 1992, p. 134) He had already confessed in 1974, "I like to try a whole different way of writing now, which is very stark and not so flashy and not full of alto of mythic figures and everything, and try to scrape it down to the bone as much as possible." (as cited in Cohn, 1991, p. 180) As he indicated with these words before, Shepard's career seemed to take a different direction with *Curse of Starving Class* (1977) and *Buried Child* (1978), the former winning an Obie Award, an the latter a Pulitzer Prize. These three-act plays seemed to be more realistic. (Bigsby, 1992, p. 180)

Particularly, the sets demonstrated a detailed realism - "Old wooden staircase down left with pale, frayed carpet laid down the steps" in *Buried Child* or "Deep, wide, dark space" in *A Lie of The Mind* (1985). (Bigsby, 1992, p. 172) Bigsby (1992) discusses that, however, these plays are not realistic in any conventional sense:

> Reality expands to incorporate fantasy, dream and myth. Sensibilities are pressed to extremes. There is a gothic element to Shepard's imagination as his characters focus their lives to a single point. Theirs is not a stable energy. Passion destabilizes identity and distorts perception. Shepard's characters tend to be neurotically hypersensitive. Everything in their interior and exterior lives is magnified, amplified. He is prone to employ music much like the sound-track of a film, literally underscoring moments of emotional intensity. Music … also serves to reinforce the specifically American world of his fables of failed love and buried dreams. (p. 172)

In the reality of these plays, there is a gothic element: "anarchic energy is always present" which could turn into a burst of violence any moment. In contrast with those of well-made plays, characters are not stable and defy easy definition. They can not be defined precisely according to their social or psychological world. (Tekinay, 2001, p.56)

In his late plays, Shepard turned from the revision of American popular culture to a focus on the role of the family and the lover within that cultural context. (Geis, 1996, p.74) He also preferred to give up the avant-garde which emphasized the *reality of fragmentation* – the depiction of temporariness, division and separation instead of any kind of unity. In an interview in 1988 Shepard states:

> I'm not interested in anything that doesn't have a kind of wholeness to it. I'm not interested any more in little fragmented bits and pieces of stuff that might be interesting for five minutes. I need something that has more of a definitive wholeness to it. That has a sense of being a story that's already been told… and that you're just coming to it … What's most frightening to me right now is this estrangement from life. People and things are becoming more and more removed from the actual. We are becoming more and more removed from the Earth to the point that people just don't know themselves or each other or anything. We're this incredible global race of strangers … That's terrifying. Things are so dispensable now. People live together for a while… then they split. Then the kids never see each other. It's absolutely frightening – this incessant estrangement… People are being amputated from each other and from themselves. (as cited in Bigsby, 1992, p.170)

Shepard, in his family plays, relates his discomfort with the fragmented lives of modern men in a unifying style. His characters are estranged from one another and from themselves with an unbridgeable space between them. Husband and wife, father and son, lovers, brothers, are all strangers. However, there is a unifying repetition beneath this drama of alienation. His plays are, as fables or reenactments of myth, accounts of same themes – the rivalry of sons, the son's search for the father or men and women caught in the contraries of emotions. "Stories that have already been told" are repeatedly referred to in different plays. This attitude of the playwright also conveys the significance of ritual and myth in his work. (Bigsby, 1992, p.170) Geis (1996) observes that Shepard's late plays, "…beginning with the *Curse of the Starving Class* (1977)…" and with the following two plays of the so-called family trilogy, *Buried Child* (1978) and *True West* (1980), "continue to reveal a passionate interest in the rewriting and rereading of American mythology" as it was the case particulary in the pop-culture phase. (p. 74)

It is often suggested that *Buried Child*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1979, is viewed as Shepard's greatest work since it marks the playwright's mature phase. The play is considered to be "an artifact of an essential Americanness" since it locates tensions in an American heritage of pionerring and mastering the soil. (Smith, 1997, p. iii) According to Berkowitz, "*Burried Child*, *True West* and perhaps *Fool for Love* achieve mythic resonances through exploiting the power of realism," and with these plays "Shepard found his way back to the American drama's natural mode." (as cited in Tekinay, 2001, p. 56)

In Shepard's published and unpublished works, characters are from all social or economic quarters of life: "criminals as well as impoverished farmers and landed aristocrats, college-educated writers, rock-musicians and amateur actors, movie moguls and business tycoons, counterrevolutionary students and dubious specimens of the military." The social mix is predominantly white and male but the "other" has never been entirely absent (women in *Fool For Love* and *A Lie of The Mind*, Indians in *Silent Tongue*). (Callens, 1995, pl 160) In Shepard's work people are trying to do their best to survive with what they have within themselves, within their heredity and from their experience of life. (Hayes, 1995, p. 131) While trying to do it whether on the ranch, at the rodeo, on the road or in the family relationships, they take both being involved with other people and being isolated in their individual consciousness into consideration. Both their actions and perceptions are significant. As a means of expressing their self-

consciousness and detaching from the action to meditate on what they are experiencing, they often employ monologues. (Simard, 1984, p. 80) In Shepard's works from all of his stages of interest – his early or late plays- monologic language is effectively used for the theatricalization of the speaking subject. (Geis, 1996, p.46-47) Bigsby suggests that the language of characters does not function only as "a literal verbal expressiveness." Characters are their performances because they can not be easily defined with their words or actions. "They come into being through the rhythm of their language as much as through its lexical meaning…meaning is generated out of tone, rhythm, inflexion, volume and cadence." The plot in Shepard's plays serves for explorations of emotional states, expressions of anxieties, disturbing journeys into the individual subconscious or the collective psyche of the tribe. (Bigsby, 1992, p. 170-171) Shepard's technique is described as "a vision of space emotional rather than physical, a vision of time immediate rather than continuous, a vision of character spontaneous rather than coherent, and a vision of story of consciousness rather than behavior." (Simard, 1984, p. 80)

1. 3. POP CULTURE PHASE OF SAM SHEPARD'S THEATRE

Sam Shepard whose career has spanned four decades from the early 1960s to the day is considered to have served for the reproduction of contemporary America on stage and screen, perhaps in a more impressive way than any other contemporary figure. Throughout his career, he has been declared as the "most American" of contemporary American playwrights. (Wade, 1997, p. 2) Wynn Handman, artistic director of the American Place Theatre, once remarked that Shepard is "like a conduit that digs down into the American soil and what flows out of him is what we're all about". (as cited in Wade, 1997, p. 2) Because of his longevity in the American theatre, his plays may be viewed as artifacts that document contemporary American history, and shifts in his aesthetic orientation often signal bigger changes in the social and political situations of the nation. Wade (1997) suggests that Shepard's having been able to attract audiences throughout many years indicates that "the playwright's appeal has not been based on innovative dramatic technique alone, but that his plays somehow speak to an American experience that lies deep within the nation's cultural memory." (p. 2) Shepard's plays are valuable as vehicles for cultural critique of the period that they were written in – they picture the American experience with the most memorable colors of their times.

As it was discussed earlier in the former chapter, Shepard started his career as a playwright in the mid 1960s just as the Off-Off Broadway movement was in the ascent and the plays he has written until late 1970s are considered to belong to the period of his early works. Shepard's first plays reflect the cultural change that the country was experiencing in the early 1960s and in a sense they document America of those times when a great exhilaration was taking place. The early sixties exhibited a dramatic expansion of social awareness. American president Kennedy called for a renewal of the national spirit against the complacency and consumerism of the 1950s and personified the idealism of an upcoming generation. African American students protested against segregated dining during the 1960 sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, which served to awaken the civil rights movement. The status of American women also became a national subject – Betty Freiden's *Feminine Mystique* was a groundbreaking work. The *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson voiced an environmental warning in 1962. The same year, Students for a Democratic Society held its first national conference. (Wade, 1997,

p. 11) All these led to and ratified the counterculture of the 1960s and its ideation. (Hermann, 1987, p. 11) Great numbers of postwar youth proved unwilling to comply with the materialistic values of their parents who had experienced the 1950s. Baby boomers of the 50s had emerged as a formidable demographic force to search for an alternative social vision other than the one of 50s that advocated goals over material goods. Paul Goodman's classic work *Growing Up Absurd* (1960) addressed the anxieties spawned by an increasingly corporate American society. (Wade, 1997, p. 11)

Wade (1997) reports Victor Turner's ideas so as to describe Sam Shepard's lifestyle during this period of radical shifts in the American society: "radical shifts in social or familial status are often attended by a "liminal" period, an interlude of antistructure, where the individual experiences an exploratory investigation of self, role play, and community." (p. 11) Shepard departed from an avocado farm in California to land in New York city, and dropped his name "Rogers" that had gone seven generations when he was on the road with the Bishop's company. He was nineteen years old when he came to New York- a city populated by eight million, with subways underneath and skyscrapers overhead, a different world from a small town in California. "It was 1963 – Kennedy was the president, the baby-boom generation was coming of age, the air was electric with jazz, hope, prosperity and energy." (Shewey, 1997, p. 24)) Shepard's early experiences in New York, in his own words, was "like being a kid in a fun park." His sex life during this period was active and indiscriminate. He also took part in the emerging drug culture. He started a free-floating adventure. All these shifts in society in the 1960s and in the familial status of Shepard corresponds to the liminal condition – Shepard followed a frank hedonism, the new and exciting as the youth did in this remarkable period of widespread euphoria. (Wade, 1997, p. 11-12)

The counterculture's rejection of middle-class values evidenced itself in avant-garde art practices as well as alternative lifestyle choices. After World War II, New York emerged as the world's leading international art center since abstract expressionism made famous by the work of Jackson Pollock had gained worldwide acclaim for the American avant-garde. Young artists came to the city in great numbers to assemble a new art renouncing the standards of traditional art. These artists produced a transgressive art characterized by spontaneity, playfulness, and stark originality. The boundaries between high art and popular culture were intentionally blurred and as a result artworks combined various media, and everyday objects and commonplace

behavior were brought into the realm of aesthetic experience. The pop art of Andy Warhol and, "happenings" that were promoted by Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, and Jim Dine, where movement, sculpture, painting, and sound were blended into collage events, were the most significant undertakings that demonstrated the desire to produce a new art. (Wade, 1997, p. 12) The expansive and radical theatrical activity of the period to the mid-70s was also characterized by social attitudes and allegiances that opposed to the prevailing aesthetics and it employed avant-garde art practices in its search for sexual, political and artistic liberation. Among the young "authenticity" was generated as the key concept of the personal and the public life, which lead to the idea of sexual liberation and eventually to the advocacy of a relaxed acceptance of being and experience. These were embodied in various degrees in the performance theatres. The Living Theatre was concerned with "the authenticity of the body" while Joseph Chaikin's Open Theatre presented the acting exercise, "the body in motion". Joseph Chaikin, whose actors chanted and moved together in physical and aural concert on the stage, noted that, "All of one's past – historically and evolutionary is contained in the body" (Hermann, 1987, p. 10-13)

The characteristics of the era, particularly the avant-garde art practices had a significant effect on Shepard's playwriting during the period of his early plays. Justifying the Martin Esslin's assertion that "Sam Shepard is contemporary American theatre" (as cited in Wade, 1997, p. 1) , Wade (1997) identifies Shepard's career as having been evolved in line with the progression of American theatre: "The production history of his plays – and its glaring want of Broadway credits – reveals much about the institutions of American theatre, its production modes, its aesthetics, economics, and ideologies." (p. 1) This was true for the time when Shepard first came to New York in the mid-1960s as well. He was employed at a jazz club in Greenwich Village that was the epicenter of counterculture activity. He made acquaintance of numerous experimental musicians, painters, and performers and eventually he found himself in the midst of a cultural explosion. He absorbed the aesthetic outlook and innovative strategies that he used in his early plays which thus became proper examples of the counterculture theatre. (Wade, 1997, p. 12) Shewey (1997) states that "Shepard's style of writing was largely determined by his style of living", which could also be taken as a cause of Shepard's position as a revealer of the peculiarities of his time. (p. 46) According to Meserve (1994), "More than any other contemporary dramatist, Shepard

shows the influences of his generation (the rock-and-roll culture, the drugs." (p. 368) His liminal condition, his lifestyle and his affinities with the counterculture activity and its artistic effects in the mid-1960s may be discerned in his earliest plays.

Including *The Rock Garden* (1964), *Cowboys* (1964), *Up to Thursday* (1965), *Chicago* (1965), *Icarus's Mother* (1965), Red Cross (1966), *and Fourteen Hundred Thousand* (1966), Shepard draws upon the techniques of the experimental theatre and dispense with the traditional character and plot, valuing nonlinear action, associative image patterns and fluid characterization. The actions and images in the early plays resonate with the experience of American life and Shepard transmits an immediate visceral sensation of contemporary reality through them. Bloom (1981) discusses that, "the behavior of these plays is especially characteristic of America in the middle of this century: the conforming to boring social rituals, the obeisance to work, the obsessive game-playing, and of course the emotional repression." (p.76) Nearly all of the one-acts of this period reflect on the "emptiness, boredom, and alienation of modern existence." (Bloom, 1981, p.75) The playwright also deploys nationalistic imagery in a satiric fashion throughout these plays: the youth in *Up to Thursday* sleeps under the American flag; *Chicago* (1965) opens with the *Gettysburg Address*; and *Icarus's Mother* (1965) takes place on the Fourth of July. (Wade, 1997, p.22) Many of Shepard's plays of the 60s are based on his own experiences – *Cowboys* is considered as a typical conversation between the two roommates (Shepard and Charles Mingus). (Shewey, 1997, p.47) *Chicago* derived from his association with Joyce Aaron (thinly disguised in the play as Joy), his girlfriend between the years 1965 and 1967. (Tucker, 1992, p. 36) Shepard spoke the language of youth his plays drawing from the images and experience of youth and thus his work became the most celebrative productions of the counterculture. *Chicago*, *Icarus's Mother*, and *Red Cross* were honored with Obies, awards given annually by the *Village Voice* or Off – and Off-Off Broadway achievement. (Wade, 1997, p. 21)

Shepard's plays of the late 1960s to the mid-70s are agreed to belong to his "pop culture" phase. In this period of his career, Shepard continued to write about contemporary America and make use of avant-garde art practices of his era to write one-act pieces for Off-Off Broadway venues. However, the influence of jazz gave way to that of rock music, while the influence of abstract expressionism was replaced by his interest in pop art. Hollywood movies also became a source of inspiration. In these

plays, stage action, character, and language itself are dominated by a regard to the external world, as Shepard began manipulating and parodying the fragmented discourses of popular culture. (Bottoms, 1998, p.59)

The ascent of Shepard's career in the late 1960s – his maturing process is thought to be apparent in *La Turista* (1967) (Bottoms, 1998, p. 59) – was concurrent with Off-Off Broadway's remarkable rise to prominence and it was a by-product of it. The success of his theatre, however, brought significant changes – it gradually became subjected to institutional controls that seek to "regiment, legitimize, recast or censor." Forces of canonization began to act upon the movement and Off-Off Broadway was increasingly being dragged in the entertainment business and the institutions of public culture. Shepard, having been recipient of numerous honors and awards – a grant from the University of Minnesota and a fellowship from Yale University in 1966, a prestigious Rockefeller Grant in 1967 – gained cultural respectability and was able to write full time with the monies he received without working in low-paid jobs as he did before. Accordingly, the theatre for Shepard became a job rather than just a vehicle for self-expression. The funding Shepard received at this time points to the playwright's growing contact with legitimate cultural agencies as it was the case for the whole Off-Off Broadway theatre. The 1960s also witnessed a boom in arts funding, since the United States sought to develop a national art "befitting its position as a world superpower" as it tried to ensure the country's technological competitiveness with the NASA space program. In these years, federal and private foundations donated hundreds of millions of dollars to performance groups. Federal policymakers championed "social renewal" – their funding was also directed toward health, highways, housing and agriculture. Wade suggests that, "These efforts toward creating the Great Society signify a paradigmatic shift in American culture: the nation-state of the 1950s gave over to the welfare state of the 1960s." (Wade, 1997, 31-32)

Begining with the *Melodrama Play* (1967), Shepard's works began to reflect these changes in American society. The play criticizes the cultural establishment and comments on how American society renders its artists' products for mass consumption, a topic to which Shepard returns a number of times in *The Tooth of Crime*, *Suicide Bb*, and *True West*. *Melodrama Play* is also considered as Shepard's response to his newfound celebrity. (Wade, 1997, 32) The play tells the story of Duke Durgens, a rock and roll singer who has become a star with his hit tune, "Prisoners, Get Up Out of Your

Homemade Beds." Duke's reasoning of his popularity by the words, "By the people of my generation. I was admired and cherished because the song was true and good and reflected accurately the emotions, thoughts and feelings of our time and place," is considered as Shepard's parodying his own media hype. With his instant stardom, Duke has also become an object of industry mechanisms and the market - even he could escape some impositions such as that of the professor who wants to interview him, he cannot free himself from the reaches of the entertainment industry. He is governed by the music industry, his manager Floyd declares that record sales are his concern. (Wade, 1997, p. 32)

Melodrama Play is also remarkable as being the first of the so-called "rock plays" of Shepard's pop-culture phase. The play was about a rock star and its action is punctuated by songs, and a live band is demanded in the stage directions.(Wade, 1997, p. 33) Rock-and-roll was the heartbeat of American youth in the 1960s, since the American youth found it as one of their major codes of identity in their search for their authentic values. (Hayes, 1995, p. 131) Sam Shepard felt the pulse and accordingly turned to writing about rock music and using it as a means of theatrical activity. He wrote a series of rock plays in his pop-culture phase. Other than *Melodrama Play*, this period included *Forensic and the Navigators* (1967), *Operation Sidewinder* (1970), *Mad Dog Blues* (1971), and his collaboration with Patti Smith *Cowboy Mouth* (1971), and *The Tooth of Crime* (1972) which is considered to be one of his finest plays. (Shewey, 1997, p.55)

An important factor in Shepard's shift to rock-and-roll was the change in the spirit of New York in the late 1960s. From his point of view, the "incredible feeling of community" he found when he had began working in the early 1960s gave its place to the hippie counterculture that destroyed any sense of the city as a sorce of freedom. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 65) Shepard clearly was not in favor of "flower power" side of the sixties counterculture:

> When this influx of essentially white middle-class kids hit the streets, the indigenous people – the Puerto Ricans, the blacks, the street junkies and all the people who were really a part of the scene – felt this great animosity toward these flip-outs running around the lower East side in beads and hair down to their asses. There was this upsurge of violence and weirdness, and everybody started carrying guns and knives. (Shewey, 1997, p. 56)

He wanted to stay away from the streets and dispense with the various pressures on him, and thus he found a fascination with rock music. Shepard was tuned into everything that was going on in the rock world, and he himself even achieved modest success as a rock-and-roller. During his early days in New York, he frequently performed as a drummer. He was also a member for Holy Modal Rounders, a folk-rock band – it was described by Shepard as an "amphetamines band" (as cited in Wade, 1997, p. 33) who recorded a little but gained a cult following. From 1967 to 1970, he made a serious attempt to make an alternative career for himself as the drummer of the band. Recording and touring the West Coast with the band led to a stage silence for two years (he had never had a pause before) between the New York premieres of *Forensic and the Navigators* (1967) and *The Unseen Hand* (1969).

Whenever possible, Shepard included the Rounders and their album *Moray Eels* in his rock plays. In spite of the opposition of director and critics, *Forensic and the Navigators* concluded the Holy Modal Rounders playing electric rock at its climax. In 1970, he wrote the band's music into the text of *Operation Sidewinder*. Live rock performances were also written into *The Mad Dog Blues*, *Cowboy Mouth*, *Back Bog Beast Bait* and *The Tooth of Crime*. Of the remaining texts of this period, *The Holy Ghostly* (1969), *Shaved Splits* (1970) contain lengthy speeches about the merits of rock. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 66)

Other than the use of drums and amplified electric instruments creating an abrasive impact on stage, Shepard also favored the attitude of "rock-and-roll" treatment of language in these plays. He began to treat speeches with a more "prosaic bluntness". In his previous plays, he had used aria-like monologues, with their internal rhythmic dynamics and surreal imagery, whereas, the speeches in his rock plays acquired a musical quality when they were attended by the driving, linear tempo of rock. He retained his interest in providing a rhythmic context for the emotion implied in the words of speeches, but the emotion here is extreme excitement or agitation and the speeches have regular periods and repetitive sound or phrases which create the effect of a "thumping, rocklike beat". (Bottoms, 1998, p. 67)

Bigsby (1985) observes that, in works like *Melodrama Play*, *Mad Dog Blues* and *The Tooth of Crime* music plays an important role as an emotional trigger. (p. 225)

Another reason for Shepard's turning to rock music was his recognition of Pop-Art as a desired impact upon his writing: "I'm interested in exploring the writing of plays through attitudes derived from other forms such as music, painting and sculpture," he declared pointing out his inclination to exercise what the the pop artists of the 1950s and 1960s did in their paintings. (as cited in Bigsby, 1985, p. 227) John A. Walker, in his book *Art Into Pop/Pop Into Art* (1987) documents interactions between fine art and Pop music during the thirty-year period, 1955-85. He assumes pop music as "the plurality of different types of popular music referred to by such terms as rock-and-roll, skiffle, rhythm and blues, heavy metal, Motown, disco reggae, soul,…" (p. 5) and makes a list of English and American pop artists of the 50s-70s such as David Hockney, Richard Hamilton, Derek Boshier, Ray Johnson and Andy Warhol, who produced both album covers for the rock bands and made use of rock music and rock heroes in their paintings. In fact, pop music (or rock music as being the sub category) is a from of mass culture, since it reaches the audience through live performances at concerts and in nightclubs, through records and tapes sold in shops, and in radio and television programs – perhaps it is the most significant form for its use of various media to address younger people. Rock music was a common subject matter of pop art and Shepard was strongly influenced with both the artistic tendency that favored using pop culture images and its use of rock music as a major source of imagery.

Pop artists applied other imagery of popular culture into their products as well. Pop-Art, whose key practitioners included Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and James Rosenquist, took the imagery of mass consumer culture- from soup cans to billboards – and transformed them into huge, colorful gallery displays which simultaneously celebrated and ironized their subject matter. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 77)

Shepard moved in the same direction by drawing on a hugely eclectic range of pop-cultural sources; along with imagery of rock music he turned to American movies and folklore. Drawing from the disparate image banks of rock-and-roll, detective fiction, B-movies, and Wild West adventure shows, his plays of this phase function as a storehouse of images, icons, and idioms that denote American culture and and American sensibility. Wade (1997) suggests that it is not surprising that mass culture would dominate his work, since "as a teenager in the fifties, a time when comic books, drive-in-movies, and TV Westerns were enjoying tremendous success, Shepard was

inculcated in the popular media." (p. 36) In Shepard's plays, the popular culture of the 1950s are usually recalled by the use of various images that belong to those times.

The figures who move through the plays of his pop culture phase are pop stereotypes, including not only rock stars, but also cowboys, Indians and shamans (of Westerns), spacemen (of science-fiction movies), mobsters (of detective fiction), cartoon authority figures and movie stars who have their roots in popular culture. The settings of these plays tend to be composed of the images of consumer culture – coke bottles, Nescafe, a full size of Chevrolet… The fantasy worlds of the earlier work are replaced with ostensible real-world locations in New York, Arizona, Mexico, Lousiana, but these are recollected by a kind of pop-iconic way. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 77)

Shepard's works of this period also emerged as high-speed, cartoon-color pastiches - a postmodern exercise that is also seen in the works of Pop-Artists. This sort of bricolage practice exhibited a bold interweaving of heterogeneous texts and images. (Wade, 1997, p. 36) These were collage-like plays which combined different subcultures such as rock music, movies and folklore where the performing artist also assumes a role as a bricoleur mining the landscapes of pop culture and theatricality itself in search of right texts. Many of Shepard's dramas of the late 60s and early 70s involve this intertextual assemblage of pop culture images in a kind of postmodern collage. (Geis, 1996, p. 59) The tenuous narratives of the rock plays parody, and sometimes openly plagiarize, the formulaic plots of films, television serials, and popular novels. *The Mad Dog Blues* for example, suggest a bizarre combination of elements from sources as diverse as *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, *The Wizard of Oz,* and *Huckleberry Finn.* (Bottoms, 1998, p. 77) Parodying the sources that were drawn on was another postmodern exercise that Shepard practiced a long with the pop artists. Warhol's series of Campell Soup cans or Lichtenstein's comic strip paintings simultaneously pay homage to their sources and parody them.

