

***Wife/ Husband and Broken Home  
in Shepard's Play Buried Child***

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الزوجة/ الزوج والمنزل المحطم في مسرحية شيبيرد الطفل المدفون

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## Abstract

Since previous era till current time, the concentration is on the moral virtue especially when it comes to the institution of marriage, projected an image of a happy home free of corruption. But most dramatists expose the truth behind this façade, attacking family life in modern society. They present the reality of marriage in a hypocritical time which is anything but idyllic.

The development of the broken home might connected to sin, crime and even evil in which the wife becomes an evil entity plays an important role as a catalyst in the break done of the home. Being aware of the hypocrisy surrounding married life, the dramatists attack the values of modern society by portraying a happy home slowly rusted by the evils of society that causes its breaking down. They portray a dark image of marriage where there is a total break up in the home and no hopes of reunification.

In fact, broken home means the husband and the wife are lawfully separated or the threat of separation is imminent as there is a strong sense of disharmony. But in current time, many reasons lead to break down home such as, poverty, jobless, irresponsibility of both or one either father or mother, shameful or sinful act. Thus, throughout centuries, the theme of incest in drama is explored neither as a sin nor as a crime but as an unspeakable experience filtered through dramatic words and deeds. The stimulation of desire, visual pleasure, and unconscious fantasy, as well as painful rejection, agony, and fear, are all aspects of this inconsistent and strange experience.

Key words: marriage, evil, society, values, crime, sin, family

المستخلص:

منذ العصور السابقة وحتى الوقت الحالي، كان التركيز منصبًا على الفضيلة الأخلاقية، وخاصة عندما يتعلق الأمر بمؤسسة الزواج، التي تصور البيت السعيد الخالي من الفساد. لكن أغلب الكتاب المسرحيين يكشفون الحقيقة وراء هذه الواجهة، ويهاجمون الحياة الأسرية في المجتمع الحديث. إنهم يقدمون واقع الزواج في زمن منافق بعيد كل البعد عن المثالية.

إن تطور الأسرة المحطمة قد يكون مرتبطًا بالخطيئة والجريمة وحتى الشر حيث تصبح الزوجة كيانًا شريرًا يلعب دورًا مهمًا كمحفز لتفكك الأسرة. وإدراكًا للنفاق المحيط بالحياة الزوجية، يهاجم المؤلفون المسرحيون قيم المجتمع الحديث من خلال تصوير منزل سعيد يصدأ ببطء بسبب شرور المجتمع التي تسبب في انهياره. إنهم يصورون صورة قاتمة للزواج حيث يوجد تفكك كامل في المنزل ولا أمل في لم شمله.

في الواقع، يعني البيت المحطم أن الزوج والزوجة منفصلان قانونيًا أو أن خطر الانفصال وشيك حيث يوجد شعور قوي بعدم الانسجام. ولكن في الوقت الحالي، تؤدي العديد من الأسباب إلى انهيار المنزل مثل الفقر والبطالة وعدم مسؤولية كليهما أو أحد الأبوي/الاب أو الأم أو الفعل المخزي أو الخاطئ. وبالتالي، على مر القرون، لم يتم استكشاف موضوع سفاح القربى في الدراما باعتباره خطيئة ولا جريمة ولكن كتجربة لا توصف يتم تصنيفها من خلال الكلمات والأفعال الدرامية. إن تحفيز الرغبة والمتعة البصرية والخيال اللاواعي، فضلاً عن الرفض المؤلم والمعاناة والخوف، كلها جوانب لهذه التجربة غير المتسقة والغريبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الزواج , الشر , المجتمع , القيم , الجريمة , الخطيئة , العائلة

#### 1. Introduction:

The family is one of the most important topics covered in world literature, as the family is the basic unit of societies and constitutes the center of human life and the essence of sympathy and social cohesion. The family is considered a main source of accurate depiction of individual's daily life by documenting the various relationships between family's members, their suffering, joy, and sadness they experienced.

Many dramatists use the family as a means of representing society and showing its values, traditions, culture and social customs. They through the

family's portrayal attempt to highlight these values and principles in shaping the individual's personality and determining his attitude. So, their writings are regarded a mirror that reflects the social transformations that society is going through. In general, the family is a manifestation of human life.

The family is the first unit of society, and the cohesion of society is achieved through the cohesion of this unit. As long as the family is highly unified and upright, the affairs of society will be sound and its matters will be rectified. Cohesion is achieved in the family if harmony prevails between the partners; wife/ husband and its shadow extends to their children. The outcome is an atmosphere of reassurance and stability prevails in the family, which achieves psychological comfort for its members, protects them from the influences of deviation, and supports the unity of the family and the strength of its solidity.

The home can be regarded as both a physical structure and an emotional state of mind. It is:

the place of peace, the shelter not only from all injury but from all terror, doubt and division....so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it....or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be the home (Cohen, 1998: p. 3).

This idea clarifies the important aspects of the home describing it as a physical space and places it in the dichotomy of the society versus home as most people see their home as a sanctuary, a place where they can forget the pressure of the societal life.

The theme of incest is not usually accepted as permissible, and is often regarded as prohibited in religious scriptures, with fear of condemnation or death. It is a desire which, interestingly, draws the attention of modern psychoanalysts, like Freud and others when diagnosing suppressed mental

conditions (Frenz, 1997: p. 332), considering incest as immoral for it undermines the family and the emotional center for the individual.

In his play, *Buried Child* (1978) a Pulitzer Prize winning, Samuel Shepard Rogers (1943- 2017) an American playwright whose literary works extended over half a century (Shewey, 1997: p. 13) emphasizes the shattering of the family, the distress and frustration with the American tradition, the country financial deterioration and the collapse of outdated family constructions that all cause the broken home.