In 1969, Shepard told The New York Times in an interview that his early plays were "kind of facile. You get a certain spontaneous freaky thing if you write real fast. You don't get anything heavy unless you spend real time. Now I'm dealing more with mythic characters, a combination of science-fiction, Westerns, and television." (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 52) Shepard's will to use pop culture imagery was due to his interest in "mythic" characters – he wanted to "capture the fulsome and fractured contemporary American moment" and he thought that this attempt would bring his

work a new seriousness. (Wade, 1997, p. 36) In Geis's words nearly all the plays that belong to Shepard's pop culture phase "reveal an apparent infatuation with the contemporary mythology that the American collective unconscious has populated with images of cowboys, gangsters and detectives, movie stars and rock stars and even creatures from outer space." (Geis, 1996, p. 57-58) Cowboys and rock stars appear in these plays as "hero" figures, who actively battle against forces of oppression in the outside world and are consistent with the classic hero figure of traditional myth cycles. He found examples of heroes in rock music and in movies, so as to rediscover and rearticulate rituals that "are not borrowed or adapted from primitive tribes but those which touch a contemporary nerve," and thus he created a world of contemporary myth which is a modern equivalent of the mythological ancient world. (Bigsby, 1992, p. 162) Shepard's dramatization of images populated with individual and group subconscious to reconstruct them as popular myths have led him to assume a role "as the post-modern American chronicler and myth-maker." (Tekinay, 2001, p. 52)

In La Turista (1967) pop and ritual elements are blended. The names of the American couple, Kent and Salem (tourists staying in a Mexican hotel room and suffering from diorhea) are well-known brands of American cigarettes suggesting an indictment of contemporary American. They can not be cured by the witch-doctor treatment in Mexico through that country's rituals, to which they feel superior. In Act II, they are at home in America - this time Kent suffering from sleeping sickness and he is tried to be cured by a father-son team behaving like country doctors of Western films, but again he can not be cured by an outworn popular model of his own country. Instead, Kent transforms into a hunted monster during a face-off with Doc. *La Turista reflects* cowboy and monster films and contemporary Americans can not find a cultural ground to cure their illnesses throughout the play. (Cohn, 1991, p. 172-173)

Operation Sidewinder (1970), cuts a wide swath across the American landscape and draws its material from topical events, pop media, and Native American myth. In the play, Shepard shows a world of mad scientists and military men and recreates a Hopi snake ceremony. (Wade, 1997, p. 41) Subtitled an "adventure show", *Mad Dog Blues* (1971) is often noted for its many colorful characters drawn from film and folklore. Kosmo and Yahoodi are accompanied on their journey by the likes of Marlene Dietrich, Mae West, Captain Kidd and Paul Bunyan, who are characterized as "saints in a cathedral of American popular culture." (Wade, 1997, p. 44) *The Tooth of Crime*,

which describes how one rock singer and life style is replaced by another, forges a new language by drawing on the dissimilar vocabularies and speech pattern of joke books, sportscasters, disk jockeys, rock musicians, hunters, and gangsters.

Sam Shepard, in his pop cultural plays, employed a combination of images of rock music and American movies to create contemporary myths in a collage-like style; spoke about the American reality of the late 1960s and early 70s – the culture industry and the rock music mainly- ; reflected the peculiarities of the time with an uneasieness, most of the time demonstrating the loss of cultural identity to the junk of pop culture.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEMPORARY MYTHMAKING IN SHEPARD'S TWO POP CULTURE PHASE PLAYS:

THE UNSEEN HAND and *COWBOY MOUTH*

2. 1. THE UNSEEN HAND

First produced at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club in New York on December 26, 1969, *The Unseen Hand* is a blend of science fiction, Old Western myth and heroics, and high-school vanities, and manifests the new complexity in Shepard's approach to playwriting, which is a sort of bricolage practice exhibited a bold interweaving of heterogeneous texts and images. The play was the first demonstration of his shift in style and subject matter that he signaled by his assertion that he was, then, dealing more with mythic characters, a combination of science-fiction, Westerns, and television. (Shewey, 1997, p. 52) Exhibiting a mixture of character types and an unstable narrative line, the work offers a rich excursion into the pop sensibility. (Wade, 1997, p. 37) In Shewey's (1997) words, Shepard was "beginning to conjure up the mythical essence of familiar pop-culture figures in language flavored with his own distinctive lyricism" with the play. (p. 66)

The Unseen Hand opens with Blue Morphan, an old-time cowboy of the nineteenth century, camped along the roadside, living out of the rusted hull of a 1951 Chevrolet, Coke bottles and other consumer-culture detritus litter the ground. Shepard gives an intricate description of the setting, and at the very beginning, before Blue Morphan appears, allows sometime for the audience to view the things on the stage and feel the atmosphere that will significantly host the play. The trash on the set is carefully detailed: "Center stage is an old '51 Chevrolet convertible, badly bashed and dented, no tires and the top torn to shreds. On the side of it is written "Kill Azusa" with red spray paint. All round is garbage, tin cans, cardboard boxes, Coca Cola bottles and other junk." (Shepard, 1981, p. 3) These devastated objects, some of which are popular goods with their names given, are remarkably used to imply that a criticism about consuming culture of the contemporary American society will take place through the play. It may be noted due to the demonstration of the objects as junk, the criticism will focus on

contemporary people's urge to consume and discard anything so rapidly and ask for something else. Things are made popular by commercials for they are shown most attractive and enviable; they are fancied and sometimes desired passionately. However, once they are consumed, people lose their affection for them in their pursuit of some other thing they have not tried. The '51 Chevrolet, probably one of the most appealing cars of its time- is not only old, but also "bashed and dented"(p. 3); it is destroyed by the human hand. It is of no use now for it has no wheels, and the most attractive part of this convertible car is, its top is "torn to shreds" (p. 3). The car is wasted and thrown away by people no matter they were once fascinated with it. The tin cans of ready-made food and drinks, which once appeared in the advertisements brilliantly, pile up as rubbish now. Things are consumed in the fastest way turning out to be junk. Shepard sets down the debris of pop Americana, and the stage is something like a pop-art painting. The real-world location, a roadside somewhere near Azusa, thus "conjured up by a kind of pop-iconic shorthand rather than by any attempt at realism," as Bottoms (1998) observes. (p. 77)

Setting is further enhanced with the lightening and sound effects:

> …The stage is dark. Sound of a big diesel truck from a distance, then getting louder, then passing with a whoosh. As the sound passes across the stage the beam of the headlights cuts through the dark and passes across the Chevy. Silence. Soft blue moonlight comes up slowly as the sound of another truck repeats, as before, its headlights cutting through the dark. This should be a synchronized tape-light loop which repeats over and over throughout the play-the headlights sweeping past accompanied by the sound of a truck. The lights come up but maintain a full moon kind of light. The whooshing of the trucks and the passing lights keep up… (p. 3)

While the setting is a sign of speed of consuming, the sounds in accordance with the lightening displays the speed of movement; all the three agents as a whole highlight the speed as a significant characteristic of contemporary world and hint a criticism of this issue as the play expands. Passing of trucks reveals that the place is near a road. The movement on the road is so fast that the sound of the trucks arrives and passes quickly as the whooshes and flash shots indicate. Lights can clarify around only for a moment, then it is dark again. There is light, but it moves too fast to be useful for identifying things just like contemporary life that is too speedy for someone to know and tell what he really experiences.

The speed may also be associated with the rapid progress of technology in the twentieth century and its providing for and demanding rapidity in the lives of people. The rapidity achieved by the machinery, brings about the issue of mechanization. Technology provides people with speed in fixing things in their lives up to a point that they do not really do a particular thing but just use various mechanisms. As they can save more time, they continuously hurry for coping with more things. People's relying on technology for the most part, prevents them from real experience and they are gradually mechanized; life becomes a mechanical thing in which problems are solved in the fastest and most common way without much consideration and understanding. People live formulaic lives like machines whose planned actions are continuously repeated in the same way. The road that is made known to the audience by the lightening and sound effects is like a machine repeatedly doing the same thing: trucks keep whooshing flashing their headlights. Their movement is just like that of a machine – every step has its own particular sound or some other feature which never changes or disturbs the order. The road represents the mechanization of contemporary life and points at a forthcoming criticism of technology and scientific totalitarianism.

The use of trucks as vehicles of the road is significant in a few aspects. As a matter of fact, it is natural to place trucks in a night setting, for other vehicles are less likely to be seen at nights. Shepard uses the most natural vehicle for this setting and avoids any other one, since he intends to give a mechanical movement to the road with the same sounds and same kind of lights. Trucks are also remarkable for they make a connection with the consumer-culture debris on the stage. Trucks function in a quite different way from other overland vehicles such as buses, cars, motorcycles or bicycles that appear on the road. They do not transport people but things- industrial products most of the time. So as to meet the consuming need, they carry goods (probably in the "cardboard boxes" (p. 3) that is mentioned among the rubbish scattered around) from one place to another – throughout America. They are fast and lasting in accordance with the speedy and continuous consuming of the contemporary American society. The mechanical movement of the trucks and the road indicates that the process of consuming is also something mechanical, not a meaningful act.

Another reason for Shepard's employing trucks is their noise. Despite the fact that most trucks have diesel engines, Shepard purposely clarifies that the sounds belong to diesel trucks which probably make the loudest noise on the road. The roaring sound

of these vehicles that move in a rhythmic order – first coming from a distance, then getting louder and passing with a whoosh- also implies the existence of a huge machine. However, since the sounds are a thunderous kind made by a diesel engine, this machine is denoted as being not only enormous but also violent. The repeated but sudden passing of trucks with their booming, whooshes and flash lights, in a sense, bombards the audience. It is like an attack of the big machine whose existence is sensed but what is hard to tell precisely. With the lightening and sound effects, Shepard initiates the violence that is fast, unpredictable and of an unknown source to the play- he lets the audience sense a kind of terror.

While the way the road is perceived through lightening and sound effects causes for the consideration of its associations with speed, movement, mechanization, violence and terror, the setting, in a contradictory way, gives a dead-calm impression; creating feelings of inertia, limpness and exhaustion. The darkness of the stage at the very beginning implies some emptiness, however, as the beam of headlights cuts through the dark, it is made known that there are things on stage but completely inactive. Shepard purposely makes the lights pass across the Chevy so as to generate a strong contradiction between the movement of the road and the immobility of the automobile without tires. The violence of the road reflects itself on the graffiti written on the side of the car with red paint, "Kill Azusa" (p. 3), as the lights flashes upon it. This graffiti is another way of Shepard for initiating terror into the play. By the coming of soft blue moonlight, the junk around is clarified to combine with the uselessness of the car. The stage is not literally empty, but it is difficult to say it is full since it is covered by futile stuff. This is the leftover of the consuming society that accumulates rapidly in the form of junk. The stagnant moonlight brilliantly accompanies the things on stage which represent the dead and still part of contemporary life. The "soft blue moonlight" also stimulates the idea that there might be some peace and quiet among this detritus when compared with the terror aroused by the roars and flash shots of the road.

The moonlight effect becomes more meaningful with Blue Morphan's appearance on stage; under the "soft blue" and "full kind of moonlight", "a figure" (p. 3) whose clothing recalls to that of a cowboy, "slowly emerges out of the back seat of the Chevy." (p. 3) He is described as having "a scraggly beard, black overcoat, blue jeans, cowboy boots and hat and a bottle in his hand." (p. 3) His cowboy look with his jeans, boots and hat combines with the romantic moonlight sharpening the contradiction

between the machine-like road image and the setting on stage. Moonlight is blue, so as to match with the cowboy's name, and this new combination of "blues" recalls an image of an unknown past time that the contemporary man can only be familiar to from the Westerns: lonely cowboy finding his way under the moonlight on the barren land. His coming out prompts another contradiction; there is a clash between Blue and his environment that is of contemporary America. He gives the impression that he does not belong to today but an unknown past as if he has not appeared from the backseat but has "come out of blue", as his name indicates. Actually, this old cowboy gets his name from "morphine", an extremely powerful opiate analgesic drug that acts directly on the central nervous system to relieve pain cause for, as side effects, impairment of mental performance, euphoria, drowsiness, lethargy, blurred vision, insomnia, and nightmares. The word "morphine" is derived from Morpheus, the god of dreams in Greek mythology. (Morphine, 2006, para.1-2) "Blue morphan", also known as "blue morphine" is a kind of morphine in the form of blue pills. Blue Morphan emerges "out of the blue" as if he is meant to relive the terror of the road, that is to say, contemporary world to which the audience were subjected right from the beginning. He is associated with anything that dispenses with the reality; he is the leader to dreams like Morpheus. This morphine man breaks the audience's connection with the reality of contemporary world around, and works as a medium bringing about an indefinite and unfamiliar vision to them. Blue Morphan's name signals that a fantastic story is about to start, and Shepard, now, begins to create one of his contemporary myths.

Blue Morphan himself has also visions: "he is slightly drunk and talks to an imaginary driver in the front seat."(p. 4) "The Chevy has no wheels, but its broken body is able to drive the imagination." (Tucker, 1992, p. 69) Blue does not drive the car himself, he is sitting at the backseat, for he knows that he does not belong to contemporary world - he can not lead anything in the reality of today. The only thing he can direct is his vision, so he lets the imaginary person drive the car while he decides where to go and what to do and what to talk about. He wants to communicate. He speaks with the driver in confidence, in a direct, cowboy-like manner. His first words display a panic-stricken urge to understand exactly where he is: "Say listen. Did we pass Cucamunga? Didn't we already pass it up? Listen. This here is Azuza. We must a' passed it up." (p. 4) As a cowboy, he is overtly concerned about his destination and the results of his next move, which indicates a sense of real experience as opposed to

mechanized contemporary man who leads a planned formulaic life. His long speech that begins as a conversation with the imaginary second person functions as the narration of his life at different times, and provides for more information about the setting. Bonnie Marranca (1981) in her article "Alphabetical Shepard: The Play of Words," suggests that, in Shepard's plays,

> the speeches of Shepard's characters are too long and too narrative. Much of the background of the play is narrated; events which don't occur on stage are narrated; narration is used as a purely informational device; the solo itself breaks apart the structure by reconstituting the narrative line as a rejection of dialogue and an act of imagination. (p. 23)

Through Blue Morphan's lengthy narration, it is made known that he has camped somewhere near Azusa. A nearby town, Duarte, is also mentioned. The names of the towns are self-refrential, since Duarte is the small California town that Shepard and his family moved to when he was around twelve to live on an avocado ranch, and Azusa is the next town from Duarte. There is a nostalgic impulse as Blue Morphan talks about Duarte, "if ya' ever happen through Duarte let me know… Just ask 'em for Blue Morphan. That's me. Anyone. Just ask any old body fer old Blue. They'll tell you," (p. 4) and some specific names are recalled that goes along with Duarte, "…Follow the old Union Pacific till ya' come to Fish Creek." (p. 4) He must be remembering Duarte of a past time before the counterculture movement took place - Blue Morpan warns his imaginary companion not to "pick up no longhairs though," (p. 4) -referring to the long-haired, in-bead and drug-user hippies of the 1960s- if he goes to Duarte. His distaste of "longhairs" also displays his being at odds with the novelties brought by the modern understanding. Shepard also recalls the Duarte of his teenage years in 1950s that was characterized by appreciation of conventional values and the consuming society. Shewey (1997) states that "Duarte is where Steve Rogers (Shepard's name before he dropped it when he first came to New York) grew up and where Sam Shepard began to invent himself." In his plays, Shepard often returns imaginatively to his adolescence and recollects the Southern California of the fifties - as it is the case also for *The Unseen Hand*- in "the long verbal arias" that are characteristic of his work. (p. 19)

Blue interrupts his speech three times to pull out two groups of perished items onto the stage. As Shepard describes this action in the stage directions, he uses a musical language with a certain rhythm as if he appraises each group assigning them a certain speed of coming out.

The first group belong to the cowboy and the cowboy tradition none of which any longer prevails. Blue is eager to show off and prove his identity as a cowboy, since he pulls out some of the stuff that are essentials of a cowboy before and after he boasts about his reputation in Duarte. As he takes out these items, he is quite careful and his movement has weightiness as the rhythm of the stage directions indicate. The first item of the first group comes into sight all alone before he starts talking about Duarte: "He slowly climbs out of the back seat onto the stage, then reaches into the back and pulls out a battered guitar with broken strings." (p. 4) The object certainly has a great significance due to its bit by bit and solo appearing.

The "guitar" stands for the cowboy music. Music and storytelling was a tradition with cowboys especially during long journeys of cattle drives on the open land. Meetings of cowboys around the campfire provided a break for some relaxation and amusement during which they told stories and sang songs about the experiences and "achievements of other cowboys interwoven with fantasies and exaggerations." (Yetginer, 1991, p. 33) Oral tradition, in other words, stories and song lyrics with their own distinctive folkloric qualities were channels of conveying the real cowboy experience. They also stimulated the code of laws of being a cowboy. Shepard, gives the guitar in Blue's hand in order that he can verify his past as a well-known cowboy. The "guitar" comes to mean the most significant witness of those days as it accompanied all those stories of strength, endurance, skillfulness and courage. However, these values are no longer considered important, since this is a "battered guitar with broken strings"; it is obvious that it has not been played for a long time to attend the myths of the Old West. The music of experience is lost to the rhythm of the machine in the modern world.

The advent of the other objects of the first group has a quite slow pulse as well: "He pulls out an old dusty suitcase held together with rope and sets it on the ground, then a rifle."(p. 4) These items come out just after he talks about Duarte and before he directs the imaginary driver there: "I ain't been back there fer quite a spell now but they'll be able to direct ya' to the stables all right. Follow the old Union Pacific till ya'

come to Fish Creek." (p. 4) He has a suspicious awareness of the road; he wants his companion to make sure which way to follow and warns him about the dangers: "Don't pick up no long hairs though. Now I warned ya'. OK. OK. Do what ya' like but I warned ya'." (p. 4)

The "suitcase" represents the mobility of the cowboy and the "rifle" is about his response to the misadventures on the way. The cowboy was a man of action and he was not bound to the soil and limited by it. During the overland drives, living on the road became a life style and prepared the ground for adventure. It meant being exposed to new experiences and required ability to cope with challenging situations. (Yetginer, 1991, p. 30-31) Cowboys' life on the drive is recollected by the image of "suitcase", and it is deliberately comes out after the guitar pointing out the sources of the cowboy myth that is passed on to generations. The "rope" on the suitcase is another essential tool of the cowboy that he used for controlling animals during the trails. No matter it has lost its prime function as a practical tool to organize the cattle, the rope has another important role now: to protect the things in the suitcase so that they will not scatter around to join the junk of popular culture. Blue carefully detaches his long-standing possessions with loyalty from the apathetic world around him. He is attached to his few belongings opposed to the modern man's attitude of rapidly consuming and discarding things.

The second group of items comes out with a rather speedy way: "He pulls out a broken bicycle, a fishing rod, a lantern, an inner tube, some pipe, a bag full of bolts and other junk. He keeps taking more and more stuff out of the back seat and setting it down on the stage as he talks." (p. 4) Due to the gradually rising rhythm of the stage direction, it is possible to say that these objects are considered of less value.

The first three of these, the "bicycle", the "fishing rod", and the "lantern" still have some connection to the cowboy tradition. The "bicycle" is juxtaposed with the sound of trucks and Chevy to create a contrast between the technology of past and present. Bicycles were useful vehicles when technology was still under control of humankind and they were slow enough to give a taste of experience. The "fishing rod" stands for the self-sufficiency of the cowboy who used to supply his own food, since he could not get it from the supermarket. The "fishing rod" also accords with "Fish Creek" which Blue mentions in his speech before he takes out the second group of the stuff.

The “lantern” points to a time when electricity and electronic devices that accelerate the life did not exist.

The rest of the objects, “an inner tube, some pipe and a sack of bolts” recall a nearer and less pleasant time since they are parts of various machines. Blue’s revealing objects starts with the “guitar” that is about music and ends with the “sack of bolts” about machinery; in this way, Shepard exposes the idea that as time goes by, things lose their spirit to mechanization. The “sack of bolts” also calls to mind the idiom, “bolt from the blue” which refers to something unexpected and unpleasant. Following the bolts, Blue “keeps taking more and more stuff” that are not mentioned with their names showing their worthlessness, and he goes on his speech bringing about the distasteful topics of the present time. He points out, as the idiom suggests, people are likely to do unpleasant things in unexpected ways nowadays, since it is difficult to tell who a person really is:

> You been driving long enough by now to tell who to pick and who to leave lay. But if they got their thumb out you better look ’em over twice. I know. I used to drive a Chevy myself. Good car. Thing is nowadays it ain’t so easy to tell the riff-raff from the gentry. Know what I mean. You can get tricked. They can fool ya’. All kinda fancy over-the-head talk and all along they’re workin’ for the government same as you…
>
> (p. 4-5)

Blue Morphan’s speech also serves as a narration of his background as an old-time cowboy, mostly through his contrasting the old West (of the nineteenth century) with the present time. His comparison causes for a serious talk -like the opening of a second scene- which points out his dissatisfaction with the contemporary society and politics, for he describes them as corrupted and insincere:

> I’m a free agent. Used to be a time when I’d take an agency job. Go out and bring in a few bushwackers just for the dinero. Usually a litte bonus throwed in. But nowadays ya’gotta keep to yourself. They got nerve gas right now that can kill a man in 30 seconds. Yup…Used to be, a man would have hisself a misunderstanding and go out and settle it with a six gun. Now it’s all silent, secret. Everything moves like a fever. Don’t know when they’ll cut ya’ down and when they do ya’ don’t know who done it. (p. 5)

Blue emphasizes that, in the past, people lived by principles. Actions had proper ways to be realized that was known to anybody. People were not deceptive even towards their enemies, since they cared about the code of manners. They sought for an honest gain, and bravery was identified with honesty. Whereas, today, principles do not function; people do things unexpectedly. They are not sincere in their acts, everything is secret and silent; fever stored-up kills up without showing itself. In fact, contemporary world does not allow for establishing common principles, since everything moves, changes, develops or ends at a great speed. It takes thirty seconds to kill a man with a nerve gas; he dies before he goes through pain. There is not enough time to understand a specific occasion and have a real experience of it; it is impossible to have common codes to act up on.

Blue's observation of the way things are nowadays, increases the sense of terror that has already been being initiated by the lightening and sound effects. Then, he recalls something pleasant, the beauty of the journey that the imaginary driver will take: "…Too nice a night fer that. Straight, clean highway all the way from here to Tuba City. Shouldn't have no trouble…" (p. 5) Tuba City is another real-world location in Arizona that reminds Blue his good old days. He longs for the real experience of moving as in the old times; not only passing by some place while rushing to another (as it is the case for the trucks), but feeling the things on the road and being aware of every step. He has respect to the nature; he appreciates the moon clarifying the night and keeping the troubles away. He advises his companion to stop on the way to eat something rather than leading a direct journey: "…If you're hungry though there's a Bob's Big Boy right up the road a piece. I don't know if ya' go in fer double decker cheeseburger or not…" (p. 5) The repeated sounds in the names of the fast food restaurant, "Bob's Big Boy" and its product "double decker cheeseburger" points out the hypnotic power of the consuming goods provided by intelligent marketing strategies. As Blue pronounces these names, he realizes that he is hungry: "…but-Listen, tell ya' what, long as yer hungry I'll jest come along with ya' a ways and we'll chow down together. Sure. Good idea. I ain't ate since yesterday mornin' anyhow. Just before ya' picked me up." (p. 5) After these words, he "starts putting all the junk back into the car," (p. 5) meaning to get ready for the journey. The old cowboy does not belong to anywhere but his stuff. Actually, it is all he owns. He is not in the frontseat,

because he does not own the Chevy although it is obvious that he lives there. Blue is emotionally bound to the things that make him a cowboy.

Blue's criticism goes further with the comparison of contemporary people with that of the Old West. The former is depicted as a generation who have lost their sensitivity and responsiveness to the growing mechanization of life, "Don't come across many good old boys these days," (p. 5) what is old is good for Blue, "Seems like they all got a chip on the shoulder or somethin'. You noticed that? The way they swagger around givin' ya' that look. Like ya' weren't no more than a road apple or somethin' worse."(p. 5) Modern people's, becoming more dependent on the technological development is indicated by the chip (a reference to the science-fiction movies) they carry that might be controlling their all actions as well as their emotions. Modern people's growing dependence on technology by which they get gradually mechanized also results in their alienation from the past. Blue, -a real cowboy of Old West that is alive in the twentieth century- complains that he is underestimated and not cared by modern people. Perhaps, people confuse him with the cowboys of the Western movies that are only images on the screen which might exist only in the visions, but not in real life. Modern world values what the technology, mass-media and consumerism offers falling apart from the real and spiritual in the junk of pop culture.

Under the "blue moonlight", Shepard brings out a romanticized cowboy figure for Blue as well as his brothers Cisco and Sycamore by Blue's description of himself and his brothers in their old days.

> If they'd a known me in my prime it might change their tune. Hadn't a been fer the old hooch here I'd been in history books by now. Probably am anyhow, under a different name. They never get the name straight. Don't matter too much anyhow. Least it don't hurt my feelings none. 'Course yer too young to remember the Morphan brother probably. Cisco, Sycamore and me, Blue. The three of us. 'Course we had us a few more. Not a gang exactly. Not like teen-age hot rodders with their Mercurys and Hudson Hornets. Least ways we wasn't no menace. (p. 5-6)

Blue, now, looks back and claims that he deserves a respectful place.

Bottoms (1998) observes, that “the wild, anti-urban frontier life of the cowboy-individualist was a popular theme in the rock music and rock-inspired movies of this period (for example, Dennis Hopper’s *Easy Rider*)”, and it is notable that in Shepard’s plays of his pop-culture phase, the hero is either a “rock musician” or “the old-time cowboy – Blue, Cisco and Sycamore in *The Unseen Hand* ”. (p. 68) Shepard is well aware that the idealized old-time cowboy figure is based entirely on “media fabrications, and has admitted that the nearest he ever came, as a child, to meeting a real cowboy was seeing the stars of The Lone Ranger and Hopalong Cassidy at the Pasadena Rose Parade.” (Bottoms, 1998, p. 90) Blue Morphan also admits that the real cowboy is lost, even in the history books which can not specify the real names. Contemporary people are too young to remember the Old West and history books wouldn’t be very useful. *The Unseen Hand*, indirectly “acknowledges the Morphan Brothers’ real roots as figments” that were populated by the Westerns of the 1950s. “Shepard thus implicitly admits the historical nonexistence of the Golden Age of the West that he looks back to”, therefore, he brings about a cowboy figure as he appears in the Westerns. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 90)

Many incarnations of Westerns remain the most obvious and popular frame for the mythos of the American frontier. The majority of Western art obsesses over the stature of the "Westerner," the white male hero who is usually a cowboy or a gunslinger. Founded on a mixture of nineteenth-century American history, the melodramatic frontier fiction of James Fenimore Cooper and James Oliver Curwood, and the Western visions of Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, and Jules Tavernier, the Hollywood Western film has become the most prevalent of all modern wild west shows. Phil Hardy carefully delineates the cultural significance of the Western's therapeutic charms:

> In short, at a time when frustratingly complex issues like the Bomb, the Cold War, the House Un-American Activities Committee and Suez, were being raised, the Western remained a simple, unchanging, clear cut world in which notions of Good and Evil could be balanced against each other in an easily recognizable fashion. (as cited in Yezbick, 2002, para. 4)

Shepard, in a similar fashion, uses the cowboy's heroic status as a response of sorts to the American malaise. "The time is an era fueled by scientific totalitarianism; Western humanism has become a museum piece," – its unknown qualities may be overwhelming for the modern world. (Tucker, 1992, p. 69) "This is not naïve nostalgia, but self-conscious, 'postmodernist nostalgia,' Bottoms (1999) concludes. (p. 90) The Morphans represent a different age, which is probably entirely fictive, but which nevertheless implies a critical perspective on the present: Blue Morphan can not understand the attitudes of the mechanized modern people – what are their real intensions, "Everything moves like a fever. Don't know when they'll cut ya down and they do ya' don't know who done it." (p. 5) Consequently, he turns to the simplicity of the old times when there was a balanced understanding of Good and Evil, "The people loved us. The real people I'm talkin' about. The people people. They helped us out in fact. And vice versa. We'd never go rampant on nobody." (p. 6) The archaisms of Blue Morphan is signaled in his appearance, his manner, and his vision of good world: they are all part of an age familiar in legend and alien in contemporary context. (Tucker, 1992, p. 69)

After Blue's speech that is used as a completion of the setting and narration of his background with a comparison with the turmoil of the time the play takes place (late 1960s, the time when the play was written), Willie, the space freak enters the stage. Willie looks so miserable and bizarre,

> He is young and dressed in super future clothes, badly worn and torn. Orange tights, pointed shoes, a vinyl vest with a black shirt that comes up like a hood over the back of his head. His skin is badly burned and blistered with red open sores. His head is shaved and there is a black hand print burned into the top of his skull… (p. 6)

Blue thinks that he is a loafer looking for a handout, "I suppose yer lookin' for a handout or somethin'." (p. 6) Here is a criticism of the flower power side of the counterculture as he treats Willie as one of the youngsters drifting for something free: "That's the trouble with you kids. Always looking fer a handout. There ain't nothin' romantic about panhandin'. (p. 6) Hippies rejected making a living by working, they preferred just asking for money and things, and Blue, mouthpiece of Shepard, finds it nothing romantic as flower power claimed. "Anyhow ya' come to the wrong place.

This here is Azusa, not New York City," (p. 6) he says indicating that the town is far away being a proper place for hippies –a further identification of the setting with the 1950s that was characterized with a praise for conventional values. Looking at Willie "still standing there", he repeats the name of the town, " 'A', 'Z', 'U', 'S', 'A'." and makes up a motto out of the letters "Everything from A to Z in the USA." (p. 69) Azusa, the setting for *The Unseen Hand*, the suburb of Los Angeles adjacent to Shepard's hometown of Duarte, is used simply as an evocation of the qualities of "junk magic" with the images of mass consumer culture on the set, and now with the motto, in Bottom's words, it becomes an "American everytown." (Bottoms, 1998, p.77) It might be possible to find anything here in Azusa – the play may be seen as an American compilation, stuffed with clichés of science fiction, movie Westerns and revolutionary activism, a topic that reveals itself in the play by the entrance of Willie.

Willie addresses Blue with his name, "You Blue Morphan?" (p. 7) what surprises Blue a great deal, "Look, sonny, nobody knows my name or where I been or where I'm goin'. Now you better trot along;" (p. 7) he is also scared, since he is already alert to the strange attitudes of the new generation. A kind of humorous conversation start between a space freak and a nineteenth-century bandit: "I've traveled through two galaxies to see you. At least you could hear me out" (p. 7) To this conservatively couched appeal Blue replies: "You been hittin' the juice or something? What's yer name, boy?" (p. 7) Blue's distinct country-western twang which contrasts with Willie's more formal accent makes the conversation funny. "They call me Willie," the space freak answers calling for another question of Blue "Who's they?" "The High Commission" (p. 7) (Proctor, 1998, p. 36) Willie answers back giving the first hint of Shepard's surfacing his recurrent concern with totalitarianism in the play. As Blue Morphan takes "Navajo blankets" for this "shakin'" buddy, he notices "the black hand print" (p. 8) on Willie's head and asks him about it. The dialogue goes on by Willie's explanation of his situation. He relates that he is allowed freedom within limits, "Whenever I think beyond a certain circumference of a certain circle there's a hand that squeezes my brain." (p. 9) If he strays beyond the law that is prescribed by the "High Commission", the dangerous elements of rebellious freedom are burned away and after that, "all you can see is the scar." (p. 9) "Nobody ever sees" the high commission except the sorcerers who are "black magicians who know the secrets of Nogo." (p. 9) Willie's continuing information including his origins, a "descended from a race of mandrills,"

(p. 9) as an extraterrestrial that comes from "Nogoland", the fantasy world he initiates, and the language he uses, "Mind warps. Time splits. Electro-laser fields. Dimensional overlays. Spatial projections. Force fields," (p. 10) resembles to those of science fiction movies. Defined in terms of its function and occasion,

> Science fiction mirrors the apprehensions and anticipations of an age; it is increasingly the product of a society that is concerned about the relationship between its continued existence and its dependence upon technological development and scientific knowledge beyond the comprehension of laymen. (Shupp, n.d., para. 1)

Willie represents the mechanization that has been developing in America and that has throttled old Western values. He is a product of technology. He explains his race as "fierce baboons that were forced into human form by the magic of the Nogo," (p. 9) since they were "so agile and efficient at sorting out diamonds for the Silent Ones that we could be taken a step further into human form." (p. 9) Willie is a mechanized member of his race that is dependent on the technology by which it was created. As this race became humans to think like a man, they also began to "feel", which wasn't counted on by "the sorcerers". Their ability to feel and think like a human being resulted in over control by their creators:

> They wanted an animal develop that was slightly sub-human, thereby to maintain full control over its psychosomatic functions. The result were something of the opposite. We developed as super-human entities with capacities for thought and feeling far beyond that of our captors. In order to continue their tests they needed an invention to curtail our natural reasoning processes. They came up with *the Unseen Hand*, a muscle contracting syndrome hooked up to the will of the Silent Ones. Whenever our thoughts transcend those of the magicians the Hand squeezes down and forces our minds to contract into non-preoccupation. (p. 10)

Even though Willie and his people are superior to their captors in their "thoughts" and "feelings", they can not escape their manipulations that are put forward by the torture of the unseen hand, and now, Willie searches for a way to continue the existence of his race that is controlled by the authority. He asks Blue and his brothers' help and he tells Blue that he can materialize Cisco and Sycamore from the dead. Blue is "beyond the comprehension" of Willie's scientific knowledge and in turn he grabs his rifle, "All right, wiseacre. Out a' the car. Come on or I'll plug ya' right here on the spot." (p. 11) Shepard develops his play in a similar fashion with the science-fiction narratives.

The evolution of Willie's race might also refer to the social and political developments in America during the period from the post-war to the mid-1960s. The prosperity of post-war era caused for conformism in the society what made people easy to manipulate. They were forced to think in the same way with the Cold War politics, and traditional values as well as patriotism were promoted. The baby boom was both a cause and effect of the prosperity. It meant business for builders, manufacturers, and school systems, and for the families baby boomers were the continuation of the traditional American family. Material comfort was the hallmark of the post war middle classes. In a growing mass consumer society they were indifferent to various problems. The Cold War also bequeathed a record of political extremism and Americans felt helpless to influence their leaders. Willie and his people represent the baby-boom generation who were thought to contribute to America's growing prosperity as materials of making money by the various business. Willie says that they were "agile and efficient at sorting out diamonds for the Silent Ones", who appears as the representatives of the conformist society preoccupied with material prosperity. However, as the baby-boom generation grew up to become the youth, tables were turned. By the late 50s the first wave of the post-war baby boom had reached adolescence, and as they were supposed to be the larger part of the consumers, they soon became an interest for Hollywood and the music industry. This new audience was catered with films portraying young people as sensitive and insightful, adults boring and hostile. Young Americans were electrified by the driving energy and hart beat of rock-and-roll. Adults blamed popular culture – rock-and-roll, comic books, television, and the new youth films- of consuming their children so eagerly. (Norton et al., 1996, p. 933-946) In the early 1960s, having been imposed the rebellious thoughts, began to "think", "feel" and "reason" to start the countercultural revolution. Mass consumer society while consuming the youth, made them turn out to ask for free speech, free sexuality and freedom for all. This time "the unseen hand" of the system began to operate. This unseen hand might be the excessive consumption of drugs by the youth what causes them unable to distinguish between illusion and reality and drugs can stop them "think," "feel" and "reason." *The Unseen Hand* was written a few years before Shepard's flee to England, and one of the reasons he moved was to escape drugs. If it is not drugs, it is a kind of unidentified mind control that Bigsby (1985) puts by quoting Shepard's own words:

> As his introductory note to *The Unseen Hand* indicates, for those caught up in the "fractured world…What's happening to them is unfathomable but they have a suspicion. Something unseen is working on them. Using them…They have no power and all the time they believe they're controlling the situation." His work both explores and validates this paranoia as, at times, it seeks to find ways to transcend it. (p. 221)

Willie (notice his name – Will), a rebellious slave, having traveled two galaxies, now asks Blue's and his brothers' help in his revolution. "What do ya' want me to do about all this? I'm just a juicer on the way out." (p. 10) Blue responds. Willie reasons his will:

> You're more than that. The sorcerers and the Silent Ones of the High Commission have lost all touch with human emotion. They exist in almost purely telepathic intellectual state. That is why they can still exert control over our race. You and your brothers are part of another world, far beyond anything the High Commission has experienced. If you came into Nogoland blazing your six guns they wouldn't have any idea how to deal with you. All their technology and magic would be at a total loss. You would be too real for their experience. (p. 10-11)

Shepard is concerned about American identity and what is real in America while he chooses the old-time cowboys as saviors. Nogoland is depicted as a land where scientific totalitarianism prevails. The oppressors have been affected with this totalitarianism as well as the slaves, having lost their "touch with human emotion" because of their scientific intellect. Although they are completely different things, "magic" and "technology" are depicted as the same for Nogolanders (sorcerers were formerly described as "black magicians"). They are so advanced in science, that they surpass to the fields of magic. By their technology, they can realize anything that Blue might think impossible. The art of penetrating the world of secrets, in other words, magic, is another sense of technology in Nogoland. No matter their scientific intellect provides them with over and above knowledge, they are alien to human emotions. What is impossible and overwhelming for the oppressors of Nogoland is an act derived from humane qualities. Willie and his people need simple but clear-cut morality of the cowboy so as to become free individuals. Then, in Yetginer's (1991) words, "the secret forces will be outwitted once and for all and their system will collapse when they encounter the cowboys." (p. 70)

Nogoland, might be a metaphor for America which is in the process of a growing mechanization where people do not know what to do with their emotions, since they are mechanized and they are already prescribed how to react in specific situations. Berkowitz (1992) observes that, " In Shepard's eyes alienation from the spiritual goes hand in hand with alienation from the past, and his another implicit moral judgments, which would become very important in his later plays, is that a culture dissociated from its past is in serious danger." (p. 130) Accordingly, Shepard turns to the Old-West mythos so as to find the lost spiritualism. By myth Shepard means, in his own words, "a sense of mystery and not necessarily a traditional formula. A character for me is a composite of different mysteries. He's an unknown quantity. If he wasn't it would be like coloring in the numbered spaces." (Proctor, 1998, p. 39) As discussed earlier, the cowboy is an "unknown quantity" to America, which even can not be truly discovered in history books and Shepard romanticizes this otherness of the cowboy to bring about a myth. The cowboy is the hero who could respond to the corruption by his simplicity, "I eat simple. I talk simple and I think simple," (p. 9) Blue accounts, and it is precisely this kind of naiveté which Willie says he needs to free the people of Nogoland from their slavery and from "purely telepathic intellectual state." "In *The Unseen Hand* the legendary characters from the old West have more reality than Shepard's vision of the future and are shown to be sources of salvation from the abstract powers that limit common humanity." (Hart, 1987, p. 88) Morphan brothers -representatives of Old West mythos- are considered a remedy for the ills of the contemporary world. As their name, "Morphan", in other words, "morphine" suggests they may be a source of relief for the modern man.

When Willie tells Blue that he can materialize his brothers from the dead, Blue grabs his rifle and points it at Willie. Willie tells him he "can't plug" him, he doesn't die. Blue, on his account, has another shock, "Then how come yer so scared to take on them High Commandos yer own self?" Willie's only problem is the hand that is unidentified but dangerous. "Because of the Hand," (p. 11) he responds and "goes into a violent spasm, clutching his head in agony." As he resurrects Cisco, his "thoughts transcend those of the magicians" and now the unseen hand is forcing his mind "to contract into non-preoccupation." (p. 11-12) It is considered that Willie's transcendental state resembles the drug scenes of the 1960s:

> The latitudinal's got us! Now! Now! Smoki it up! Smoke him! Gyration forty zero two nodes! Two nodes! You got the wrong mode! Wrong! Correction! Correct that! Step! Stop it! Modulate eighty y's west! Keep it west! Don't let up the field rays! Keep it steady on! Harmonic rhytm scheme! Harmony four! Discord! You got it! Aaah! Aaaaaaaah! Let up! Extract! Implode! Bombard the picture! The picture! Image contact! Major! Minor! Loop syndrome! Drone up! Full drone wave! Now! Ooooh! Just about! Just about! Crystallize fragment mirror! Keep it keen! Sharpen that focus! Hypo filament! Didactachrome! Resolve! Resolve! Resolve! Reverb! Fuzz tone! Don't let the feedback in! Feed it back! Keep your back up! Back it up! Reverse foliage meter! Fauna scope. Graphic tableau. Gramophonic display key. All right. All right. Now raise the horizon. Good. Moon. Planets in place. Heliographic perspective. Atmosphere checking cool. Galactic four count. Star meter gazing central focus. Beam to head on sunset. Systol reading ace in. Dystol balance. Treble boost. All systems baffled. Baffled. (p. 12)

Geis (1996) suggests, that the words Willie uses during his "hocus-pocus speech", are "a series of vaguely technical terms, many chosen from rock music technology, selected for their sounds and rhythms rather than their meanings," such as "Hypo filament. Didactachrome! Resolve!...Fuzz tone!." (p. 60) The regular periods and repetitive sounds or phrases create the effect of a "thumping, rocklike beat." (Bottoms, 1998, p. 67) The words uttered one after another do not make sense, but the rhythm they fix into the speech provides for the recognition of resurrecting process. In the beginning, there are short and hard words of agitation, whereas, towards the end phrases get longer, and after the "Ooooh!" sound, a kind of resolution takes place.

Willie's speech also functions to demonstrate Willie as a machine-like entity. The way he utters the words is mechanic and panic-stricken. He repeats the same action like a machine. He can easily be destroyed and become out of use turning out to be a mechanized junk.

Soon after Willie "goes unconscious" having delivered his speech, Cisco Morphan enters the stage with a typical look of the cowboy figure as it appears in Western movies: "He wears a serape, jeans, cowboy hat and boots, a bandana on his head, a rifle and a hand gun. He has long black hair and scraggly beard. He is younger than Blue by about twenty years." (p. 12) Actually, as his name indicates, Cisco is associated with, The Cisco Kid, the popular radio, television and film series. These productions were based on,

> the fictional Western character created by author O. Henry in his short story 'The Caballero's Way,' published in 1907 in the short story collection *Heart of the West*. Films and televisions depicted the Cisco Kid a heroic Mexican caballero, although in O. Henry's original story he was a non-Hispanic character and a cruel outlaw who was probably modeled on Billy The Kid. (The Cisco Kid, 2006, para. 1)

Cisco in *The Unseen Hand* is probably a non-Hispanic character for his being brothers with Blue and Sycamore, and there is no evidence in the play that they are of Mexican background. However, since he is also drawn as wearing a serape that is a blanketlike shawl or wrap worn in Latin America, he is probably brought into relation with both of the frontier outlaws and murderers, the Cisco Kid, and Billy the Kid who he was modeled on:

> Henry Mc Carty (November 23, 1859 – July 14, 1881), better known as Billy the Kid…was reputed to have killed 21 men, one for each year of his life, but the actual total is probably closer to nine (four on his own and five with the help of others)… Short and lithe, McCarty had blue eyes, smooth cheeks and prominent front teeth. Many newspaper reporters said, "Billy is handsome and very easy going." He was also personable and quick to laugh, but these qualities masked a fierce temper and a single-minded resolve which, combined with superior shooting skills and an almost animal cunning, served to make him a dangerous outlaw. His most noticeable apparel was a sugar-loaf Sombrero with a wide green decorative band.
>
> (Billy The Kid, 2006, para. 1-3)

While Blue assumes a rather romantic role as the highlighted images of "guitar" and "soft blue moonlight" imply, Cisco represents the exciting, adventurous and violent side of the cowboy experience. Like Billy the Kid, he is dynamic, energetic, sociable, fond of fun and fight, and eager to burst into action. When he sees Blue after he shows up on the stage, he goes to him "with his arms out": "Blue!" and he introduces himself as mean and bad-tempered: "…It's me! Cisco. Yer brother. Yer mean ornery flesh and blood." (p. 13) He is received by the rifle which Blue points at him in confusion; he is alarmed with Cisco's irrational claim. Cisco's respond to his reaction shows that he has a keen mind on guns like Billy the Kid: "Better watch out that thing don't go off by

accident. Let a gun go to rustin' like that and ya' never can tell what it's liable to do." (p. 13) Cisco's being equipped with a "rifle" and a "hand gun", and the pointed "rifle" image at him as he enters the stage are significantly used to demonstrate Cisco's fellow feeling for fighting and disobedience. So as to convince Blue that he is really his brother, he offers to show him a proof: "What if I was to show ya' some honest to God proof of the pudding'… Like say a knife scar ya' give me fer my sixteenth birthday in Tuscaloosa." (p. 13) As the stage direction explains: "Cisco takes off his poncho and shows BLUE a long scar going from the middle of his back all the way around to his chest." (p. 14) He comes up with a big cut that is the confirmation of his affinity with guns and fight. The scar is also noteworthy when compared with the "brand" on Willie's head. Cisco's scar is a label of honor, perhaps a gift of the elder brother that marks his initiation to cowboyhood on his sixteenth birthday. It is man-made in contrast with Willie's. The use of the word, "brand", for the stain on Willie's head is remarkable, since it is a sense of the trademark of a product. His mark is machine-made just like himself, and it shows that his mind is under control of the technology he is created by. Ciscos's scar, however, is a sign of his independent body and mind.

"There we go. Now. Take a looksee," (p. 14) Blue offers Cisco in order to reassure he is Cisco really; in that way, he appeals to the strong urge of the cowboy: to see, understand, make sure, and be aware. The scar was actually left by Blue himself: "What ya' got to say now? Ain't that the mark ya' give me with yer very own fishing knife?" After seeing it, he is convinced, so Cisco asks: "If yer satisfied why don't ya' do me a favor and lower that buffalo gun." (p. 14) Blue's "fishing knife" and "buffalo gun" are contradictory with the "hand gun" of Cisco. Blue is rather associated with the cowboy of long trail drives, the real cowboy, who was concerned mainly about cattle on the abundant land of the West as a profession, since his guns are used for functional or practical reasons such as fishing or protecting the livestock from predation by wild animals. Whereas, Cisco's "hand gun" depicts him as a character more alike the mythic cowboy of the Western movies, such as the Cisco Kid, who appears in "cliché scenes like barroom fights, train wrecks, Indian attacks, train holdup and street shootout." (Yetginer, 1991, p. 38) In that way, Shepard recollects the evolution of the cowboy from the one living a simple, plain and lonely life close by nature doing his job, to the other whose deeds are "enlarged and carried beyond real life happenings."

(Yetginer, 1991, p. 37)

Still in a shock, having difficulty to comprehend his brother's resurrection, Blue remembers: "But you and Sycamore was gunned down in the street right in broad daylight. I was there." (p. 14) He cannot believe that his eyes might have given him a wrong vision on the daylight that makes everything visible. Things work clear of reason that his skills and understanding as a cowboy by which he had overcame various troubles are incapable of conceiving such abracadabra. Yet, what convinces him is his sight of the scar; there is still nothing else he can count on more. "You escaped," (p. 14) recalls Cisco, Shepard's underlining Blue's disinclination to fighting.

Now, that Blue is certain about Cisco being his flesh and blood, they begin to talk about Willie and the mission they are supposed to accomplish. "He just shows up out a'the clear blue and starts to jawin' about outer space and High Commancheros and what all," (p. 14) he explains meaning the space freak. Willie is an entirely alien entity with his look, what he tells and what he does. Blue wants to know; he asks his brother if he knows something and Cisco tries to clarify it simply: "All I know is that I was summoned up. Me, you and Sycamore is gonna be back in action before too long. And this dude is gonna set us straight on what the score is." (p. 15) Blue is distressed; he does not want to fight anymore: "What score? I settled up all my debts a long time ago. I hunted down every one a' them varmints what got you and Sycamore. I'm an old man, Cisco." (p. 15) He escaped the street fight, but he took revenge of his brothers. As opposed to Blue, Cisco is quite eager to settle down for adventure: "There's other upstarts seems to be jammin' up the works. Besides, I'll be glad to see a little action for a change. I been hibernatin' for too long now..." (p. 15) Blue is exhausted having had a long life, and for the most part, having witnessed the change through the years; the golden age of cowboy coming to a close, the code of the West being broken, people's losing their morals, politics being uncertain and everything getting more and more complicated. He has the sense that things nowadays are so complex to cope with; as he states earlier "it's all silent and secret," (p. 5) The skills of the straightforward and simple cowboy might not be useful in this world of backbiting affairs. Cisco, however, is optimistic and confident, for he has not passed through all that disappointing times.

Cisco needs to learn; he asks questions, and Blue responds him with comprehensive explanations, bringing out the objects and displaying how to use them, so that he can understand what is going on here, in the twentieth century, if he wants to take

action. Blue begins to display things around as Cisco asks for explanation. It is conceived that the opening speech of Blue was a micro summary of the world Blue would describe to Cisco.

The first thing to be mentioned is a can of "Campbell's Pork and Beans" (p. 15), the brand which is made famous by Andy Warhol in his graphic designs. Then, they talk about what "highway patrol" (p. 15) means. Cisco asks, "What's this here rig?" pointing at the car. "Fifty-One Chevy" (p. 15) Blue answers, assigning it some nostalgic associations. The broken car without wheels is some lovable, pretty thing of the past. As time goes by, things lose their peculiarity in the complex of the unnecessary; he goes on: "Don't make 'em like this any more. Now they got dual headlights, twin exhausts, bucket seats, wrap around windshields and what all. Extra junk to make it look fancy. Don't go better though." (p. 15) These words also highlights the cowboy's simplicity possessing any material for only functional and practical reasons.

During this ask and answer dialogue, the discrepancy between the time of the Old West and the modern mechanized world is humorously revealed. When Blue introduces Cisco to the concept of a car he explains that "some of'em'll do over a hundred mile an hour," (Proctor, 1988, p. 36)

> Cisco: What's that mean, Blue?
>
> Blue: That means in an hour's time if you keep yer boot stomped down on that pedal you'll have covered a hundred mile a territory.
>
> Cisco: Whooee! Sure beats hell out of a quarter horse, don't it? (p. 16)

Later, when Blue is explaining that he's afraid of the law, Cisco asks him why he's "scared a'the law all of a sudden." (Proctor, 1988, p. 36)

> Blue: It ain't so sudden as all that. I'm goin' on a hundred and twenty years old now. Thanks to modern medicine.
>
> Cisco: That a fact? Sure kept yerself fit, Blue. (p. 17)

This dialogue gives some information about the age of two brothers. It is known that by now, Cisco is twenty years older than Blue: he died with Sycamore in 1886 and Blue is one hundred and twenty years old. For the play is written in 1969, it can be assumed that the action takes place at the close of the decade. Then, it is figured out that Cisco was only seventeen when he was killed just as Billy the Kid who was murdered at an early age of twenty-two. Moreover, Cisco's risk-taking and taste for adventure may be explained with the teenager spirit he is involved in.

Blue introduces Cisco the radio and eventually informs him about "a station up there" on the moon and the "rocket ship" (p. 18) that is used for traveling to the moon, Mars and Venus. Cisco's question upon the information given, points out the loss of identification with the origins to the advanced technology, "Don't they like it down here no more?" (p. 18) Science and technology are both constructive and destructive. Modern medicine makes the life longer, but as the earth is not big enough to hold so many people, rockets are sent to space to look for alternative worlds. Blue answers Cisco's question: "The earth's getting cramped, boy. There's lots more people now. They're lookin' for new territory to spread out to." (p. 18) The contemporary people are gradually losing their touch with the earth as well as their past and being rootless will be a characteristic of the future.

As Blue and Cisco wait for the coming of Sycamore who "has been summoned up" by Willie as well, "a drunken high school cheerleader kid comes on yelling." (p. 19) He is described in this way:

> He has a blond crewcut and a long cheerleader's sweater with a huge "A" printed on it. He holds a huge megaphone to his lips. His pants are pulled down around his ankles. His legs are red and bleeding and look as though they've been whipped with a belt. He has white tennis shoes on. He yells through the megaphone to an unseen gang of a rival high school in the distance behind the audience. He doesn't notice Blue and Cisco. (p. 19)

In addition to the playwright's account of his physical condition, his speech indicates that he has been kidnapped and gang-beaten by a bunch of rich kids from a rival high school:

> You motherfuckers are dead! You're as good as dead! Just wait till Friday night! We're going to wipe your asses off the map! There won't even be an Arcadia High left! You think you're all so fuckin' bitchin' just 'cause your Daddies are rich! Just 'cause your old man gives you a fuckin' full blown Corvette for Christmas and a credit card! You think your girls are so tough looking! They are fucking dogs! I wouldn't fuck an Arcadia girl if she bled out her ass hole! You punk faggots shouldn't even be in the same league as us! The Rio Hondo belongs to us! You're gonna go fucking scoreless Friday night and I'm gonna be right there cheering and seeing it all happen! Then we're gonna burn your fucking grandstand to the ground! Right to the fucking ground! Then we're gonna burn a huge "A" for Azusa right in the middle of your fucking field. Right on the fifty yard line! (p. 19-20)

Both Kid's speech and appearance (crewcut and tennis shoes) reflect the characteristics of 1950s, and as he is merely titled as Kid, he represents the young generation of the decade. Kid is a patriot who believes in his high school and in the values of small-town America. "Rich daddies" refer to the post-war middle-class families that were enjoying an increasingly comfortable standard of living, and the "Corvette" and the "credit-card" refer to the consumer society, which having satisfied their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter turned their attention to conveniences and luxury items. The kid is angry because he has been betrayed by the forces and values he has always believed in.

Kid wants to stay at the place giving the reason that his father "will beat the shit out of" him. "He won't let me use the car for a month." (p. 21) Blue and Cisco argue on the matter and Blue convinces Cisco who opposes as "We got business to set straight here, Blue," (p. 21) referring to the operation of freeing Willie. Blue is kind-hearted; he is positive to people, no matter he reveals doubts about the new world. He calls the Kid, "boy" meaning some sympathy towards him.

Although Kid threatens Arcadia high-schoolers he has been abused by in his speech above, he is afraid of them what makes him ridiculous. He's very intense, very anxious, "If those Arcadia guys come by here don't tell them where I am, OK? (p. 22)

His repeated use of the word "never", "I'll never lead another cheer… Never! Not for them or anybody else! Never! Never! Never! Never! Never! Never! Never! Never! Never! Never!" sounds very much like the repetitive chants which characterize cheer-leading. In an ironic way he cheers as he rejects cheering anymore. He is inherently ludicrous, which adds up to the humor in the play. (Proctor, 1988, p. 37)

After Kid goes off the sleep, Blue and Cisco go on their conversation:

Cisco: Boy, howdy, what'd I miss all them years?

Blue: A whole lot, Cisco. A whole lot. Things change over night now. One day there's a President, the next day he gets shot, the next day the guy what shot him gets shot.

Cisco: No foolin'.

Blue: Next day they outlaw guns and replace 'em with nerve gas. Stuff can turn a full grown man into a blithering fool. Then they change the government from Capitalism to Socialism because the government's afraid of a full blown insurrection. Then they have a revolution anyhow and things stay just like they was. (p. 22-23)

Blue's historical account in the play "mixes the Kennedy assassination with futuristic whimsy to create an ironically resigned vision of political failure. Politics itself, however is unable to solve anything"; Blue concludes "things just like they was." (p.23) (Bottoms, 1998, p. 71)

It is just like the headlights of the trucks that pass across one after another. As soon as the light comes up, it disappears leaving the place in the dark. There is an appreciated president, but he is killed the next day; light and then the dark. His murderer is found, but then he is also murdered; light and the dark over again. Shepard searches for an alternative salvation, his employing Willie to release the trio from the death corresponds to his mistrust to politics. He has faith in the sincerity of the emotions that may be available in the old-time gunslingers whose blazing of their guns are most relied on in Willie's revolution.

After Willie comes to, he tells Blue in scientific terms that he has to be transformed to become younger: "Your brain has undergone cell breakdown with age and time, Blue. We have to regroup your temporal field to make you young enough to again become sensitive to telepathic and extrasensory reception." (p. 24) He adds that this is "the only hope for the prisoners of Nogoland." (p. 24) Blue wants to learn who are those Nogolanders and Willie explains:

> People, like you and me but with a strange history and strange powers. These powers could work for the good of mankind if allowed to unfold into their natural creativity. But if they continue as they are they will surely work for evil, or, worse, they will turn it on themselves and commit a horrible mass suicide that may destroy the universe.
>
> (p. 24)

"People, like you and me," refers to the people of America who have a completely different culture and tradition from that of Europeans' or any other nations' due to their history of the frontier with the power of the cowboy. The cowboy, however, in the mechanized new world does not have the space to use his natural creativity. The straightforward and simple values of the cowboy might be a solution for the tyranny of the scientific totalitarianism, but if the code of laws of the past comes to an end, America will lose its identity and gradually destroy itself.

At this point, it is observed that the play also inherits the basic theme of comic books where superheroes fight on the side of the poor and the powerless against a conspiracy of corrupt political bosses, greedy stockbrokers, and foreign tyrants. (Wright, 2002, para. 5) Consequently, Blue transforms from 120 to 30 – which might be realized with the "actor transformation" on stage – Shepard goes on applying the technique that he exercised particularly in his early plays. As Willie transforms Blue, he "goes into another seizure."(p. 25) He starts another rocklike beat monologue, but this time his words and phrases are more meaningful, "…Strength in the steel! Strengthen!..." so as to make Blue stronger, and to call back his spirit of tough cowboy, he yells "…Texas man! Longhorn panhandle tough cowboy leather man! Send him home!..."; he reminds him his old circumstances, "…Look out, Tuba City!..." and finally Blue is back, "…Here's screaming new blood! Churning new blood flooding your mind up. Sending you zig zag straight to your heart…" (p. 26)

Since Blue is young again, he is utmost happy, "he lets out a yell, takes a run across the stage and does a somersault." (p. 27) Cisco and Blue start to sing "Rock Around the Clock," "dancing around and doing the twist and all that jive." (p. 27) Shepard, admitting the historical nonexistence of the Golden Age of the West (discussed earlier), freely places the Morphan Brothers in the context of the 1950s "by having them launch incongruously into a rendition of Bill Haley's" song. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 90)

While they are dancing Sycamore shows up:

> SYCAMORE MORPHAN appears opposite them. They freeze. Sycamore's very tall and slick. Dressed like Bat Masterson with black tails, black hat, black vest, white shirt with ruffled cuffs and diamond cuff links, black boots, black leather gloves and black cane with a diamond-studded handle and a pearl-handled revolver tied down to his hip in a black holster. He just stands staring at his two brothers. (p. 27)

Bat Masterson, whose clothing Shepard picks for Sycamore was a legendary figure in the American West who lived between the years 1853 or 1856 and 1921. "He lived an adventurous life which included stints as a buffalo hunter, U.S. Army scout, gambler, frontier lawman, U.S. Marshal, and, finally, sports editor and columnist for a New York newspaper." (Bat Masterson, 2006, para. 1) Bartholomew – Bat for short – was the second of five sons among which he soon emerged as the natural leader. In his late teens, Bat and two of his brothers, Ed and Jim, left the boring life of the family farm in Kansas. Bat led his brothers into the wilds of south west Kansas in search of the Buffalo herds. Along the way the youths got involved in many adventures. (Bat Masterson: Gentlemen Killer, n.d., para. 1) After a fight in which Bat was shot in the pelvis, he started carrying a cane for the rest of his life. In 1877, he was arrested and thrown in jail for allowing a prisoner to escape, however, within a few months he was elected County Sheriff of Ford County, Kansas. He started wearing a fashionable black suit, a bowler hat and, of course, his cane as he set about taming the county. His brother, Ed, was the deputy sheriff of Dodge City, Kansas and Jim was a partner in a saloon there. After 1879, he traveled several of the legendary towns of the Old West as a gambler. (Bat Masterson, 2006, para. 6) He began to move from law keeping to saloon keeping, and then to promoting prize fights. He moved on to Denver and from there to New York city where he became a sports writer. (Bat Masterson: Gentlemen Killer, n.d., para. 9) Bat Masterson lived in the American West during a violent and frequently lawless period. He was well-known as a gunman and he called himself "The Genious" during his adult life. (Bat Masterson, 2006, para. 2)

A fictionalized account of the life of Bat Masterson was shown in a Western television series that ran on NBC from 1959 to 1961:

> The show took a tongue-in-cheek outlook, with Barry's Masterson dressed in expensive Eastern clothing and preferring to use his cane rather than a gun to get himself out of trouble (also the case with the real Masterson), hence the nickname "Bat". Masterson was also portrayed as a ladies' man who traveled the West looking for women and adventure. The black derby, fancy vest, black jacket, and elegant cane were his trademarks. The episodes each ran for half an hour. (Bat Masterson, 2006, para. 6)

As it is the case for Cisco whose characterization is a blend of "The Cisco Kid" - a pop-icon of the 1950s - and "Billy the Kid" – a real-life cowboy, Sycamore's depiction is also a combination of a real-life figure and its TV series version, Bat Masterson. Shepard's employing personalities from real life that survive in the Westerns of the 1950s as shining examples of the Old West, is another declaration of him that the source of his contemporary myths is mainly popular culture of those years. No matter, these old-time personalities lived in a distant past, they would not have become mythic figures unless they had been glorified by various media, especially in the 50s. Therefore, Sycamore's entering the stage in Bat Masterson's costume reinforces the effect of "Rock Around The Clock" that recollects the pop culture of 1950s determining the Morphan Brothers' real basis as the Westerns of those years.

Shepard might have had Masterson Brothers in his mind before he settled down to write the story of Morphan Brothers. Blue, Cisco and Sycamore Morphan are reported to be a team before Cisco and Sycamore died. Blue, in his opening speech, gives an account of their unity: "…yer too young to remember Morphan brothers probably. Cisco, Sycamore and me, Blue. The three of us..." (p. 5) They are like Masterson Brothers who left home in search of some adventure and became buffalo hunters. Blue's "suitcase" and "buffalo gun" and Cisco's urge for action give hints of such an encounter. Sycamore, like Bat Masterson, must have been the leader of the brothers. When he appears on stage, he begins to investigate around cautiously instead of responding his brothers who greet him happily. Stage directions explain his behavior as following:

> Sycamore sidles over to WILLIE and pokes him with his cane. (p. 27)

> Uneasy silence as Sycamore moves to the Chevy and pokes it with his cane, scanning the area with his eyes. He is cold and mean. He reaches in the car and turns the radio off with a sharp snap. (p. 28)

He is watchful and wants to understand the things around and make sure that the place is secure. He speaks his first words in a reserved way still having not saluted his brothers: “Was there some specific reason behind choosing a rendezvous point right on the open highway?” (p. 28) He wants to know if the plan has already been made, “I guess you boys know exactly where you’re going, then, how you’re getting there,” (p. 28) and if they are ready for the action, “I reckon he’s got you all set up with enough guns and provisions, then, huh.” (p. 29) Blue answers back naively: “Hadn’t thought a’that one.” (p. 29) They begin to talk over how to take action:

> Sycamore: We just meet ’em in the street, then, huh? Like old times. A showdown.
>
> Cisco: Yeah, why not?
>
> Blue: I see what Sycamore’s drivin’ at, Cisco. There’s only three of us with pistols against hundreds, maybe thousands.
>
> Cisco: So what. We used to bring a whole town to a standstill just by ridin’ in. They used to rall out the carpet for the Morphan brothers.
>
> Blue: This ain’t a town Willie’s talkin’ about, it’s a whole country, maybe even a whole planet. We ain’t in the movie, ya’ know. (p. 29)

Sycamore is after a big challenge in the street, and Cisco is confident that they can manage to outdo anybody. However, knowing that things nowadays work silently and secretly, Blue warns his brothers to consider things in a more rational way. Shepard points out, in Blue’s words that straight, sincere and honest ways of fighting is only a matter of movies in the modern world.

As Blue and Cisco get down to make plans Sycamore comes up with his suggestion, “I say we forget it.” (p. 29) Instead of freeing “those baboons” Sycamore, as being freed now, suggests to “reorganize the gang” (p. 30) to rob the trains. He is shocked when he is told that “there ain’t no trains to rob no more” (p. 30)by Blue. By Sycamore’s “devastation at the prospect of there being no trains to rob anymore- that the whole cowboy-outlaw ethos is now an anachronistic irrelevance.” (Bottoms, 1998, p. 90) Eventually, Sycamore decides that Nogoland “could be used as an escape route,” (p. 32) since there is an underground system there, and upon his decision Cisco bursts into a great joy: “Then we’re going’ then! Waaaahoooo! Attaboy, Sycamore! I always knew ya’ had a soft spot.” (p. 32)

Sycamore is quite different from his brothers in respect of his personality and experience. Shepard might be assigning him a full lot of experience as it is the case for Bat Masterson who was a man of several professions, moreover, an outlaw, and a lawman at the same time. As a lawman, he is solemn and utmost cautious. As an outlaw, he is mean and cold. He is also very intelligent, and as a result of his experience, he is wise. When he learns that there are no trains any more, he immediately realizes that his experience is irrelevant in the new world. Then, he decides they would rather go to Nogoland. In contrast with Cisco who thinks that Sycamore has "a soft spot," he is selfish while making the decision. He is also arrogant like Bat Masterson who used to call himself "The Genius," he feels superior to his brothers and once he calls Cisco: "…you pinhead." He is fashioned in a complicated and expensive Eastern style; he looks like a dandy rather than a cowboy. He speaks little in a reserved way and when he speaks he uses a more formal language. Blue and Cisco, however, are simple and honest characters depicting the values of the cowboy in line with their clothing as typical Westerners. They are concerned about the misfortunes of other people and know how to be grateful. When Sycamore declares that he is against saving Nogolanders, Blue opposes him as: "…we can't ditch Willie like that. He just give me back my youth. I can't go walkin' out on him," (p. 30) and Cisco agrees with him: "Yeah, I feel kinda' bad about that too. I wouldn't even be here if it weren't for him. You neither, Sycamore." (p. 31) They are kind and naïve in contrast with Sycamore whose is cunning and self-centered.

Sycamore's name is also significant, since "sycamore" is a name that is applied to three very different types of threes one of which is "California Sycamore". Shepard might have chosen California Sycamore for his character rather than the others since he is fascinated with California and American South West in *The Unseen Hand*. For sure, he has other reasons which may be found in the description of this particular tree:

> In keeping with its size, Sycamores have the largest leaves of any native tree in North America. The trunk of a Sycamore is usually divided into several large, secondary trunks. Its bark is speckled white and brown, with darker bark of older trees peeling away from the lighter-colored and younger bark. Typically, the Sycamore grows on bottomlands, floodplains, and on the banks of streams. Its tough and course-grained wood is difficult to split and work. It has various uses, including acting as meat preparation block for butchers. A few birds feed on its fruit, and several mammals eat its twigs and bark. (California Sycamore, 2006, para. 2)

Like the spectacular sycamore tree, Sycamore is portrayed as looking splendid in his fancy costume and accessories. He is depicted as "tall and slick" (p. 27) like the tree itself. The height of the tree represents Sycamore's urge for observation; seeing everything within a broad perspective as well as detecting details clearly and knowing exactly what a specific thing is. It also stands for his viewing himself superior to others looking down things from above. The monumental size of the tree corresponds to Sycamore's vast experience. A California Sycamore usually has several large, secondary trunks, likewise, the life of Bat Masterson, who Sycamore was modeled on, had periods of various career. Sycamore is tough like the tree; he is difficult to communicate with; "mean and cold" having little affection for others.

After Sycamore resolves to take action in Nogoland as being the leader of the gang, Willie shows them a plan of Nogoland which is a thinly veiled metaphor for the United States, with the rulers in the Northeastern Capitol, and slaves in the south-west:

> In the Northeastern sector is the Capitol, as you would say, contained in a transparent dome permitting temperature and atmosphere control. It is here that the Silent Ones conduct their affairs of state. Only members of the High Commission and Sorcerer Chiefs are allowed passage to and from the Capitol. Over here in the South-western sector are the Diamond Fields where slaves work day and night under constant guard by the soldiers of the Raven Cult. (p. 32)

In Nogoland, there is an imprisonment by the system. Nogolanders are ruled from the Capitol and watched by the soldiers of the Raven Cult who are "Fierce morons cloaked in black capes…patrolling and keeping a constant eye out for the possibility of an uprising amongst the slaves." (p. 32) Other than the rulers and soldiers there are not any free beings on the land. Slaves work in the "huge refineries and industrial compounds for the processing of the diamonds," (p. 33) and rulers are occupied only with ruling more slaves and getting more diamonds. Races are experimented on, as in the case of Willie's race in order that they could become more efficient. Having fun means forcing slaves to fight "beasts from other galaxies," "robots" or "androids." (p. 35)

Sam Shepard indicates by the circumstance in Nogoland that the modern people in the United States are slaves of a kind of scientific dictatorship which the rulers appraise as a means of overwhelming the rival force - Soviet Union, in the Cold War era.

People in the United States and peoples of other nations are used for more prosperity so as to gain more scientific power and scientific power is used to make more slaves. “A Great Game” is a metaphor for the rivalry between the superpowers during the Cold-War: “Each year a great game is played with the people of Zeron, a competition of some kind.” (p. 33) Here, “Zeron” represents the Soviet Union. “The winner is allowed to extend the boundaries of his domain into the loser’s territory,” – Shepard recalls, Korean and Vietnam Wars, Cuban Missile Crisis, Marshall Aid and other efforts of superpowers to spread their ideologies to the world- “and rule the people within that new area.” (p. 33) Most of the people are not aware that they have been abused by the politics; they enjoy the comforts of technology and prosperity they are provided with. However, they are gradually mechanized and over-controlled, perhaps imprisoned by the system.

“The railroad system” is associated with the Old-West. Earlier, Sycamore has suggested to rob trains. During Willie’s description of Nogoland, he rises the issue again, “They got trains where you come from?” “They used to have a system underground but it’s long been made obsolete,” Willie answers. (p. 31) Shepard draws attention to the loss of the real, the sincere and the spiritual as America loses its touch with its past. “Only certain chosen ones are allowed to travel at all,” (p. 33) Willie goes on, and later on his account, it is understood that “chosen ones” are those who can’t be overwhelmed during the tournaments in which people of Nogoland “pitted against the beasts…robots and androids” (p. 35) and Willie is, actually, the only chosen. Chosen ones can travel “by means of teleportation.” (p. 33) Even the freest in Nogoland can not touch the spirit of the old times. However, “this underground railroad” might be the only way to go to South where Willie’s race is kept, since “it connects to all the parts of the city where these prisoners are.” (p. 31) The railroad represents the myth that is the only common ground on which modern people could meet and find salvation.

While Willie and the three brothers are discussing over Nogoland, Sycamore notices that the Kid has been watching them. Sycamore captures him “his hands raised and his pants still down.” (p. 36) Kid begs them to set him free, he tells that he knows “about that kind of fighting” (p. 36) and he could help, revealing that he has heard everything. Sycamore insists on killing him, but they listen to his version of revolutionary fight which he has “learned at school.” He puts the three principles: “Constant movement, absolute mistrust and eternal vigilance.” (p. 36) In the modern world, freedom costs imprisonment of one-self. The principles all point what someone

can't and mustn't: "….never stop moving one from one place to another…mistrust everything until you hold a liberated zone…never sleep in a house where you can be surrounded." (p. 36-37) Over-control means over-caution, and it is nearly impossible to cope with the control-mechanisms in the modern world, as it is the same for Nogoland. Kid begins a long and serious speech about the tactics of guerilla warfare which seems ridiculous for someone whose pants are down:

> That's enough. Ten to fifteen is all you'll need in the initial stages. It's important to remember that what you're organizing is more than a gang of bandits. Guerilla warfare is a war of the masses, a war of the people. The guerilla band is an armed nucleus, the fighting vanguard of the people. It draws its great force from the mass of the people themselves. Bandit gangs have all the characteristics of a guerrilla army, homogeneity, respect for the leader, valor, knowledge of the ground and often even good understanding of the tactics to be employed. The only thing missing is support of the people and inevitably these gangs are captured and exterminated by the public force. (p. 38)

The hard beat of his speech that is confidently fixed into the text with commas and listings suggests that he has memorized the whole thing and it is an artificial knowledge that he utters one after another. The enraged flow of the rhythm also accords with the content of the text that is "guerilla warfare." Things "learned at school" are not really practical in authentic situations unless they are considered with a keen mind. Upon Willie's concern, "But the people you speak of, the masses, in this case are all held prisoner," (p. 38) his answer is "Then you must liberate a few for reinforcements." (p. 39) What he suggests is irrelevant, but he just goes on telling how to carry out this mission with the same rhythm, merely relying on his memorized knowledge:

> Hit and run, wait, lie in ambush, again hit and run, and thus repeatedly, without giving any rest to the enemy. The blows should be continuous. The enemy ought not to be allowed to sleep. At every moment the impression ought to be created that he is surrounded by a complete circle. (p. 39)
>
> Acts of sabotage are very important. It is necessary to distinguish between sabotage and terrorism, a measure that is generally ineffective and indiscriminate in its results, since it often makes victims of innocent people and destroys a large number of lives

> that would be valuable to the revolution. Sabotage should be of two types: sabotage on a national scale against determined objectives, and local sabotage against lines of combat. Sabotage on a national scale should be aimed principally at destroying communications. The guerilla is a night combatant. He thrives in the dark, while the enemy is afraid of the dark. He must be cunning and able to march unnoticed to the place of attack, across plains or mountains, and then fall upon the enemy, taking advantage of the factor of surprise. After causing panic by this surprise he should launch himself into the fight implacably without permitting a single weakness in his companions and taking advantage of every sign of weakness in the enemy. Striking like a tornado, destroying all, giving no quarter unless the tactical circumstances call for it, judging those who must be judged, sowing panic among the enemy, he nevertheless treats defenseless prisoners benevolently and shows respect for the dead. (p. 39)

Kid's account of the "guerilla warfare" demonstrates the discrepancy between the way of fighting in the Old West and in the contemporary world. In Blue's account of the street fight in which Cisco and Sycamore had died, Shepard deliberately uses the "broad daylight" (p. 14) image so as to point out the honest, sincere and face to face kind of fighting of the past. Whereas, in today's world, as Blue puts formerly, everything is silent and secret. Kid suggests for sabotage and terrorism both of which employ strategies that focus on capturing the enemy in unexpected and surprising way. The best example of this "guerilla warfare" might be the conflicts in the Vietnam War in which American soldiers were involved in large numbers from 1965 to 1973. Many Westerners consider the Vietnam War;

> a "proxy war", one of several that occurred during the Cold War between the United States and its Western allies on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and/or the People's Republic of China on the other. The Korean War is another such war. Proxy wars occurred because the major players — especially the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. — were unwilling to fight each other directly because of the unacceptable costs of global nuclear war. (Vietnam War, 2006, para. 4)

In the contemporary world even nations can not wage war against each other directly, they are demanded to have fallacious and double-dealing relations.

Sycamore allows him to pull his pants after Kid delivers his speech about "sabotage" still his pants down. As he bends down to do that, he suddenly kicks Sycamore getting the gun to himself. Now tables are turned, this time Kid points the gun at the others and threatens them to tell everything to cops and how they "were planning

to take over Azusa." (p. 41) Kid is deceitful just as the modern world he represents. His behavior also strengthens the effect of the lightening on stage; he pretends to help Willie and brothers as if the light comes up, but he turns out to act in a completely different way – the light sways away and darkness again. The kid of the Old West, Cisco, is involved in adventure, whereas, Kid arouses violence and terror.

On account of Kid's challenge, "Sycamore starts laughing hysterically, then scream with pain, then back to laughter." (p. 41) Kid's misunderstanding is amusing but his capturing the glorious gunfighters of the Old West is bitter. Therefore, Sycamore both laughs and screams his pain out.

As discussed earlier, Azusa is an "American Everytown" and the high point of the play is reached when the half-naked Kid – believing himself the savior of the American way of life– delivers a maniacal speech exposing his junkie-like subjection of pop culture ephemera:

> Shut up! Shut Up! I'll kill you all! I'll kill you all! This is my home! Don't make fun of my home. I was born and raised her and I'll die here! I love it! That's something you can't understand! I love Azusa! I love the foothills and the drive in movies and the bowling alleys and the football games and the drag races and the girls and the donut shop and the High School and the Junior College and the outdoor track meets and the parades and the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Key Club and the Letterman's Club and the Kiwanis and the Safeway Shopping Center and the freeway and the pool hall and the Bank of America and the Post Office and the Presbyterian
>
> *They laugh louder and louder as Kid keeps on*
>
> church and the Laundromat and the liquor store and the miniature golf course and Lookout Point and the YMCA and the Glee Club and the basketball games and the sock hop and graduation and the prom and the cafeteria and the principal's office and Chemistry class and the county fair and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and the High School band and going steady and KFWB and white bucks and pegger pants and argyle socks and madras shorts and butch wax and Hobie boards and going to the beach and getting drunk and swearing and reading dirty books and smoking in the men's room and setting off cherry bombs and fixing up my car and my Mom, I love my Mom most of all. And you creeps aren't going to take that away from me because I'll kill you first! I'll kill everyone of you if it's the last thing I do! (p. 42)

Kid's extended praise of life his home town, Azusa, should be seen in conjunction with its slogan, "Everything from A to Z in the USA." His "picture of America, for all its apparent inclusiveness, is clearly slanted, expressly limited to small town, adolescent popular culture" of the 1950s. Kid's is "a sense of culture that affirms the social and political hegemony. He shows his commitment to the country's economic, financial, and religious institutions", "the Chamber of Commerce… the Bank of America…Presbyterian Church." (Callens, 1995, p. 162)

Shepard returns imaginatively to his adolescence and recollects the Southern California of the fifties in Kid's long verbal aria that is characteristic of his work. The character called Kid in *The Unseen Hand* extols the virtues of his hometown while a bunch of Wild West bandits sit around and laugh at him. Shewey (1997) observes that, "Although Sam Shepard would like to pretend that he was always a bad-ass juvenile delinquent growing up, Steve Rogers was somewhere in between a glee-club cheerleader-type like the Kid of *The Unseen Hand*." (p. 21)

Kid's speech is another rock-and-roll treatment of language Shepard employs in the play. The stage direction requires that "In the background the old "C" "A" "F" "G" Rock and Roll chords are played to the Kid's speech." (p. 42) This speech without any punctuation results in a breathlessly overexcited performance on stage. It is attended by the laughter of the others, in the midst they laugh louder, which provides for a musical effect with its ups and downs. As the speech finishes they stop laughing.

In this particular part of the play, the whole thing seems ludicrous. A de-pants cheerleader, who has tended to be on the bandits' side offering advice for guerilla warfare, now reveals his true intentions in a long and rhapsodic defense of Mom and apple pie. He is a crybaby holding men who are laughing at him at gunpoint. As Proctor (1998) suggests, "America is imperfect is made stronger rather than weaker by presenting it in humorous terms." (p. 39) Despite his glorification of America, Kid's ridiculous looks and everything that contributes to it, ironically, reinforces just the opposite.

When Kid stops, Willie enters a trance state and follows him by reciting the entire speech backwards, as if to call it back from ever having been spoken:

> Od I gniht tsal eht sti fi uoy foe no yreve llik lli. Tsrif ouy llik lli esuaceb em morf yawa that ekat ot gniog ton eruoy. Em morf yawa that ekat ot gniog tnera speerc uoy dna. Lla fo tsom mom ym evol I mom ym dna racy m pu gnixif dna sbmob yrrechc ffo gnittes dna moor… (p. 43)

As Willie inverts Kid's speech, Kid shoots at him. The bullets accomplish nothing, neither rupture nor decease, for Willie is space, freedom, immateriality. He is a spirit that can not be killed by physical aggression. When he finishes his act, he is free of the unseen hand, "I have discovered their secret! The Hand is in my control! I have the Hand! We are free! Free! Free!" (p. 44) and Day-Glo Ping-Pong balls fall from the sky. But for all that effort, nothing much changes. This time Kid suffers from a kind of mind control, "My brain! I can't stand it!" (p. 44) he cries out in agitation. The oppressed must give its place to someone else in order to get free. Perhaps, Kid is the most miserable of all the characters since he is continuously abused by what he believes in; by his glorification of America and the adolescent pop culture that freeing Willie puts him under the oppression of the unseen hand. He is the conformist who is most susceptible to the ills of an insincere society and politics. As Willie cheers, since he is freed and Kid is suffering from his new oppressor, more and more ping pong balls fall indicating that the game was not worth playing. Now someone else is captured by the unseen hand. Shewey (1997) discusses that the play reveals Shepard's "fatalistic attitude" (conscious or unconscious) towards politics. It's pointless to try to change the world because it either goes on usual as in *The Unseen Hand*, "despite the best efforts of the right or the left, the young or the old, the square or the hip." Change is only possible from within. Shewey (1997) suggest, that

> Shepard's attitude may have been influenced by the teachings of G. I. Gurdjieff, a Russion-born spiritual master whose books outline a quest for self-knowledge through distinguishing the "real" (inner) world from the "illusory" (outside) world, whose values people tend to accept without questioning. Or it could be that Shepard was increasingly drown to the Gurdjieff work because he already believed in the ultimate futility of overt political activity. "If the experience of being confronted by a theater event brings some shock to your reality, brings you in some kind of new touch with yourself – then it's important," he said in a Village Voice interview. "But if you leave the theater with a lot of theories about how to approach the world… well, that just lasts for a while." (p. 67)

Willie's accomplishment further reasoned by the discovery the cultural inheritance that he finds out as he spells the entire thing that belongs to contemporary America, "It was all in my brain the whole time. In my mind. The ancient language of the Nogo." (p. 45) Shepard again underlines the the power of the unknown past- the power of the myth.

Things haven't changed for the brothers either; their effort has turned to be meaningless. As Willie leaves to return to Nogoland to start a revolution, he tells them: "This is your world. Do what you want with it." (p. 45) Cisco answers back: "But we're strangers too. We're lost Willie." (p. 45) They are too real for the contemporary world of scientific totalitarianism, therefore they are lost. Blue, Cisco, and Sycamore – the three brothers from the Old West – are left on stage, along with The Kid, who is paralyzed in fear and trembling from his pain. Blue decides to go off somewhere, to a desert outpost, a place where he can feel free. Cisco asks to join him. They escape the offices of modern technology. Only Sycamore remains in Azusa, deciding he has had enough of roaming. He is going to "stay awhile." (p. 48)

According to Tucker (1992):

> As Sycamore is left alone on stage, with a mute Kid, he begins to age into an old man. The youth of his body leaves him at the moment of his decision to give up his pursuit of the dream of an ageless, always young frontier. In accepting his limitations of one place to make a home for himself and thus in accepting his place of limitation, Sycamore has in effect become a member of Azusa society. (p. 71)

He comes to an awareness that his vast experience and skills, and his senses that he has sharpened to fit the code of an old time are not functional now. In this strange new world, he cannot lead anybody, in fact, nobody asks for his leadership. Blue, on his own decides to leave and Cisco joins him wishing good luck to Sycamore. Sycamore would rather stay than go through an inevitable disappointment he foresees. In contrast with Sycamore, Blue and Cisco still preserves the spirit of freedom and an instinct for adventure. They are urged to leave, since that is the only thing they can; it is their nature to move. As simple and naïve cowboys, they just go without much consideration of their reputation, a forthcoming failure whatsoever. When Cisco asks Blue before he joins him, "But where you gonna go? What you gonna do?," (p. 48) Blue answers back: "I'll answer them questions when they come up. Right now I just gotta move. That's all I

know." (p. 48) Blue and Cisco's stepping forward onto the contemporary ground is promising as it implies that there may be a possibility of real experience, even in the modern world, as long as someone has the spirit to prove it.

The play ends with Sycamore's speech in which he makes a criticism of contemporary America, and at the same time, declares his agreement with the way things are. His speech brings the issues that were introduced by Blue at the beginning, to a conclusion. First of all, he cordially salutes the imaginary driver that has accompanied Blue, with his distinctive formal language: "Sure is decent of ya' stoppin' so late of an evenin' fer an old wreck like me. Yes sir. Mighty decent," (p. 49) corresponding to his Eastern dandy look. He calls himself "an old wreck" assuming that he is quite useless, here, in the twentieth century America. He is disturbed by the speed that is a significant characteristic of the time; he goes on: "Cars get to rolling' by here, eighty, ninety, a hundred mile an hour. Don't even see the landscape. Just a blur. Just a blue blur." (p. 49) He points out that speed destroys the experience; people go far away in a short time, but they can hardly tell the things on the road. Speed will not allow them to get a clear view. While Sycamore tries to figure out the reason of this speed that modern people so eagerly acknowledge although it prevents them to look for seeing, he speaks out the sense of terror that was set forward at the beginning by the lightening and sound effects (flash lights and whooshes following each other): "That's what it mounts up to. A certain terrorism in the air. A night terror. That's what's got 'em all locked up goin' so fast they can't see." (p. 49) People are afraid that something unexpected and unpleasant will happen in a moment, which Blue, as well, complains about in his opening speech. They run from something they cannot name, perhaps, something has never existed or will not, but something awful that is likely to pop up silently and secretly in the dark. It is a kind of paranoia; lack of hope and courage what causes for blurred visions of high-speed movement. Sycamore declares that he is "slow by nature" (p. 49) like the sycamore tree that gradually spreads its arms to the sky and feet to the earth attaining a position to see and feel everything clearly. He is a man of experience which he achieved bit by bit. However, he is not alien to the concept of speed: "I've done plenty a speed in my time to know the taste good and well. Speed's a pleasure." (p. 49) In his time, speed allowed for experience; people used to feel the speed of the wind rather than being caught in the wind of speed. It did not mean running from a nameless danger, but facing the troubles in the quickest way. Sycamore hopelessly admits the fact, "Yes sir. Naw, that ain't it," (p. 49)

and he resolves to take the backseat as his place: “Mind if I grab yer back seat here so’s I can curl up?” (p. 49) The word, “grab”, is significant, that it points out a swift and strong hand that is able to touch and feel. Back seat is the only thing he can grab now, for he is in an alien world that makes his skills ineffective. He knows that he cannot be the driver, just like Blue that emerged out of the back seat at the very beginning. The vision that came out from the back seat by Blue under the soft blue moonlight, now, fades away with Sycamore: “…The lights fade slowly as he gradually disappears in the back while he talks.”(p. 49)

“It’s just hankerin’ to take stock a’ things,” (p. 49) he goes on. Once he was the leader of a gang, he was a reputed gunfighter who took anything into consideration incase of a trouble, but he is aware that, now, it is impossible to control things. That is the reason, he has not joined his brothers and took his place at the back of the Chevy. He believes that “a man’s gotta be still long enough to figure out his next move.” (p. 49) It is meaningless to immerse oneself into an unknown space that his knowledge and skills are not adequate to cope with it: “Can’t just plunge in. Gotta make plans. Figure out your moves,” (p.49) he asserts knowing that he will not be able to move in such a way in the contemporary conditions. He would rather not take action, if he could not do it in his own style: “Make sure they’re yer own moves and not someone else’s.”(p. 49-50) Since he is not in his own time, he does not favor making a new start; he is confident with his deeds of the past: “That’s the great thing about this country, ya’ know. The fact that you can make yer own moves in yer own time without some guy behind the scenes pullin’ the switches on ya’.” (p. 50) Now, he is free to take it easy; he does not have to control or lead anything, or take responsibility as he did in his former life. His staying inactive is not a restriction, but a kind of liberty for him: “May be a far cry from bein’ free, but it sure comes closer than most anything I’ve seen.” (p. 50) Old and exhausted, “in an ancient voice”, (p. 50) he announces his resignation from being constantly concerned about accomplishment and precision: “Me, I don’t yearn fer much any more but to live out my life with a little peace and quiet.” (p. 50) He can, now, take a rest without the thought of having to make a “next move.” As he states in the last lines of the play, he’s done his bit, he’s lived his life, he’s had his yearnings, and now he wants to settle down into a quieter life. In his own words, “There comes a time to let things by. Just let ’em go by. Let the world alone. It’ll take care of itself. Just let it be.” (p. 50)

Consequently, Shepard frees Morphan brothers by utilizing the qualities of the cowboy; Blue and Cisco by action and movement, and Sycamore by simplicity and serenity. The guitar that appeared with broken strings at the beginning makes music in the end. Sycamore's ending speech is accompanied by the guitar music honoring the entire cowboy culture and experience.

2. 2. COWBOY MOUTH

A short play in one act with music, and with Patti Smith credited as coauthor, *Cowboy Mouth* was first presented at the Travers Theatre in Edinburgh on April 12, 1971, under the direction of Gordon Stewart. It received its first American production at the American Place Theatre a few weeks later on April 29, under the direction of Robert Glaudini; Shepard and Patti Smith played the roles based on themselves. The play is one of Shepard's rock plays in which he displays his analysis of the artist's conflicts – what an artist is, and what he is supposed to be. As it is inevitably read biographically, *Cowboy Mouth* is also about Shepard's discussion of his own identity as an artist, as a family man and as a friend who strives to be loyal. The play involves an intertextual assemblage of pop culture images in a kind of postmodernist collage, that is typical of his pop-culture phase plays.

One characteristic *Cowboy Mouth* shares with most of the contemporary American pop cultural genres is its being highly self-referential. Dunne (1992), in his book, *Metapop: Self-Referentiality in Contemporary American Pop Culture*, examines self-referentiality in many contemporary genres, such as print and television advertisements, substances of electoral campaigns, literary texts (lyric poetry, dramas and fiction), movies, TV programs, music videos, popular music (country and rock) and comic strips. He defines self-referentiality in these terms:

> …Throughout the Western cultural history, however, some artists have very deliberately signaled their own presences by emphasizing the process of communication as well as the content…In the most extreme cases, in fact, content can become merely the occasion for an artist's self advertisements… Whether in subtle or extreme form, such advertisements of a communicator's presence may be designated by the term self-referentiality. (p. 3-4)

Dunne's reasoning of today's popular culture as being more commonly and elaborately self-referential is based on the fact that "rhetorical intention of the self-references has shifted considerably, shifting away from the artist's self-expression and toward an affirmation of the meditated community that is embracing both creator and audience." (p. 11)

Cowboy Mouth, similarly, moves further from being just self-expressive, but exhibits the lifestyle and circumstance of Shepard during the time it was written, on stage. This particular play might be considered as self-referential in an extreme form, since it displays Shepard's own conflicts in terms of career pressures, familial problems and his love affair with Patti Smith, through the account of his character, Slim.

Shepard got married to 19-year-old O-Lan Johnson in 1969. Their wedding was a peculiar event to the sixties where "poetry was read; music was performed; members of Holy Modal Rounders greeted guest with purple tabs of LSD." However, by 1971, his marriage came to the edge of breakdown. Although Shepard was not resolved to divorce his wife and recently born son Jesse Mojo, he was engaged in a love affair with rock poet/singer Patti Smith. "*Cowboy Mouth* draws from the couple's adventure at the New York's Chelsea Hotel in 1970 and dramatizes the playwright's uncertain emotional state." (Wade, 1997, p. 44-45)

Since the play resulted from collaboration with Shepard and Smith writing lines in turn, shoving a typewriter back and forth across a table to one another, it is considered as "one of the rawest and most exciting works Shepard has produced." "I'd never written a play with somebody before, and we literally shoved the typewriter back and forth across the table," said Shepard. "We wrote he whole thing like that, in two nights." (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p.72)

With some poetic intensification, the play provides a documentary account of their life together. Characters, which are created by a self-characterization, are described as, "Cavale: a chick who looks like a crow, dressed in raggedy black," (p.145) representing Pattie Smith and "Slim: a cat who looks like a coyote, dressed in scruffy red" (p. 145) representing Shepard himself. "They are both beat to shit." (p. 145) Cavale has kidnapped Slim off the streets and wants to turn him a modern-day savior. While these two play a game, high on drugs, in their small hotel room, they order up food from the Lobster Man, they fight, scream, roll around on the floor, make up characters, bang on their instrument, and tell childhood stories. Finally, Slim wants to go back to his wife and child assigning the Lobster Man to become the rock-and-roll savior Cavale so desperately desires.

Shewey (1997) reports, that

> Friends of Shepard invariably confirm that Cowboy Mouth was one of the most exciting performances they've ever seen – the few that got to see it. Shepard performed for the dress rehearsal and a couple of previews for the American Place Theatre's subscription audience, but the heat, both onstage and off, became too intense. "It didn't work out because the thing was too emotionally packed," said Shepard. "I suddenly realized I didn't want to exhibit myself like that, playing my life onstage. It was like being in an aquarium."
>
> He smashed the fishbowl and left town without a word to anyone. He showed up in Varmont, where the Holy Modal Rounders were playing a college gig, and hung out with them until things cooled down. Sam's disappearance marked the end of Cowboy Mouth. "O-Lan didn't know where Sam was," remembers Wynn Handman, "and Patti kept coming to the theatre every night hoping he would show up. It was very sad."
>
> (p. 73)

By May 1971, after eight years in New York, Shepard was a renowned playwright in well-to-do conditions, which he could have hardly dreamed of when he came to the city as a college dropout from a Californian small town. "I was living high," "I was living in wall-to-wall carpets with color TVs and all the dope I could want and girls climbing all over me and my name in all the papers." (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 73) "The tension between the cowboy and the genius, his city life and his country roots, his marriage to O-Lan and his fling with Patti Smith was tearing Shepard up." (Shewey, 1997, p. 73) The program for the *Cowboy Mouth* he wrote very well demonstrates his being "clearly out of control":

> I'm listening to ole Bobby Dylan and trying to write something about me that might be of interest to folks out there. Maybe a few of my favorite words would do it. Here's a few of my favorite words: Slipstream, Thachapi, Wichita, Choctaw, Apache, Switchblade, bootleg, Fox, Vixen, Feather, Coyote, Crow, Rip tide, Flash Flood, Appaloosa, Pachooko, Cajun, Creole, Gris Gris, Mojo, Shadow, Cheyenne, Eucalyptus, Sycamore, Birch Bark, Creasote, Asphalt, Ghost, Saint, Aztec, Ouaxaca, Messiah, Tootsie Roll, Abazaba, Cantalope, Antelope, Python, Yucaa, Sapling, Waxing, Wanning, Moxie, Hooch, Wolf, Pine, Pistol, Abalone, Cowboy, Stranger.
>
> (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 74)

This is where he announced “I don’t want to be a playwright, I want to be a rock and roll star”, and how “Writing is neat because you do it on a very physical level. Just like rock and roll.” (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 74) He continued with a confession of various explosions of teenage aggression – before concluding his life story with a list of his loves in which most of the items are outstanding figures of 1950s and 1960s pop culture and mythic characters that appear in the movies that belong to that period:

> I love horse racing and stock cars. I love the Rolling Stones. I love Bridgette Bardot. I love Marlon Brando and James Dean and Stan Laurel and Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett and Jimmie Rodgersand Bob Dylan and The Who and Jesse James and Crazy Horse and The Big Bopper and Nina Simone and Jackson Pollock and Muhammed Ali and Emile Griffith and My wife O-Lan and my Kid, Jesse and Patti Smith.
>
> (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p. 74)

Then, Shepard realized, among other things, that he was killing himself with drugs and that he had to get out of New York, which he thought was “a bastard…a bitch…poison…about making money not making friends,” it valued “competition over community.” In New York, everybody lived “in an unreal world where you are a star and no one else exists.” “New York,” Shepard concluded, was “no place to live.” He went back to O-Lan to recover their marriage, and they left New York for England with one-year-old Jesse. (as cited in Shewey, 1997, p.75)

Cowboy Mouth, based on his own conflicts, might have played a crucial role in Shepard’s realization of his degenerate condition in New York, since he might have observed the whole thing on stage. Shepard gives a detailed description of the room, probably where he temporarily lived with Pattie Smith, to set the play. As it is the case for *The Unseen Hand*, the scene is full of trash collected from American pop culture. In line with the note that followed the description of the characters, “They are both beat to shit,” (p. 145) Cavale and Slim are in the middle of “miscellaneous debris,” (p. 147) that is scattered around “a fucked-up bed center stage” (p. 147):

> …hubcaps, an old tire, raggedy costumes, a boxful of ribbons, lots of letters, a pink telephone, a bottle of Nescafe, a hot plate. Seedy wallpaper with pictures of cowboys peeling off the wall. Photographs of Hank Williams and Jimmie Rodgers. Stuffed dolls, crucifixes. License plates from southern states nailed to the wall. Travel poster of Panama. A funky set of drums to one side of the stage. An electric guitar and amplifier on the other side. Rum, beer, white lightening, Sears catalogue.
>
> (Shepard, 1984, p. 147)

The setting is similar to a pop-art painting with various texts and objects of pop culture, but they make a whole of junk - their fast-consuming and temporary nature is underlined. The setting also displays "the detritus of the western/rock connection." (Coe, 1998, p. 61) Cavale and Slim are purposely placed in this setting of debris, since their affair itself is somewhat fast and rootless. According to the given information, "Cavale has kidnapped Slim off the streets with an old .45," (p. 147) she has popped up in Slim's life forcing him to become a rock-and-roll star, "but they fall in love." (p. 147) She is a force of persuasion that is also acceptable like those initially attractive pop cultural items that are picked and consumed almost subconsciously. However, as pop culture give way to decadence quickly, "after one too many mornings," (p. 147) which have probably repeated a similar course in the small room, "they're both mean as snakes." (p. 147) They are in love but they are mean, "Slim is charging around screaming words; Cavale is rummaging through junk, yelling with a cracked throat." (p. 147) Concerning both their circumstance and their mental conditions "They are both beat to shit." (p. 145)

The description of characters reveal a contrast between what they are and what they look like. Cavale is "a chick who looks like a crow," Slim is "a cat who looks like a coyote." (p. 145) Beneath the surface, there is something innocent, lovable and timid, however, it is tightly covered with the wild and aggressive looks, further fashioned with fading and dirty clothes, Cavale is dressed in "raggedy black" and Slim "in scruffy red." (p. 145) They are disguised in what they are not, in what is mean and of decay. Tucker (1992) observes that in *Cowboy Mouth*, "there are two hells awaiting the play's characters: one lies in killing oneself, the other lies in the death of contemporary life." (p. 86) Cavale and Slim are laid in a setting that displays the rubbish, which is continuously produced by contemporary life and which in turn regularly empties and

gradually kills the lives of people. People kill what they have in essence desiring to become the rubbish the contemporary life requires, and they are drawn to destroy what they have to serve for the needs of contemporary world.

The play opens in the hell, Slim uttering random words of wilderness and inhospitality, as if calling upon one word from the other "Wolves, serpents, lizards, gizzards, bad bladders, typhoons, tarantulas, whipsnakes, bad karma, Rio Bravo, Sister Morphine, go fuck yourself!" The cat has to be a coyote so that he can cope with all the calamities around. Meanwhile Cavale, who looks like a crow, is looking for the dead crow - Raymond that has been mentioned before in the description of the scene along with other junk. She is calling him "old black tooth" reinforcing the animal's futility and uselessness of everything else he is lost in. Cavale's first words also evokes the image of hell due to her repeated use of "dark" and "black" and her bad language: "Fucking dark in here. Fucking old black dog. You fucking. Where's Raymond? Where's Raymond, goodammit? Shit. Raymond, Raymond, where's my crow, old black tooth?" (p. 147) Coe (1998) suggests that "with her crow talisman" Cavale is "the Shaman in the Wasteland, daring holy violence." (p. 62) She has kidnapped Slim off the streets with a gun, because she wants to turn him a modern-day savior. She is the representative of the dark modern world who is obsessed with black but she is also seeking a way out of her hell.

Slim, on the other hand, wants out of his role as savior, he is more cautious; he is concerned about his wife and son:

> Your Raymond! My wife! My kid! Kidnapped in the twentieth century! Kidnapped off the street! Hot off the press! Don't make no sense! I ain't no star! Not me! Not me, boy! Not me! Not yer old dad! Not yer old scalawag! This is me! Fucked! Fucked up! What a ratpile heap a dogshit situation! (p. 147)

Slim cannot reason how he could be the savior. He views himself pathetic. Not only is he kidnapped physically but also he is mentally captured. Although he is concerned of his family he cannot choose to go for them, since he is kidnapped corrupted in the twentieth century where everything gradually decomposes. Cavale's hotel room represents the twentieth century with all its attractions that have turned into miscellaneous debris of popular culture. He senses his own deterioration what makes him think that he cannot be the savior.

Cavale is unsympathetic to Slim; she does not care Slim's pitying himself and instead goes on looking for Raymond as she tells the dead animal what an awful thing Slim is: "…He's an old snake, a water moccasin, a buffalo, an old crow…" (p. 148) When Slim goes to the drums, and starts playing, singing, and wailing, it is understood that he really needs some compassion; he needs the consideration of his lover. His song reveals his affection for Cavale who has been looking for a dead crow remaining indifferent to Slim's misery:

> You cheated, you lied, you said that you loved me.
>
> You cheated, you lied, you said that you loved me.
>
> Oh what can I do but just keep on loving you?
>
> Ooooooooooooooooh what can I do but just keep on loving you? (p. 148)

Slim is in love with his kidnapper and that is why he is standing by her. He is also annoyed, since Cavale is fascinated with a dead crow more than Slim while he was abandoning what he should do and stay with her:

> Will you please stop fucking around with that dead crow? It makes me sick! It's morbid and lack and dark and dirty! It makes me sick! Can't you see what's happening here? Here we are stuck in some border town, some El Paso town, and you're fucking around with a dead crow. I should just leave and go back to my family. My little family. My little baby. I should, shouldn't I? Shouldn't I! (p. 148)

The dead crow, for sure, means something more significant for Cavale. As discussed before, Cavale is the Shaman who is trying to lead her dream of finding a modern-day savior and she allies herself with her talisman Raymond to fulfill the dream. After Slim's grumbles about Raymond, Cavale reflects her idea of what Slim should do ["I should just leave and go back to my family…Shouldn't I? (p. 148) he has asked."] to the crow. Being aware of Slim is jealous of Raymond, she compares the animal with the man so as to show him what he lacks and what she thinks he should do in a more effective way:

> Fuck you. Fuck you. Fuck, fuck. Can't you see what's happening here? A dream I'm playing. I love Raymond, I love you, Raymond. You don't talk about yesterday stuff. Yeah, you fucking coyote, Slim, always howling after yesterday. Raymond don't squawk 'bout his ole nests, do you, baby? He sleeps on my belly 'cause my belly's today. Yesterday yesterday, that's you, sulking shitface – Mr. Yesterday. (p. 148)

Cavale mocks Slim with the name "Mr. Yesterday" because Slim cannot move on to a next step; "always he is tied to the past and to the values the past has inflicted on him." (Tucker, 1992, p. 88) She wants him to fix himself at present, near her and focus on her dream.

Although Slim thinks at times about the Brooklyn flat with his wife and son, he will not make the decision to fly there yet. He cannot resist his will to please Cavale. Meaning to stop their quarrel Slim brings his moan to an end and changes the subject to something both Cavale and Slim enjoy. He wants to hear the story about Johnny Ace from Cavale again. Still asking for some sympathy, he obeys what Cavale has indicated when she praised Raymond for his sleeping on her belly: he "goes to her and curls up in her lap."

Johnny Ace is one of the artists mentioned in the play who Cavale envied for their courageously facing death. Johnny was a great rhythm-and-blues singer appeared before a "black guy had a hit record" or a "rock-and-roll boy had a hit record" (p. 149) as Cavale narrates. Shepard indicates that he was a myth, because he is reported as a man of sometime nobody can truly know and tell; as if Johnny existed before rock-and-roll. It is useful here to recall that "myth" for Shepard is, in his own words, "a sense of mystery" and mythic character is an "unknown quantity." (Proctor, 1998, p. 39) Johnny "was real cool," (p. 149) girls loved him and he had great songs. Moreover, he had a heroic deed, he played Russian roulette with his life on stage and blew his brains out. Slim's words just after Cavale's narration of the story expresses the gravity of Johnny's action. "You think that takes balls, I suppose. Do you?" (p. 149) What Johnny did is unbelievable for Slim. He likes listening to this story, probably he has got it told by Cavale several times, because it is about a man at an unattainable position. It is a great tale about a great artist beyond his imagination and perhaps beyond his perception of reality. It is a story of an incomprehensible time, it is a myth.

Cavale is pretty upset upon his comment on the story:

> Oh man. You're always saying that shit. Why don't you just play? Just play, it don't mean nothing, it's just a neat story. Fuck. You always wreck everything. Jus' like when I told ya' about Villon. You never just listen, you always got to place stuff. And hey, fuck you, you asked me to tell you it. I ain't telling you no more stories. (*she gets teary and nervous*) (p. 149)

Cavale is after making a modern-day savior out of Slim, but his reflection on Johnny Ace's killing himself on the stage comes to mean that he does not have the spirit and courage to be one. Cavale is disappointed and she blames Slim for "placing" things. "He has to have a 'place' – a label-ready for everything, a variant of the conventional saying, everything in its place." (Tucker, 1992, p.88) Slim's labeling things makes Cavale upset, because this act of him spoils her dreams, ruins what she has in her mind and she would rather hear none of the observations of Slim. She wants him just listen and acquire what she is intending for him.

Slim meaning to calm Cavale down and apologize, tells the reason why he likes her telling stories:

> Aw, come on, baby. Baby crow. Don't crow, baby crow. I'm sorry. I love ya'. I love ya' to tell me stories. It's like listening to the streets. Ya' know? Like listenin' to summer sounds. Like it could be the dead of winter but some kind of sound like just a bunch of people laughing makes it sound like summer. That's why I love your stories. I'm sorry, baby. (p. 149)

These words of Slim demonstrate that listening to stories from Cavale is something relaxing because of its creating a false impression. They remind him of things like summer and people laughing whose connotations might be warmth, happiness or liveliness. Even if it is winter, it is like summer when she tells stories. He clings to these tales when he seeks refuge from his hell-like situation in this small hotel room or the contemporary America with the junk of pop cultural items around. The extra-ordinary deeds of the heroes of the past generate a soothing atmosphere for Slim, since they take him away from reality which is painful to face. These stories are so naive, immaculate and courageous that they cannot be real; they are like listening to

summer sounds in bitter winter. Slim does not think he can dare to be one of these heroes; he is the man of reality, of today, and the reality of today is not for heroes, heroes could only exist in a distant mysterious time and space.

While Slim prefers making a run for stories in order to cope with reality, Cavale makes use of them as she tries to create a reality of her own. She assumes her dreams could happen to be the reality; there must be a way for them to cover the whole thing around completely. Her insisting that Slim should forget about yesterday and stop labeling things also points out her effort to avoid reality. Escaping reality and clinging to dreams, however, is something risky and dangerous. The rest of the world do not seem to welcome the violators of the real they hold; they want their codes, institutions and policies prevail so as to guarantee comforts of their lives. Therefore, they hurt or repel the source of threat. Cavale was also hurt due to her dreams and tales she holds on to keep the reality away. After Slim's compliments about her stories she complains about her injury: "Baby. Baby. Baby. I hurt my foot. *(she lifts her foot. It's wrapped in a piece of ragged stuff).*" (p. 149) She goes on listing who were responsible for it: "Raymond bit it," – her dream state; "Johnny Ace bit it," – heroic figure no more real in the contemporary world who dared to kill himself on stage; "Villon bit it," - French outlaw artist that she admires; "a tarantula bit it,"- an object in her hell-like hotel room that Slim lists at the very beginning of the play; "Summer bit it," – Slim's simile for the joy her stories create. (p. 149) Among the reasons of her pain, "summer" comes at the end of the speech, probably to underline its greater effect. She must be offended with Slim's finding her telling stories similar to summer sounds more than others. Slim cannot see the value of her story; he cannot take it as a means of freedom but recalls the joy of some other distant reality. Still, she asks for some compassion from Slim; she believes that he may join her dreams and agree to become the savior: "Kiss it, will ya', Slim?" (p. 149), she asks. Meaning some sympathy to Cavale, Slim starts getting at those who cannot accept the ones that oppose to live according to a common law. "It's damn steel plates they put on yer foot when you was a punk. They called ya' splayfoot, no 'count, " (p. 149) he says pointing out the fact that if someone is an outlaw they prevent him/her to walk at ease and they call the person's disability as being splayfooted. "I know. I know 'bout that jealous creeps. Lookin' at my crow like a freak," (p. 149) again indicating the distaste of the ordinary to the other. However, they are also jealous; probably they lack the spirit, intelligence, freedom, courage or

conditions to attain the rank of otherness. Actually, Slim is one of those who envy Cavale. He cannot move to pursue a dream; he has a family, he does not feel free, and he does not have the courage to move away from "yesterday." For he also takes part in harming Cavale's dreams, the whole speech of Slim is somewhat funny and it goes more amusing toward the end, "I'll kill 'em! I'll tear out their throats! I kiss your foot. I lick your toes. I suck your pinkie 'cause I love ya'. How's that for openers?" (p. 149) Cavale responds: "Slim, don't tease me." (p. 149) Since Slim knows that he cannot be truly on her side, he makes fun of her conditions.

Shepard, in *Cowboy Mouth*, as in his many other plays, makes a criticism of contemporary America and American way of life and displays the "myth" as a source of contentment for the modern man. As it was discussed before, Patti Smith's hotel room represents contemporary America that is messed up with popular culture objects. These objects probably seemed attractive a short time ago before they were consumed, but now they add up a whole of junk. In the middle of this consuming culture, individuals are hopeless and lonely; Slim views the room filled with the horrible creatures and things. For Cavale, everywhere is dark. They do not know how to step out of this circle. Shepard assumes that the reality around them is unbreakable; the modern world is ugly, corrupted and compelling. However, in a thing of the past, he finds some relief which cannot be provided by today's reality. Shepard suggests the myth can save souls, can be a remedy for social ills. Myths are about innocent and sincere bravery of people that they have left somewhere a long time ago. Listening to that unknown past calms Slim down. Cavale, on the other hand, takes the myth as a possible future. She has dreams to fulfill. She is looking for a savior to change things, but she is hurt and humiliated in turn. Shepard hopelessly implies that modern man is not capable enough to cope with the complications of contemporary world for pursuing his/her dreams.

The play goes on with Slim's offering some food from the lobster man – the character that appears to be quite significant towards the end of the play. Slim lists lots of food and drinks: "Send us up some lobster with drawn butter and two scrambled eggs and four toasted bialys with cream cheese and some Pepsi-Cola and a bottle of tequila with plenty of lemon," (p. 150) demonstrating modern man's tendency to consume a whole heap to get away from the problems or to ignore them. Slim calls the lobster man to change the subject about Cavale's having been continuously hurt by people. After his

talk with the lobster man, Cavale says, “I’m not that hungry,” (p. 150) implying her being disturbed by Slim’s ignorance.

Slim asks for another story, “Tell me about Nerval,” (p. 150) meanwhile, “he holds her close and they dance while she talks; an old waltz or a fox-trot.” (p. 150) Slim and Cavale continuously hurt each other and then afford to express their regret, often in a way that involves being compassionate and meaning love to the other. They are, for sure, in love but poisoned by expectations from each other which constantly causes for a kind of disappointment. Slim is after some relief; he insists on asking Cavale to tell him stories for they remind him of some distant beauty – summer sounds and etc. Cavale, however, wants him to fulfill her dreams that Slim is not so eager to. When they show sympathy to each other, that is also because they want to influence their partner to do what he or she wants. Now, that Slim asks for a story he holds her close, however, Cavale does not start telling directly:

> Nerval. Hey, Slim, really he’s “de” Nerval, but we’ll can that “de” stuff ’cause it’s too fancy. Hey, Slim, tomorrow can we go into town and you buy me something fancy? I don’t got nothing fancy. Oh, Slim, ya’ know what I want? Tap dance shoes. Red ones, red ones with pretty ribbons. Could we do that, huh, baby? (p. 150)

She is jealous of the hero of her own story, since she thinks Slim is more interested in Nerval than herself and the cause of her telling about him. She wants to get rid of the article of Nerval charging it being too fancy – she is the one who should have something fancy. If she had one, she could be prettier, people would be fascinated with her and her dreams. She wants tap dance shoes for she wants people to listen to her; she wants red ones because she needs to call attention to herself, and red ribbons as a sign of honor she wants to attain. For sure, she knows –as well as Slim- that she is, however, a raven-like creature with a dead-crow.

Slim knows, that in order to hear the story of Nerval, he should try harder, so he starts a game and opens her a vision, meaning some interest in her type of reality, reality of dreams. He says, “We’ll do that right now. Right now we’ll do that,” (p. 150) and according to the stage direction, “He stands up and pulls her to her feet. They take an imaginary walk to the shoe store. Cavale limps along, Slim helps her. They walk through the room as though it were the city.” (p. 150) Slim’s turning Cavale’s wish into a game

also shows his implication that Cavale is not somebody who could have something elegant – she is not that type. As soon as they start walking he warns her: "Now, you gotto look sharp. Ya' know what I mean. No limpin'. Try not to limp" (p. 150); they are going somewhere she does not belong to. As she says "I can't help it, Slim," (p. 150) she approves she is not a lady. When they arrive the imaginary store after going up past "Ridge Avenue", down through "Ashland" and through "Mulberry," (p. 150) Slim offers Cavale the dancing shoes at the window and Cavale chooses the red ones with the ribbons as a means of her recognition by others. She lets herself to employ something of theirs hoping that she may be visible to them, especially to Slim. However, Slim reinforces the idea that she is the other, she cannot be an ordinary modish one, she is an outlaw. "He smashes the window and steals the shoes," although Cavale opposes as "But we got money." (p. 151) After they run and sit down exhausted, Slim "puts a beat-to-shit pair of high-topped sneakers on Cavale," (p. 151) in a cordial way, "Now, madam, if you'll just slip your foot into these, we'll see how they suit you." (p. 151) Slim's choosing for her such shoes concludes that Cavale is some extra-ordinary mean dreamer. Actually, it is what he loves about her; she makes him violate the code and disregard the conventional, and she tells her stories about men of decadence that are like summer sounds. Cavale tries the sneakers on, "she takes a walk in them and looks them over," and reflects her joy, "Oh, Slim, they're beautiful." (p. 151) Since her dream is fulfilled, Slim turns to his main objective: "Good. Now will you tell me about Nerval or "de" Nerval or whatever the fuck his name is?" (p. 151) It seems as if the whole game was a trick so as to persuade Cavale to feel like retelling a story.

Cavale begins her account as "Can the 'de,' baby. He's Nerval to me." (p. 151) She tries to be Nerval, both by canning the "de" and allowing herself to be fancy. She goes on verifying her affinities with him:

> He had a fucked-up foot too. Poor baby. Always banging into walls. Always dreaming when he's walkin'. (*she spins around and tells the story sinsong*) It hurts just to think about. Singing, I try to sing it out. Dead in winter. Two calico shirts. They cut the rope, that rope that cut him down. It hurts just to think about or how I'll do without him.
>
> (p. 151)

On Cavale's relation, Nerval was also a dreamer, an outcast like her who was not able to adopt himself to the reality around him, so he was hurt and he hurt himself as well. History also reports Gerard de Nerval, the French symbolist writer, in a similar way:

> Gérard de Nerval lived from 1808 to 1855... He was an acquaintance of Baudelaire, his junior by thirteen years... Nerval was widely regarded as being a distracted soul, a dreamer perpetually lost in a state of supernatural reverie. He studied the Occult and was fascinated by antiquity and dead religions for which he always felt a spiritual affinity. He idolized several women throughout his life and wrote his major works concerning his idealized loves; Sylvie, Aurelia, and Octavia... Nerval eventually lost the ability to distinguish dream from reality and his bizarre behavior resulted in numerous anecdotes. He was seen walking a pet lobster on a leash in the gardens of the Palais Royal. He came to believe that he was the son of Napoleon's brother. Nerval was committed to an insane asylum, described as being more of a literary rest home than a true institution, where he believed he was being put through an initiation ritual. He came to a tragic end. Nerval hanged himself from a bar in a sewer grate. There are many inaccurate accounts of exactly where he hanged himself. The back cover of *Journey To The Orient* claims "*He died in 1855, hanging himself from a lamp-post in the snowy streets of Paris*. (Robbins, n.d., para. 2-3)

As his life story demonstrates, Nerval lived in a reality of his own where things had outcomes dissimilar to the conventional reality. Cavale implies that she also has such a dream-like situation (or she fiercely wishes she had), that she has empathy with Nerval. As she tries to recount the misery of his death, she uses a musical language as the stage direction indicates: "she spins around and tells the story singsong." (p. 151) Bottoms (1998) observes that, Shepard, in his pop cultural plays "retained his interest in providing a rhythmic context for the emotion implied words of speeches, but the emotion here, more often than not, is extreme excitement or agitation, rather than anything more subtly inflected." (p. 67) Now, Cavale sings her pain within a rhythmic frame, "Dead in winter. Two calico shirts. They cut the rope, that rope that cut him down" (p.151) with the repeated "t" sound that contributes to the speech with a hard beat.

After the last sentence of Cavale that is "It hurts just to think about or how I'll do without him," (p. 151) Slim helps Cavale's eager association herself with the writer: "Cut the shit, baby. You never knew that guy; he's a million years old. Just tell the story." (p. 151) For Slim, this is just a story, a myth, as discussed before, it is a great but irrational

deed of a heroic figure. Whereas, Cavale always asks for the continuation of the myth here, at present time. "I do so, I do know him, Slim. He hung himself on my birthday. My birthday." (p. 151) For Cavale, this might be an evidence of her connection with Nerval, and also for the expanding of the myth into the modern world. "And some lady tole my mom I was made from a hanged man," (p. 151) she adds as if she is the rebirth of Nerval. Her relating herself to the writer through her birthday and her mother's account, may also imply Nerval's association with someone else. Yetginer (1991) suggests that Nerval is "presumably Cavale's father who hung himself on her birthday". (p. 75) Cavale is infatuated with fancying herself as Nerval. Her speech goes on this way: "Poor bastard. And, Slim, he had a crow too. Just like Raymond. I read this dream book Baudelaire writ, and he said Nerval came to him half-crow, half-half-half-ass. Nah. I'm just teasing. I'm sorry, Nerval." (p. 151) Her addressing to Nerval as if he is listening is another indication of the maintenance of the myth. As she begins teasing, she comes to her senses to understand that she has tried so hard and wants to end up: Slim, I don't wanna' tell this story. It's stupid. I'm sick of telling about people killing themselves, it makes me jealous." Eventually, she admits her jealousy; she is afraid that she may not be able to do something significantly strange and gracious, like killing oneself; she may not inherit the myth.

Having not managed to listen to a straight version of the story, Slim gets annoyed yelling as, "Okay! Okay! Then don't tell me a story! Don't never tell me a story! Don't never tell me another fucking story! See if I care! Nobody gives a rat's ass anyway!," and he tells, "I'm gonna play some mean, shitkickin' rock-and-roll!" (p. 151) As said by the stage direction, "he goes to the electric guitar and starts playing loud rock with a lot of feedback. He sings have no fear."(p. 151)

Shepard employs music to carry out Slim's agitation. Actually rock music of the '70s is reported to be rather pessimistic in line with what the decade took over from the '60s. On the word of Coe (1998):

> Meaning at as anyone who made it through knows, events of the early '70s struck a hardy blow to the fundamental optimist of the 60s rock culture. A more-or-less naïve millennial faith in the ability of society to transform itself was swept away; surprised anger and violence surfaced from beneath the shattered idealism. Denied a progressive participation in history and an identity as communal sacrament, rock music ceased to galvanize people into broader awareness, devolving for a time into pop or a delusionary hermetics of power. (p. 63)

Slim's case also indicates such "shuttered idealism". He is with Cavale here, in this hotel room, because he is captivated also by her dream. He might have been the rock-and-roll savior, if he had not married and got a kid. He is disturbed by the misleading of his destiny. As he knows he cannot fulfill Cavale's dream, and his own as well, he is angry. He knows that Cavale does not tell the story, because she does not want him to take it as a story, but grab it strongly for himself. Slim, however, as he cannot create one, wants to be fascinated with someone else's daring account. Since his incapability is once more obvious, he goes to play rock-and-roll to speak out his agitation. The song goes as:

Have no fear

The worst is here

The worst has come

So don't run

Let it come

Let it go

Let it rock and roll

The worst has come

Have no fear

The best is here

The best has come

So don't run

Let it come

Let it go

Let it rock and roll

The worst has come

Every night I sit by my window

Watchin' all the dump trucks go by

Have no fear

The worst is here

The worst has come

So don't run

Let it come

Let it go

Let it rock and roll

The worst has come (p. 152)

The song presents the binary opposition - "good" and "bad" which appear in their extreme forms with the same effects. "The best" is viewed as undesirable as "the worst", on the other hand, both of them are welcomed what makes "the worst" the same as "the best." The extremes contribute to Slim's anxiety, since living on the edges means being either at the top or at the bottom; it is either very hot or very cold none of which allowing for some warmth and ease. So, when an extreme is not avoidable, it is better to keep going with it till it rocks and rolls, in other words, till it gets "mean and shitkicking" as Slim puts. His affair with Cavale is either the best thing or the worst, but there is no difference, since it will end in the same way. He has little hope about what has been going on in this small hotel room, but just goes on receiving it in a sense of callousness without fear.

As Slim plays and sings his song, "Cavale plays dead on the floor with Raymond on her stomach. After a while Slim stops. Cavale stays 'dead.'" (p. 152) She is in another game that is a result of her fancying herself with Nerval. As opposed to the demand of the song, she fears to be a real one, she cannot kill herself but envy others' suicides. Rather than creating her own original one, she is hard at overrating others' stories and even taking them over to herself. Both Slim and Cavale are caught in a disturbed reality.

"Stupid broad" (p. 152) grumbles Slim on account of Cavale's ignorance of the door being knocked, revealing his distaste about Cavale's games, no matter he sometimes participates in them to persuade Cavale to tell a story in turn. He "goes to the door and opens it. The lobster man enters. He's dressed like a lobster and carries all the food they ordered." (p. 152) Shepard, places the products of mass consumer culture, as it is the case for the stuff that has already been set, on the floor in a chaotic way: "Just drop everything in the middle of the floor," (p. 152) and Lobster Man obeys; he "goes center

stage an drops all the food in a heap." (p. 152) Slim is pleased to see all these food; he says "Great," (p. 153) a word that implies his pleasure about both the amount of the food and the way they are placed on the floor. There is a lot of food ready for being devoured in a disordered way, then, he "digs into the food" (p. 153) as said by the stage direction. This may be considered as an anecdote of consuming habits of contemporary America; having a great amount to dispose of, without much consideration of how they are disposed, and consuming facilities available anytime, anywhere, even if the consumer has not got any cash with him -Slim asks the bill to be charged to his office number.

As Slim gets the food, Cavale still plays dead on the floor and when Slim calls her, she utters another speech with a rocklike beat, that is to say, emotion implied words and sentences due to its rhythmic context: "I'm dead, baby. Dead as dogshit. Dead and never baptized. Dead. Slaughtered. Without the Christian aid of water. Water makes me cringe." (p. 153) Her words point out her desperate situation on account of her having nothing to cling on to. She is not baptized, thus, she is not saved by being directed to a great holy being. She feels filthy and disordered as she has not got an upright route. She is dead, because there is no point living. Tucker observes that "In effect, she is after a means of submission to a religious experience, a conversion to a faith that annihilates doubts and anxieties. She is looking for a savior." (Tucker, 1992, p. 88) Actually, her main problem is her "doubts and anxieties", which may be true for also Slim. She is obsessed with the word "neat". After Slim calls her to eat she "runs to the food and starts overacting disgustingly," (p. 153) and her first words are, "Oh, man, look at all this neat shit." (p. 153) Her circumstance is so chaotic that she has to rush to something "neat"; something orderly, simple and precise. However, she also destroys the neatness as she tries to go through it in a hurried and nasty way. Slim and Cavale continuously form new kinds of physical and mental mess in which they hopelessly struggle for the neat.

Cavale pretends to feed the dead-crow, the silent participant of her games, with the food on the floor: "Have some cream pie, Raymond honey…Shove a little sausage in that ole cracked beak. Here's tuna in yer eye." (p. 153) She mentions names of food that Slim has not offered. Neither Slim nor Cavale can realize that they are eating something they have not asked for. This is another sign of their cluttered physical and mental condition; they yearn for something but ironically do not care about providing it. It is also a kind of inertia what makes them merely desire without intentional actions.

"I'm gonna' roast that fucking crow," (p. 153) says Slim meaning his distaste to the stuffed animal, and Cavale begins to tell the story of Raymond that is developed through her and Slim's dialogue "as they slop around in the food" (p. 153):

> Cavale: Hey, man. Watch that shit. Raymond's real sensitive. It's bad enough you don't let him in bed with us anymore.
>
> Slim: Gimme that sausage. Well, goddammit, it's sick. Fucking dead crow sucking me off in the morning. You went too far with that one, baby. There's nothing in my contract says I gotta have a rotting stuffed blackbird for a groupie.
>
> Cavale: Hey, shut up, will ya? Raymond's been a real chum. All them nights in that fuckin' hospital, all them electric shocks. All those hours they stole my dreams, all those people in white face masks saying I was crazy. Only ole Raymond stuck by me. Never gave me any shit. And the dirty fuckers broke his beak. Poor beak. (p. 153)

Slim fails to see, that Raymond is, in fact, the main reason for his coming together with Cavale, since it symbolizes all aspects of Cavale's dreams. It is a concrete evidence of her identification with Nerval and his dream-like state, and it is both the partaker and the protector of her dreams. It is also the mute representative of the acts that Cavale is expecting from Slim in respect of his reactions to her dreams. The crow is the main point of the contract, since the agreement is on the realization of Cavale's big dream; making a modern-day savior out of Slim. If he really wants to accomplish being a rock and roll Jesus, there is no way out for Slim without Raymond.

Raymond's story of its being a good friend, and always sticking to Cavale, come rain or shine, also reveals Cavale's story which involves her having "suffered from a mental illness and undergone a medical treatment through electric shocks which stripped her dreams from her." (Yetginer, 1991, p. 75) After the treatment she has probably lost her visions of a talking dead crow, since she underlines the broken beak of Raymond in agitation. Now, that it has a broken beak, it cannot voice its faith in Cavale's dream that Cavale desperately desires to hear. Meaning to help Raymond recover, she "bandages Raymond's beak with an old piece of lace." (p. 153)

Slim's account of his dog following the story of Raymond, relates Slim's consideration of his animal in a quite different way from Cavale:

> Slim: Poor beak, poor beak, poor beak. All I ever had was a dog. A dog. Like any good American boy. I had a dog. A live dog. A cattle dog. The reason I got him was 'cause he was a fuckup. He used to chase the cows out of the pasture instead a' bringin' 'em for milking. He was a fuckup. (p. 153)

Slim did not care about his dog being a friend or approving his dreams whatever. As a normal American boy he had a dog, not an unusual thing like a crow. The reason he got him, however, was quite unusual; he kept the dog, because he did what he should not. It was bad and a waste of time, but due to his malice he was Slim's dog. Slim's standing by Cavale has a similar ground. Just like the dog that caused the cows take a wrong way, Cavale prevents Slim from going home to his family. She is not ordinary; she does not do what she is supposed to do as a woman; she is not typical of her society; she is wrong. Slim is with Cavale, because he can be mean, bad and irresponsible along with her. The way both Slim and Cavale view their animals corresponds to their considerations of each other; Cavale thinks that Slim might be the one who can appreciate and realize her dream, whereas Slim is fascinated with Cavale's inaptness rather than her dreams.

When Slim tells the dog was named after the stripper "Blaze Storm"(p. 153), Cavale "sings something like 'Put the Blame on Mame' in stripper style'" (p. 154) as if verifying her similarity with Slim's consideration of his old dog. However, she also fancies being an ordinary one, just like other women, so that, she thinks, she can give Slim what she misses about his wife. She begins taking a look at the "Sears catalogue", telling that she wants to have "some stuff ladies have." (p. 154) On account of Slim's offering to buy "a nice calico shirt" (p. 154) like Nerval's, because she is not the type to have household devices, she responds him revealing her will to replace his family along with Raymond:

> Fuck Nerval. I wanna dishwasher. I wanna stovepipe and a scrambled-egg maker. Here, Slim, we can get it all in the catalogue. All the stuff you always miss when you get like Mr. Yesterday. Then you'd be gladder Slim. We could even get Raymond a little cradle. And a rattle. And booties. And a black baby lamb with a bell in its tail.
>
> (p. 154)

Coe (1998) suggests that, although Cavale says Slim is "Mr. Yesterday," "her project involves a re-visioning of the past, not its extinction: a replacement of the family and a neat little life with the supreme risk of self-sacrifice." (p. 62) She believes that she should do anything to assure Slim's agreement on becoming a modern-day savior, or just his standing by her. She could even give up her Nerval-like style.

Cavale's view of a typical American family also demonstrates, that forming a good family in the contemporary America, requires getting involved in the consuming culture. Good consumers make good family members; a housewife needs to have a dishwasher, stovepipe and a scrambled-egg maker etc., and having a baby means buying him things. Sears catalogue presents everything a family can obtain through which they could be recognized as regular, good, and acceptable, and conform with the rest of the society.

Slim furiously turns Cavale's will down, calling to his mind again that he has his "own baby with his own cradle," "a wife and a life" (p. 154) of his own. He cannot comprehend how come he cannot go out of this hellish hotel room and accuses Cavale of putting a curse on him, and keeping him jailed here for a quite long time without any promising sign of his accomplishment as a star: "…A long fucking time. And I'm still not a star! How do you account for that?" (p. 154) Slim is not with Cavale for becoming a star indeed, and if he has not proved to be one, it is mostly on account of him – his lack of confidence. Knowing this fact, he makes another wild accusation; upon Cavale's denial of his claims as "…I never promised nothing," he yells at her, "…You tempted me into sin." (p. 154) The main reason he stays with Cavale is his love and passion for her; he is tempted into sin like Adam who wanted to please his spouse and be pleased by her. Slim stands by Cavale upon his own will in contrast with what he claims. Accordingly, when Cavale frees him as "You can go if you want," he hysterically rejects the offer: "I don't want! I don't want! I don't want! I want you!" (p. 154) His dilemma is well demonstrated by the rest of the dialogue:

Cavale: Then stay.

Slim: I want her too.

Cavale: Then go.

Slim: Good-bye! (p. 154)

Slim says good-bye not meaning to leave the place, but as he goes to make some music, again, for conveying his emotions - this time his anger and agony by the beat of drums. As stated by the stage direction, "…He starts bashing them violently." Cavale, as well, communicates her emotions along with drums using body language; she "goes through a million changes. Plays dead. Rebels. Puts on a bunch of feathers and shit to look alluring. Rebels. Motions like she's gonna bash the amps with a hammer. Hides in a corner." (p. 154) Having been put the blame on by Slim – as if she has forecasted with the song "Put the Blame on Mame,"- Cavale rebels. She is jealous of Slim's wife, so she tries to look alluring, and again rebels knowing that she is not that neat kind. She puts across her anger with a hammer in her hand, and her loneliness hiding in a corner. While Slim is still banging the drums, Cavale improves herself to put him at gunpoint with her .45.: "Look, you jive motherfucker, I'm still packing this pistol. I'm still the criminal. I'll fill you with – I'll – Hey, listen to me. I'm threatening your life. You're supposed to be scared. Look, baby, kidnapping is a federal affense. It means I'm a desperate…" (p. 155) Now, she pushes her efforts forward to threatening Slim, since she is through with trying to be a good American wife. This is another attempt of her to imply her self-sacrifice; she is so desperate, that she does not hesitate to threaten Slim's life for just making him stay although what she does is a federal offense. She wants to scare Slim, but against her expectations, he is perfectly calm and confident. Instead of alarming at her violent outbreak, he coldly corrects her grammar: "It's 'offense,'not 'affense.'" (p. 155) Cavale is frustrated that her aggression is received in a quite unexpected way: "What? Hey, what do ya' mean?" On account of Slim's abusive response, "I mean your grammar stinks. I mean you talk funny. I mean -" (p. 155), she gets furious: "Shit. Goddammit. How could you? How can you bust up my being a hard bitch with that shit? What a lousy thing. You know I'm sensitve about my talking." (p. 155) She is offended by her language being teased, thus her being put in the rank of the mean and the indifferent, but what is worse than that is her being unable to generate the forceful effect she meant at Slim. "Shit. Just when I was really getting mean and violent. Murderous. Just like François Villon. You fuck it up. You wreck everything." (p. 155) Her failure is probably due to her fancying herself as the outlaw French writer Villon this time. She is by no means real.

After a session of shouting match, eruptions of fury and contretemps, Slim asks the most critical question of the play: “How come we’re so unhappy?”. He is, now, at a closest point to recognize the hell around them. They are increasingly getting meaner and more contemptible ruining the love and affection for each other, and any pleasant feeling in them. They continuously add up the mess that is already available in the setting gradually becoming one of the deteriorated objects around. Worst of all, they do not know what they really want. Cavale seems to have not been evolved to have an identity of her own. She is likely to imitate others; she cannot decide whether she should be a dreamer like Nerval, an outlaw like Villon, or just an ordinary housewife. She says that she wants to make Slim a rock and roll savior, but she does not do anything to realize it. Slim is, on the other hand, in a tight-spot, that he cannot choose to stay in Cavale’s hotel room or leave for home. They are stuck in a kind of inaction unresolved and unproductive. Cavale and Slim are the representatives of modern people who have lost their sense of having a specific purpose of life to define their acts by, the code of laws to act upon, and their awareness of being alive.

Cavale cannot dare to analyze the reasons for their misery in fear of figuring out the chaos of her life. She is also disturbed with the idea that Slim is unhappy with her and wants to flee to his wife. Therefore, she “gives a simple but an absurd answer” attributing their unhappiness to the season, “Must be the time of year.” (Yetginer, 1991, p. 75) Slim does not insist on the consideration of the true answer; he does quite the opposite agreeing with Cavale: “Yeah. It’s the time of the year,” and comes up with a suggestion, “…Let’s change the time of year to Indian summer. That’s my favorite time of year.” (p. 155) Then, they change the time to “fall” – Cavale’s favorite time of year. They once more go into their world of fantasies in order to escape reality. “Changing the time game” is also another attempt of Slim to calm Cavale down and make her tell a story. “Now tell me a story,” (p. 155) he asks, since Cavale is happy having changed the season to fall. As she refuses him saying that she is uninspired to tell a story, he asks for something else: “Okay, then tell me what it means to be a rock-and-roll star…You’re going to make me into a rock-and-roll star, right?...So tell me what it means, so I’ll have something to go by.” (p. 155)

The most remarkable point of the play is when Cavale describes what it means to be a rock-and-roll savior. “Well, it is hard, Slim,” (p. 155) she starts her first words. Displaying the weightiness of the issue she asks Slim to let her time to think and stay

quiet as she tries to find the right words. “I always felt the rhythm of what it means but I never translated it into words,” (p. 155) she says, implying with the word “rhythm” that the concept of the modern-day savior has a certain beat of showing itself, and she is energized with the idea, but it is hard to describe. Her words also recall Shepard’s statement as: “Words are tools of imagery in motion.” (as cited in Coe, 1998, p. 61) Now, as Cavale delivers her speech, she makes her imagery move through words, in line with the rhythm she feels:

> It’s like, well, the highest form of anything is sainthood. A marvelous thief like Villon or Genet…they were saints ’cause they raised thievery to its highest state of grace. Ole George Carter, black and beat to shit on some dock singing “Rising River Blues”…he was one. He sang like an ole broke-down music box. Some say Jesse James was one…and me…I dream of being one. But I can’t. I mean I can’t be the saint people dream of now. People want a street angel. They want a saint but with a cowboy mouth. Somebody to get off on themselves. I think that’s Mick Jagger is trying to do …What Bob Dylan seemed to be for a while. A sort of god in our image…ya’know? Mick Jagger came close but he got too conscious. For a while he gave me hope…but he misses. He’s not whole. (p. 156)

Cavale determines the first condition of being a savior as being achieved to highest state of grace, that is to say, doing a particular thing in the most fair and honorable way, no matter if the deed involves criminal behaviors, such as thievery, or not. The person must be a “saint”- a perfect representative of his occupation. She gives examples to this kind among mythic figures of the past such as the criminal French writers Villon and Genet, Jesse James of great robberies in the 19th century America, and George Carter of the fifties. The second condition is, the savior must be “a saint with a cowboy mouth.” He must be the “American everyman speaking a language – their own language-” who could regenerate people when they need. (Yetginer, 1991, p. 76) As looking for an everyman, Cavale, turns to popular culture, but even the greatest rock musicians such as Mick Jagger or Bob Dylan cannot prove to be one. Such a personality also requires naivety and humbleness, since Cavale dismisses Mick Jagger, reasoning that “he got too conscious.”

The second part of Cavale's explanation demonstrates "a fantastical Christian idealism with its insistence on future redemption". (Coe, 1998, p. 62) She wants her description "to be perfect", because "it's the only religion I got" she says making a proper introduction to the issue, then, goes on as follows:

> It's like…well, in the old days people had Jesus and those guys to embrace…they created a god with all their belief energies…and when they didn't dig themselves they could lose themselves in the Lord. But it's too hard now. We're earthy people, and the old saints just don't make it, and the old God is just too far away. He don't represent our pain no more. His words don't shake through us no more. Any great motherfucker rock-'n'-roll song can raise me higher than all of Revelations. We created rock-'n'-roll from our own image, it's our child…a child that's gotta burst in the mouth of a savior…Mick Jagger would love to be that savior but it ain't him. It's like…the rock-'n'-roll star in his highest state of grace will be the new savior…rocking te Bethlehem to be born. Ya' know what I mean, Slim? (p. 156)

Cavale assumes that human beings are the source of creation; they create their creators due to the powerful instinct for believing in something. They need to place something great in the center of their lives to worship, in Cavale's words, "to lose themselves", till they satisfy their need of being saved. However, as time goes by, the understanding of the "great" has changed. The whole Christian belief, Cavale thinks, has become irrelevant in the new world. The God in the sky is too distant to touch the "earthy" people of the twentieth century, and God's language is too plain to be moved by for modern people. They have lost their connection with God in time. Yet the instinct is still with the human kind; they still want to believe that there is something greater than them – some power that can bear their pain, and provide them with extra-ordinary feelings. Cavale suggests that the source of the new god might be rock-and-roll, since it can "raise" the modern man "higher than all of Revelations."

Rock-and-roll has been one of the major codes of identity of the new generations since it was discovered in the 1950s. It deals in age-old subjects such as pains of love, protests against poverty, coldness of isolation, aberrations of personality, however, due to its raw and untutored tone, "its sound is bold, its expression is contemporary and the form follows the dictates of the need for immediate impact." Furthermore, becoming a rock-and-roll practitioner does not require formal training or systematic knowledge of

the past; anybody who has the spirit can dare to give utterance to himself. (Hayes, 1995, p. 131-132) A naïve god who derived from rock-and-roll may end up age-old troubles of the high-speedy people of the modern world, in a simple, direct, and hasty way. The old God was said to create the man from his own image, and the man was thought to be the God's child. Rock-and-roll, however, Cavale claims, was created from the own image of the modern people, it's their child and must soon find itself "in the mouth of a savior." Instead of trying to fit the image of an unknown superior entity, modern people want to create a God that fits to their own image. Cavale claims the "demise of Christianity and the imminence of a new savior, a 'saint' with 'a cowboy mouth…rocking to Bethlehem to be born.'" (p. 156) (Wade, 1997, p. 45)

"Well, fuck it, man. I ain't no savior," (p. 156) Slim reacts on account of Cavale's explanation. "…You could do it," (p. 156) Cavale encourages him, and goes on her speech with clarifying how he could manage this:

> You gotta collect it. You gotta reach out and grab all the little broken, busted-up pieces of people's frustration. That stuff in them that's lookin' for a way out or a way in. You know what I mean? The stuff in them that makes them wanna' see God's face. And then you gotta take all that into yourself and pour it back out. Give it back to them bigger than life. You gotta be unselfish, Slim. Like God was selfish, He kept Himself hid. He wasn't a performer. You're a performer, man. You gotta be like a rock-and-roll Jesus with a cowboy mouth. (p. 156-157)

"This rock star savior is no empty image in which to dump fantasies of power." He is a figure of passion, someone who could represent the contemporary people's pain, and who could recognize their frustrations better than anybody. (Coe, 1998, p. 62) With the advent of technology in the twentieth century, modern people have come to an understanding that the impossible might always be possible. Being natural born worshippers, they still believe there is a God, but they want it to be possible now, they "wanna' see God's face." Once they found this modern day savior who could ease their pain, they would ask for more relief, and the savior must be unselfish to feed them with more. The new savior should not keep himself reserved, but constantly perform as a savior to heal people, raising them higher with rock-and-roll which involves the language of their own. He has to be "a rock-and-roll Jesus with a cowboy mouth."

The phrase, “a rock-and-roll Jesus,” suggests for the sacrificial obligation of the artist and the tyrannical power of the stage. Since the duty of the rock-savior is explained as assuaging the community’s collective desire of seeing the God’s face, Slim recognizes that the artist is slave to the dreams of others. “He turns on Cavale, declaring his reluctance to attempt what Mick Jagger and Bob Dylan have failed – to be the rock Christ.” (Wade, 1997, p. 45) Yet, he may possibly try to be one if he had met Cavale a few years ago, “Two years ago or one year ago!...If it was happening to me then, I could have done it!” (p. 157) he yells in agitation. However, now, he cannot sacrifice himself, since he has got a family he is responsible for: “Not fucking now! I got another life! I can’t do it now!” (p. 157) Slim is so irritated with the Cavale’s account of the rock-and-roll savior, that he calls him, “You stupid fucking cunt!” (p. 157) and once more accuses her for tempting him although she knows he cannot do such a thing: “You can’t bring somebody’s dream up to the surface like that!...I know I could do it, but you’re not supposed to tempt me!” (p. 157) “He feels spent now” for his dream is over, like Shepard himself who the character is based on. (Tucker, 1992, p. 88) Eventually, when Slim tells Cavale to leave, “Get the fuck out of my house,” (p. 157) she realizes that it isn’t Slim’s house, it is her house and “it’s her dream being busted and not his.” (p. 157) She is not the one who must leave. She feels that her dream was underestimated, “…My only dream. I spread my dreams at your feet, everything I believe in, and you tread all over them with your simpy horseshit,” (p. 157) and thinks that Slim was unable to realize her effort, “…I take your world and shake it. Well, you took my fantasy and shit on it.” (p. 157) He is, in fact too selfish to become the savior of Cavale’s dreams. Moreover, he cannot resolve to discard everything he has so as to devote himself to a greater mission: “…I was doing the streets looking for a man with nothing so I could give him everything…But you have less than nothing baby, you have a part of thing. And it’s settled,” (p. 157) Cavale observes. Having finally lost her faith in Slim’s developing into the rock-and-roll savior, she concludes her speech in a dreary way: “…I can’t give you nothing. I can’t. I can’t. You won’t let me.” (p. 157)

Cavale and Slim kiss and make up again, as usual, after a deal of verbal abuse and mean talk. The play itself has a certain rhythm with its recurring tension and relief sessions. Coe (1998) observes how Shepard and Smith allow the rhythm to the play in these words:

> Shepard and Smith's poetic strategy is to establish a rhythmic relationship to the use of words through inclusion, incessance, insistence: the modernist delusion of sustaining talk to both create and prop up the world, using the power of myth fired by the tongue to create a timeless present, seeking a salvation in the glory of spoken rhetoric sprayed through an enclosure like visionary mace. (p. 62)

Slim and Cavale, as Coe's observation suggests, lie on the bed to come up with new narrations creating a soothing atmosphere in which they might find some contentment. (Coe, 1998, p. 62) Slim's account on rivers reveals that he will not be an appropriate saint, as he does not believe that he can sacrifice himself to fit Cavale's description of a modern-day savior:

> …I love rivers. I love the way they just go wherever they want. They make up their own paths…I tried to make a dam once in a river. It was just a little river. I put a whole bunch a' rocks and sticks and shit in that river. I even put a tree in that river, but I couldn't get it to stop. I kept coming back day after day putting more and more rocks and mud and sticks in to try to stop it. Then one day I stopped it. I dammed it up…I was really proud. I'd stopped a river. So I went back home and got in bed and thought about what a neat thing I'd done. Then it started to rain…All night long it rained. The next morning I ran down to the river, and my dam was all busted to shit. That river was raging like a brush fire. Just gushing all over the place. Gushing up over the sides and raging right into the woods. I never built another dam again. (p. 157-158)

Slim's speech once more demonstrates the couple's obsession with the "neat," and also how a neat thing may turn into a big mess. Throughout the play, the "neat" is juxtaposed with the messy and the chaotic. Slim and Cavale find themselves deeper in confusion as they strive for the tidy and the simple. They need a calm and relaxing place like a pool of water before a dam, but because of their uneasy inner beings they destroy the barrier attaining a more violent move. Slim will not dare to build another dam, in other words, imprison himself in the phrase, "rock-and-roll Jesus with a cowboy mouth," since he knows that his nature might not tolerate such a task. He prefers to take his own individual way.

Cavale's narration following the Slim's, also starts with sentences that express a hope for the "neat"; "You're so neat. You're such a neat guy," (p. 158) she admires Slim. Perhaps, it is just the way of Slim - his having manners to identify with, and his feelings of responsibility - what makes him a "neat" suitor for the modern day savior in

Cavale's mind. He would make a good saint if he had the will and proper conditions, but he is already attached to a family and he feels responsible for his wife and kid more than anything. Cavale knows she cannot persuade him to be accountable for the redemption of the whole humanity, so she wishes she had known him before – at a distant time in the past when he had nothing to cling on to. "I wish I woulda' known you when I was little. Not real little. But at the age when you start finding out stuff," (p. 158) she asserts, then, they could learn about things together, "…I would've took you to this real eat hideout I had where I made a waterfall with tires and shit, and my own hut. We could've taken all our clothes off, and I'd look at your dinger, and you could show me how far you could piss," (p. 158) so she would not have happened to come so lonely, insecure, and uncertain: "I bet you would've protected me." (p. 158) Her memory of taking part in a play, *The Ugly Duckling*, when she was a little girl, points out that her discontentment finds its traces in her childhood. She had to be the ugly duckling, but she didn't care for she thought she would be the pretty swan in the end. But, at the end of the play, instead of little Cavale, some other pretty blond girl appeared as the swan in white a dress. "I paid all the dues and up rose ballerina Cathy like the North Star," she remarks in frustration. (p. 158) She experiences the same thing now, all over again; for the accomplishment of her big dream by Slim, she has been the outcast, the mean and the ugly one, she remained cool when she was insulted, she was even ready to give up her personality as she tried to be a housewife. Nonetheless, her effort is undervalued, and her intended savior is about to flee to some other pretty life. Slim is not very interested in Cavale's frustrations now, but if they had known each other when they were little, Cavale thinks, Slim could have had affection for her: "I bet you would've protected me." (p. 158)

Slim has little reflection upon Cavale's sad story, "Poor baby," he utters, then immediately drops the topic, "Well, what're we gonna' do now?" (p. 158) They begin to play another game passing to a new melody with its own rhythm. As Cavale suggests to "howl at the moon," Slim becomes the coyote, and Cavale the crow "on their hands and knees." (p. 158) The "lean and low-down coyote chases the crow, who had a hard time singing all through night "without wings", until he jumps and tears into her. (p. 159) The game is another exposition of Cavale's frustration. Her fantasy was turned down by Slim, so she does not have wings anymore to carry out her dream. She feels spent and pointless now, here, in the desert of reality. After she is eaten by the coyote she finds some relief:

“Little crow feel pretty good inside coyote belly. Not bad she says for a day on the range. Not bad at all. Though she may never see daylight again. Not bad at all.” (p. 159)No matter Cavale cannot find reflections of empathy and consideration from Slim, she is just fine in his presence. She is glad that he is still standing by her after all.

Tucker (1992) observes that, “Slim, unable to break with one world for another but hoping to hold onto both – the world of his wife and the world of Cavale- indulges in…games as subterfuge.” (p.88) As Tucker’s words suggest, Slim is eager to play another game; after the coyote and crow fantasy, they pause for a while, and Slim suggests to “call back the lobster man just for laughs.” (p. 159) Accordingly, they settle down to call the lobster man and “do a trick on him when he comes.” (p. 159) They come up with lots of ideas about what they could do to the lobster man. One suggestion is putting him in a movie. By uttering the names of the movies Cavale picks for the lobsterman, she makes a wish -*Three Coins in the Fountain*-; she wishes the savior of her dreams -*The Prophet*- could come. She implies that the lobsterman could assume a role as a saint. However, this saint is a devilish kind due to his intelligence; to grow so big “he’s outfoxed all the fishermen for years and years. He’s never been caught,” (p. 160) Cavale observes. While Slim offers to boil him or says he could stab him with his switchblade, Cavale opposes as “I thought you wanted to be nice to him,” or “Now, dear, don’t get violent.” (p. 160) As Cavale’s sympathy for the lobster man grows, Slim declares that he envies him; the reason of his intended violence toward the lobster man is, indeed, due to his love and respect for him:

> Slim: I could cut through that hard shell and tear his heart out. I could eat his heart. You know that’s what warriors used to do. Primitive warriors. They’d kill their opponent and then tear his heart out and eat it. Only if they fought bravely, though. Because then they believed they’d captured the opponent’s strength.
>
> Cavale: What kind of strength does a lobster have?
>
> Slim: Ancient strength. Strength of the ages. Ancient sea-green strength. That’s why I love lobster so much. They’re very prehistoric.
>
> Cavale: But this one is a monster.
>
> Slim: You’d say the same thing about a Tyrannosaurus if he came in the door. I suppose you’d call him a monster too. (p. 160)

On account of Slim's remarks, lobster man attains the rank of a primitive brave warrior who has the strength of the ages. Shepard, in Cowboy Mouth, as well, goes deep in the history to seize an unknown entity of the past, and introduces him as the holder of an extra-ordinary power that could remedy the ills of the modern times. Cavale views him as a savior, and Slim as a source of ever-lasting strength assigning him a role as their holy provider. Cavale and Slim's sustained talk serves for the creation of a contemporary myth that is embodied by the Lobster Man. Accordingly, the delivery man in a lobster costume, appears as a real, giant, monstrous lobster at the door implying the significance of his coming by his "loud banging on the door" and "more loud banging" as Cavale and Slim get ready to open the door. He is confident; he enters the room sauntering and after he is seated on the bed he stares out at the audience. Cavale and Slim start to ask him questions to get to know him "on a more intimate level" and to learn about his "darkest nightmare…most beautiful dreams…wildest fantasies…hopes…aspirations" and "stuff like that" (p. 161), but the Lobster Man just grunts as if he speaks a language of his own, and nothing else. He is completely unknown to modern people; he is a monster of prehistoric times – times of Tyrannosaurus. Cavale and Slim are unable to make him speak, so they cannot play a trick on him as they have planned. "I think we oughta try a different tactic," considers Cavale. (p. 162) The strategies of the modern world cannot outwit such an obscure thing. He is the myth of today, a mysterious creature with an unknown way of thinking and talking who might become a real hero in the modern world wasting all the possible tactics employed to overwhelm him.

As Slim and Cavale think over a different tactic, Cavale suggests to ignore him for a while. "Let's go down to deli and leave him here alone," (p. 162) she puts forward and declares she does not care about the stuff in the room, "We don't need this shit," when Slim warns her as "He might rip us off." (p. 162) Then, Slim gets concerned about his own stuff, "What about my drums? My guitar?" (p. 162) Cavale's reaction to this concern is significant:

> Cavale: What about them? Man, you knock me out. You just gave it to me on the line. And like the Chinese say, sweetie, fuck the dream, you fuck the drum. Let the lobster man be the new Johnny Ace. It's the Aquarian Age. Ya' know it was predicted that when Christ came back he'd come as a monster. And the lobster man ain't no James Dean…Hey, honey, hit some hot licks on the Fender. We're going out for a little shrimp cocktail. (p. 162)

Cavale does not understand what is the use bothering for the instruments after giving up to become the rock-and-roll savior. She thinks that Slim should pass the things he is not able to hold onto the Lobster Man and allow him to become the savior. Cavale, once more, has faith in the coming of a great hero in whose persona greater myths may be created. This hero might be the Lobster Man. This monster might be the new Christ.

With Slim's words following the Cavale's, an explicit reference is made to William Butler Yeat's line "What rough beast slouches towards Jerusalem to be born?," from his poem "The Second Coming." (Tucker, 1992, p. 88) Yeats, in this particular poem suggests for the second coming of the Christ with a power that integrates "the human intellect with the animal power of the bodily intelligence of the animal beast." (Waters, 2001, para. 9) Slim does not want to believe that Cavale assigns the Lobster Man as the savior: "So now you want him to take my place. Is that it?" (p. 162) He is utmost jealous of him, "Well, I'm gonna' cut his ass wide open!" (p. 162) According to the stage direction, "He pulls out his switchblade again and starts to threaten the Lobster Man." (p. 162) He wants to capture the ancient strength of the lobster, then he could dare to be the modern day savior. He wants to know what makes him special and wants him to reveal: "We know you can talk. We know you understand what's going on. You've got the silver. You've got the gold. Out with it! Out with it, Lobster Man, or the sun won't shine on your slimmy shell." (p. 162) Slim is desperate that he cannot understand his magic. He is even more frustrated when Cavale pronounces the Lobster Man as the savior, "No, don't Slim. Leave him alone. He didn't do nothin'. Leave my savior alone." (p.163) He reacts as, "Your savior? Your savior! He's supposed to be your savior?" and he challenges him, "We'll just play him a little music and see what makes him tick. All right, Lobster Man, this is your big chance." (p. 163) Shepard employs the music again for the exposure of the emotions, and secrets of the Lobster Man that cannot be told verbally. After Slim "goes to the guitar and starts playing the old C-A minor-F-G chords," (p. 163) the constant dialogue between Slim and Cavale gives its place to action on stage accompanied by Cavale's song and music played by Slim. The stage directions intensely explain the noteworthy action on stage that is meant to conclude the story of the Lobster Man. The first stage direction comes as:

> Cavale gets up and goes to the microphone. She begins to talk the song "Loose Ends" as Slim plays behid her. He comes in on the choruses, singing. During the song, the LOBSTER MAN gets up from the bed and comes downstage. As the song unfolds he begins to break open and crack, revealing the rock-and-roll savior inside the shell, dressed in black. (p. 163)

Her prayer kind of song calls for the "neat," the word that has been recurring in the play, although it is not used in the song. She wants him to bring her confusion to an end by leading her to a secure way, and giving her something great to look at and see, to be identified with and to cling on to. She asks for a kind of deliverance to ease her pain for once and for all. She just needs someone who could show her how to destroy for building up stronger again:

> I'm at loose ends
>
> I don't know what to do
>
> Always dreaming big dreams
>
> Half dreams
>
> Wanting him and loving you
>
> To tell the truth I don't know which way to turn
>
> Give me something to hold on to
>
> Something I can learn
>
> Oh com right here
>
> Show me the way to it
>
> You know I need a friend
>
> A song to pull me from the hole I'm in
>
> Give me something low-down
>
> Give me something high
>
> Pulling in the power of dark or light
>
> To destroy to the left
>
> Create on the right
>
> Oh come right here (p. 163)

In the second part of the song Cavale reveals her devotion to her dream which, she believes, could heal the world. However, her dream is too high like a star; its lights barely reach her, and she cannot perform it making it real. She wants the savior to lower the sky, so that dreams can flow into the reality:

Oh I was at loose ends

Not knowing what to do

I needed to open up

So I turned to you

Help me to do it

I was always dreaming too high

Help me pull my star down from the sky

Down on the ground

Where I can feel it

Where I can touch it

Where I can be it

Oh I don't want to give up

I believe a light still shines

It shines for everyone

It's yours

It's mine

Oh come right here (p. 164)

The chorus appears as if it is sung for encouraging Cavale to capture her own strength in order to cope with her frustration instead of calling for a savior; perhaps, for that reason, Slim attends the chorus singing. She is heartened to move according to her own song concentrating on the feeling the moment gives, and ensured that it will not lead her wrong. She is asked to find the savior in her own movement.

Come right here when you feel alone

And no one speaks for you

You can do it on your own

Come right here it's such a simple song

It'll cure all your misery

It won't move you wrong

So open up your mouth don't think about a thing

Feel the movement in you and sing

Come right here you know you're not alone

If you got no savior you can do it on your own

Open up your heart don't think about a thing

Feel the movement in you and sing (p. 163-164)

The song ends by the last stanza of the chorus which is both talked by Cavale, and sung by Slim, and it underlines that "it is in vain to wait for a savior and that everybody should be his/her own savior." (Yetginer, 1991, p. 76) As the stage direction draws, "By the end of the song the LOBSTER MAN is completely out of his shell and stands center stage as the rock-and-roll savior." (p. 164) In response to the song, the monster takes on the shape of a rock-and-roll star as Cavale has always dreamed. "From the very beginning, Cavale is conscious that she is playing a dream, and she brings her dreams down to earth, because she realizes that they are too high to be accomplished." (Yetginer, 1991, p.76) Now, her biggest dream is in front of her, flesh and blood, in a black rock-and-roll costume staring out at the audience. Now, that Cavale is able to push her fantasy forward to create the shape of the savior, Slim "sets down his guitar," he "picks up the gun," (p. 164) and holds out it to the Lobster Man, to carry out Cavale's dream killing himself on stage like Johnny Ace. His leaving the guitar is "a gesture of rejection of rock salvation." (Tucker, 1992, p. 88) Eventually, "he leaves the stage rejecting the world of apocalyptic for the world of daily coping; presumably to return to the more limited visionary space of his wife's Brooklyn flat." (Tucker, 1992, p. 88) He pauses to look at Cavale, and they stare at each other for a moment. His flee is also due to his inaptness

being there, since Cavale has found her savior. He "concedes superiority to the Lobster Man" as he slowly exits the room. (Wade, 1997, p. 45)

Cavale takes up the education of the new student, as she gives her final speech "simply and softly, sitting on the edge of the stage:" (p. 165) (Wade, 1997, p. 45)

> Nerval. He had visions. He cried like a coyote. He carried a crow. He walked through the Boulevard Noir inhuman like a triangle. He had a pet lobster on a pink ribbon. He told it his dreams, his visions, all the great secret to the end of the world. And he hung himself on my birthday. Screaming like a coyote. The moon was cold and full and his visions and the crow and the lobster went on *cavale*. That's where I found my name. Cavale. On my birthday. It means escape. (p. 165)

Her speech reveals her strong identification with Gerard de Nerval whose lobster is carried out to the twentieth century with its pink ribbon (the description of the setting mentions "a boxful of pink ribbons." (p. 145) Cavale believes that Nerval's lobster and crow, and accordingly his visions and secrets passed on to Cavale. They escaped the cold full moon which accompanied Nerval's screaming like a coyote when he hung himself, to land on newborn Cavale. Just like Nerval believed that he was Napoleon's brother, Cavale assumes that she is a twentieth century Nerval.

While she gives an account of her relation to Nerval, Lobster Man keeping up with the musical quality of her speech "spins the chamber of the gun," slowly –"almost in rhythm with the speech" (p. 165) as said by the stage direction. "All through this he stares at the audience," (p. 165) as if waiting for Cavale to end up. "As Cavale finishes," looking like a rock messiah, "he slowly raises the pistol to his head and squeezes the trigger. A loud click as the hammer strikes an empty chamber." (p. 165) The unloaded gun he puts to his own head without effect indicates that the whole thing was a futile fantasizing. Cowboy Mouth ends with a "grotesque parody of a fantasy salvation, as Slim and Cavale create not their dreamed-of-rock hero but a Lobster Man. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 89) The Lobster Man dares to pull the trigger, however, his act does not prove to be a heroic deed, since he is just a dream, not the dreamer. The whole struggle of Cavale and Slim is in vain for they cannot act out the saviors themselves.

According to Cohn (1991), "Brilliantly theatrical, the play implicitly denies its title. A cowboy mouth or a lobster shell – neither one heralds a messiah." (p. 177)

CONCLUSION

The Unseen Hand and *Cowboy Mouth* are two significant examples of Sam Shepard's pop cultural plays in which Shepard recreates mythic figures of pop culture sources in the contemporary context. Both of the plays bear an assemblage of heterogeneous texts such as movies, music and folklore presenting a kind of postmodern collage similar to the works of pop-art painters. The language of the plays, especially that of the monologues, attains a musical quality –usually the beat of rock music- at times so as to reflect a particular emotion. The plays are also highly self-referential. These qualities peculiar to the pop culture phase of Shepard's career are deliberately used to bring about a serious criticism of contemporary American society and politics, and American way of life in the twentieth century.

The Unseen Hand, from the very beginning, with the description of the setting, the sound effects and the lightening surfaces a harsh criticism of modern America. The setting is fashioned with the junk of popular culture with sucked-up Coca-Cola bottles, empty tin cans and cardboard boxes drawing attention to the consumer society that consumes to a great extent, and at a great speed. The roaring sound of the road with trucks passing by, and accompanied lights cutting through the stage initiates a sense of violence and terror to the play on account of their bombarding effect on the audience. It is the terror of the growing mechanization in the modern world, since the road is described as a machine moving in a never disturbed rhythmic order. The machine-like road signals a forthcoming criticism of the technology and scientific totalitarianism in the modern world. The whole thing on stage becomes more significant in they symbolically function for displaying the unease about America, when the lights pass across the graffiti with red paint, "Kill Azusa" on the Chevy. The violence is associated with "everything from A to Z in the USA," as the motto for Azusa suggests.

As the play develops, Shepard gives depth to his criticism of the contemporary American society picturing it as tragic having lost the essential American identity to the superficial, momentary and materialistic values of the present. Blue Morphan views the modern individuals as dishonest and hypocritical in line with the backbiting affairs of the corrupted contemporary politics that he describes as operating "silent and secret."

(Shepard, 1981, p. 5) Technology that is expected to make a positive effect on the lives of people has turned out to cause for growing mechanization in the modern society limiting the experience, and thus dehumanizing the individuals. People have turned into machines who are programmed to consume more without any real urge. They have also lost their emotions, and have forgotten the taste of living by allowing time for experience. Sycamore Morphan, in the final speech of the play, highlights the loss of real experience in the modern world on account of the speed that is brought by the technology. He reasons the need for speed with "a certain terrorism in the air" (p. 50) that modern people hurry to escape; they are scared of an unexpected attack that may emerge at a similar speed as theirs. People are depicted as mechanized, insecure and uncertain in the contemporary America in accordance with the death of spiritualism, and the following rise of terrorism through the cracks of the disintegrated modern society.

Kid is the representative of the modern individual who is the victim of civilization he himself created. He, particularly recalls the 1950s characterized by a remarkable conformism with the Cold War policies and the praise of the conventional values. He is the person of dualities as a result of the fragmentation of self in the contemporary American society. It is possible to observe the discrepancy between his intentions and performance put forward in an ironic way, in every act of him. While he goes for or against something, he does just the opposite; he cheers as he refuses cheer leading again, he offers help to Willie and the cowboys but hold them at gun point eventually. As he delivers the memorized information about the guerilla warfare with excitement, he looks ridiculous with his pants down. Worst of all ironies about him, he is betrayed by the values he has always believed in. As Willie frees himself by converting Kid's "I love Azusa!" (p. 42) speech praising the adolescent popular culture of the 1950s and various institutions that belong to the decade, the imprisonment by the unseen hand passes on to Kid.

Shepard suggests the individuals to realize their imprisonment by the system and take action. Willie, the space freak, functions as a vision to demonstrate the future of the American people; what may happen to them if they continue to conform with the corrupted society and politics, and if they allow technology to provoke scientific totalitarianism. Shepard warns Americans by Willie who is a slave of his rulers' "purely telepathic intellectual state" (p.11) controlled by their "unseen hand". He is depicted as a machine like entity created by the technology of the Nogoland. However, through

some human emotions his race developed, he has achieved a realization of his slavery and wants to free his people. Eventually, he gains his freedom via "the ancient language of the Nogo" (p. 45) which he says was all in his brain the whole time. Shepard underlines the cultural inheritance as a source of recovery from the ills of the modern world. If modern people can rediscover the real American identity, they may be unified with the whole American generations attaining the real state of freedom.

The cowboy image –of the nineteenth century- is deliberately placed in this contemporary fragmented world so as to underline "the tensions and gaps" between the understanding of the modern world and that of a distant past. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 81) Shepard contrasts the modern world with the Old West through the characterization of the Morphan Brothers, which is based on Shepard's recollection of cowboys as mythic figures from the Westerns of the 1950s. In view of their personalities, their own depiction of the cowboy as well as their criticism of the way things are in the modern world, Shepard demonstrates what the modern man lacks for contentment. Blue Morphan appears as the reminiscent of the cowboy tradition and experience as the play opens, drawing attention to the cowboy's being a man of movement, strength, endurance, skillfulness, and courage as he displays the essential cowboy materials such as "the guitar", "the suitcase", and "the rifle." Cisco Morphan exposes the cowboy's urge for adventure. Sycamore Morphan emphasizes the significance of real experience; to see, understand, be aware, and make sure. As their name "Morphan", in other words "morphine" implies they are meant to be a source of relief for the contemporary people who are infected by the unseen hand of the system that operates on the sly. The cowboy image reflects Shepard's wish to regenerate "the dead spirit of the society." (Yetginer, 1991, p. 89) Shepard views the Old West mythos as a common ground for Americans where they can trace the unique American identity to fill the gaps between the generations and end up the fragmented American experience.

Although Shepard suggests the myth as a remedy for the sorts of malaise in the contemporary world, he does not have the faith in a true realization of freedom or attaining a collective identity through myth in the contemporary cultural environment. No matter Willie frees himself by the ancient language of Nogo, he can not be truly unified either with the cowboys or with Kid. He leaves the Morphan brothers with their own choices of the next step, and Kid inherits the torture of the unseen hand. The

fragmented pieces are still in the air. Shepard's statement in a 1992 interview justifies the outcome above:

> Myth in its truest form has been demolished. It doesn't exist anymore. All we have is fantasies about it. Or ideas that don't speak to our inner self at all, they just speak to some lame notions about the past. But they don't connect with anything. We've lost touch with the essence of myth…The same with the Native Americans –they were connected to their ancestors through myth, through prayer, through ritual, through dance, music – all of those forms that lead people into a river of myth. And there was a connecting river, not a fragmented river. (As cited in Bottoms, 1998, p. 9)

His statement also emphasizes that the mythic figures are unknown entities and the myth will not reveal itself in the modern world in any way, since the connections to the past have already been broken. As time goes by, the number of the gaps through the time increases causing for more fragmented lives and personalities. Even Morphan brothers split in the modern world as Sycamore resolves not to take his chances in the alien contemporary arena. As being the representative of the young conformist generation, Kid is given the most miserable state in the end.

"Shepard's sense of apocalyptic breakdown, of a hopelessly fractured world, while often being explicitly stated in the plays of his pop-culture phase, is communicated most powerfully and consistently through their fractured construction." The tension between the primary story-line and the independent flow of events implies that "incoherent fragments of experience cannot be bound together." While constructing his pop cultural plays, Shepard employed sudden bursts of "performative fits of language or song", rather than a "linear narrative format." In *The Unseen Hand*, Shepard pushes the development of each separate performance of the characters – Blue Morphan's tedious opening speech, Willie's performance of science fiction jargon, "Kid's catalogue of revolutionary jargon and delirious listing of the virtues of American life", Willie's converting the same speech backward, and Sycamore's final mutterings – to its limit, thus the thread of narrative is constantly in danger of being lost just like the myth being incapable of unifying the individual experiences under a collective understanding in the modern climate. (Bottoms, 1998, 74-75)

Another way of Shepard to create incoherent worlds is his use of the bricolage approach. In *The Unseen Hand* he juxtaposes diverse pop references – from the Western tv series, comic books, and science-fiction movies of the 1950s, items of adolescent popular culture of the 50s, and Bill Haley's song, etc. This approach is also evident in the diversity of the vocal styles such as Blue and Cisco's country-western twang, Willie's formal accent and mechanic talk, and Sycamore's reserved cordial voice. Moreover, images of the past and future mingle into an incoherent present in the play. Morphan Brothers as nineteenth century bandits and Willie representing a future time America, come together at a present time that is fashioned both with the hippies of the 1960s and schoolchildren of the 1950s. (Bottoms, 1998, p. 81)

Shepard's fascination with the bricolage approach to produce multivalent works, accounts for his interest in pop-art. In his pop cultural plays, Shepard like the pop-art artists of the sixties, picks up images from television, movies and music, etc., and juxtaposes them in the same context. However, his work differs from the pop art, since he does not use these images merely for parodying their sources. As Wade (1997) observes, "Shepard's treatment of American imagery frequently takes a satiric bite; it also however retains traces of affection." (p. 38) In *The Unseen Hand*, Shepard parodies the "American pie mythology of the 1950s" by allowing the de-pants cheerleader to glorify them. (Geis, 1996, p. 58) On the other hand, his view of the Old West is nostalgic rather than parodic since he turns toward an idealized American past in the play, demonstrating his fondness to the cowboy icon.

The Unseen Hand is also a self-refrential play like many other pop-cultural genres. Shepard recalls the real-time locations of his teenage years, Duarte, Azusa and Arcadia, and he brings about the adolescent pop culture by Kid, which is actually based on his own recollections of South California in the 60s.

The other primary source for this dissertation, *Cowboy Mouth* is, perhaps, Shepard's most self-refrential play, since it was written in collaboration with Patti Smith and provides a documentary account of their passionate affair in a small hotel room in New York. The play derived from Shepard's (and Smith's) own conflicts; whether to stay with Smith or go back to his wife and baby son; whether to self-sacrifice himself for his followers as an artist or take his own individual way, and it demonstrates the whole thing in a bizarre and distressful atmosphere.

Shepard gives a detailed description of the setting, which is probably based on Patti Smith's hotel room, picturing it with a similar fashion to that of *The Unseen Hand*. The stage looks like a pop-art painting with the trash around collected from American pop cultural sources – a bricolage of western/rock connection displaying "pictures of cowboys", "photographs of Hank Williams, Jimmy Rodgers", "license plates from southern states", "an electric guitar and amplifier". (p. 147) The "miscellaneous debris" of American pop culture (p. 47) indicates an upcoming criticism of contemporary America. Accordingly, the characters are described as spent as the debris around them pointing out a mean and degenerated state associated with modern people. The fraught and distressed characters, Slim (based on Shepard himself) and Cavale (based on Patti Smith), who frequently expose their agitation through dialogue and music throughout the play, draw attention to the devastating effect of the modern American way of life on the individuals. They are like the products of pop culture; fast consumed and left in a meaningless position, having nothing to cling on to or to get along living with. From the very beginning the modern world is denoted as being violent. As the play opens, Slim tries to communicate what he views around him, "wolves, serpent, lizards, gizzard, bad bladders, typhoons, tarantulas, whipsnakes..." (p. 147), and he hopelessly reveals the reality of his state, "Kidnapped in the twentieth century!" (p. 147)

The central point to the play is Cavale's biggest dream of creating a rock-and-roll savior out of Slim, who could end up people's alienation and loneliness by reconditioning them in the new world. Cavale lectures him with the stories of artistic bravery of the past – Johnny Ace playing Russian roulette to blow his brains out, and French decadent writer Nerval who hanged himself – so that he can get some inspiration for his task. However, Slim has little confidence in accomplishing this mission, since he thinks he should devote himself to his family rather than to the whole humanity. Accordingly, he views the myth only as fascinating, and even soothing accounts of a distant reality. Cavale, on the other hand, is on the quest of its continuation in the modern world.

The tension between Slim and Cavale aroused by their intense demands from each other which they would not like to carry out (Cavale asking Slim to be the savior, and Slim asking her retell stories), spreads throughout the play in sudden bursts of violence and agitation, and sudden recoveries constructing a fractured structure that implies the fragmented self of the modern man. Their search for the "neat" also emerges

out of a need to achieve a unified view of themselves with each other, and with the outer world, but each attempt for a unity results in more pieces of the self and bigger frustration in a largely fractured world.

Music is a quite important element in the fractured construction of the play. Sudden bursts of emotions are usually communicated by either the speeches attaining a rocklike beat, or performances of music often breaking the loose narrative course. Music is not only used for constructing the play, in fact, the play is about music, particularly about rock music. The savior of Cavale's dream, is a rock-and-roller, an outcome of the sixties rebellious atmosphere, and accordingly the reflection of its rebels.

As Cavale describes the modern-day savior she asserts that rock-and-roll was created by the image of modern people, and it could "raise" them "higher than all of revelations." (p. 156) The savior must be a rock-and-roll God, so that he can understand the conflicts of modern people and ease their pain properly. He must also have a cowboy mouth to unite them with the whole American experience speaking a language peculiar to America. He must be naïve and unselfish at the "highest state of grace" (p. 156) to reach anybody in need of help, and to collect people's despair and loneliness to himself. The description, in this sense, exposes the sacrificial deed of the artist to abandon his own life and dreams so as to provide deliverance to masses. "Shepard emphasizes that the function of the artist is equal to that of the savior." (Yetginer, 1991, p. 76)

All through the play, Cavale and Slim being disturbed by the hell-like reality of the modern world, seek a way out by being fascinated with the stories of the past, hanging on to dreams, and involving in games. The game they play most intensely is Lobster Man fantasy. A clear reference is made to William Butler Yeats's line "What rough beast slouches towards Jerusalem to be born?" from his poem "The Second Coming" and to the coming of a savior in the form of a monster at the end of the twentieth century. (Tucker, 88-89) Slim and Cavale call the lobsterman to their room for just fun. Through their sustained talk that involves their speculations about the lobster man before he arrives, they assign him the qualities of a prophet, a primitive warrior with ancient strength, a prehistoric monster. Thus, they turn the delivery man into a mythic figure orally, so when he arrives in the room, he just grunts like a creature of an unknown time and space. Bewildered with its strangeness, Cavale resolves to appoint him the mission of saving modern people. She takes charge to lead him to his new

identity, as she sings her song, lobster man steps out of his shell as a rock-and-roll star. Slim leaves the stage holding out the gun to him, as he realizes that he is not a rock star.

As it is the case for *The Unseen Hand*, the play ends with the emphasis of Shepard that the myth cannot connect to the modern world. The rock-and-roll star who has just come out of the shell, cannot fulfill his mission. The gun he puts to his head is unloaded; he remains on stage without effect as the lights slowly fade black.

Cowboy Mouth is an intertextual play. It cycles old myths – the suicides of Johnny Ace and Nerval and the account of Nerval's daydreaming state- and earlier works of literature – "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats- to shape the idea of modern-day savior.

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