*Buried Child* is the second in Shepard's trilogy of family plays; first *The Curse of the Starving Class* (1977) and *The True West* (1980); considered psycho-analysis criticism. For Mathew Roudane, "the buried child and truths of the past suppressed through years of denial, ..... are the ultimate bases of dis-connection in the family" (Roudane, 2002: p.129). This confirms the absence of any link or harmony among the family's members. Shepard concentrates on the breakdown of the American family and his vision in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century is of egotistic, cruel, and hypocritical oppressor who never cares but concerned on control.

It is obvious that in *Buried Child*, Shepard portrays a family image involved in a shameful act of incest committed by the mother Halie and her oldest son Tilden who has managed this event. They keep silent because of the shame that affects the family's normality.

## 2.The Connection between Family/ Incest

In Psychoanalytic Theory, the term Oedipus complex means the emotions and ideas that the mind keeps in the unconscious, via dynamic repression, that focuses on a child's desire to sexually possess the parent of the opposite; in other words, male attracted to his mother, whereas female is attracted to her father (McCabe, 1993: p. 22).

Freud seeks to verify that his model was commonly legal therefore goes to ancient mythology and modern ethnography for comparative material. Therefore, Freud's new theory comes after the well-known Greek tragedy Oedipus saying; "I found in myself a constant love for my mother, and jealousy of my father, I now consider this to be a universal event in childhood" (Rank, 1992: p.103) and developing this idea in the dynamics of the mind. For him, Oedipus complex is bisexual that implicates an attraction to both parents. Hence, his usage of the Oedipus conflict is to point out that people desires incest that must be repressed. On the contrary to Freud's theory the sociologist Edward Westermarck in his book *The History of Human Marriage* said "that people living together never attracted to each other" (1981: p.16) here he emphasizes that the incest is taboo. It is evident that from many perspectives, incest has been regarded; psychological, scientific, biological and sociological that each has offered clarifications concerning the main reasons that cause incest to be happened. Without doubt, all agree that incest is immoral, illegal and disgusting.

Concerning the notion of *family*, Shepard perceived, "What doesn't have to do with family? There isn't anything. Even a love story has to do with family. Crime has to do with family. We all come out of each other; everyone is born out of a mother and father. It's an endless cycle." (DeRose, 1992: p. 33). This means that despite of one's belonging to mother/ father, the connection might be bitterer due to some unexpected, horrible, or shameful acts. Here in this play, family's relationship becomes warped and important. Although, the play begins with the offstage voice of an elderly wife, Halie, irritating her drunken husband, Dogde who only watching TV. This image of marriage becomes a horrible act of infidelity, and killing that definitely causes broken home. Shepard's intention is to reveal the incorrect relationship between father / children. It is clear that,



the family plays of Shepard focus on characters' aim to forget the past and escape loneliness and cruelty. Hence, most of his plays are known for their open endings.

## 2. Mother/ Father's Role and Broken Home:

Family relations are of great importance as the family is one of the most significant institutions of society, the place where the individual's personality is formed and where he can learn values and social customs. Family relationships highlight problems and difficulties the individual can face in his daily life, whether emotional, psychological or social disorders. So, family disintegration or family rift is a state of dysfunction as a result of disagreement or one of wife/ husband abandons the basic roles assigned to her/ him which lead to family's breakdown.

The problem of family disintegration represents a great danger to society, especially with the increase of this phenomenon in recent times, which necessarily requires a great attention and strive to limit this crisis that the family is going through in the present era, which has begun to suffer from disintegration after losing many of the moral values and pillars on which the family was based in the past. It is worth noting that the phenomenon of family disintegration is almost absent from any society at the present time, although the phenomenon varies in its severity and danger from one society to another and from one country to another.

In this play, Halie, the mother according to Erich Neumann is the awful and destroyer mother as "the corn mother ..... the goddess of voluptuousness and sin" (Neumann, 1972: p. 82). Through the play, Halie actually dominates all her family's members. In act one, she used to abuse her husband Dodge who always be alone due to his illness but has to be imprisoned with her non ending questioning. Her bad treatment not only with her husband but with her children specifically her son Tilden which

her incestuous desire not only destroying him but the whole family. Tilden said “I was alone, I thought I was dead” (Shephard, 1981: p. 19), he is completely lost as if he dies and on behalf of the buried child; knowing nothing; what to do or where to go for becoming his mother’s victim.

It is clear, that from his father, Tilden inherits his cruelty and violence whereas from his mother her abysmal nature. Thus, he is imprisoned by his violent nature unconsciously seeing like a demolisher “I am a murderer! Don’t underestimate me for a minute! I’m the Midnight Strangler! I devour whole families in a single gulp!” (Shephard: p. 61). The inheritance from his mother as devourer and strangler becomes painfully plain.

The first moment of the play shows Dodge, the father, the main protagonist, 70 years old as a weak and susceptible man. He is a disgusting and alcoholic father whose farm is now neglected and barren and the setting gives a sense that this family of no success and wealth; it is a rotting family whose farmhouse is a best symbol for its collapse. On the other hand, Halie, the wife 60 years old paying no attention to her miserable condition by occupying herself with different things like nostalgia, religion and re-counted memory. Being far from an ideal family, both Dodge and Halie are far from being an ideal of family patriarch and matriarch, are incompetent and at odds as Halie never appear but the audience knows her only by her voice. This reveals that the husband and the wife avoid each other for dislike to be together. Before Vince’s birth, the youngest son, the mother and her son Tilden had a child who is killed by the father Dodge and buried in the backyard of the home. The family keeps this secret for decades which is revealed at the end.

This play is about the breakdown of a traditional 20<sup>th</sup> century family and the incestuous relationship between the mother and her son. During the play, Shelly, is Vince’s girlfriend, a young woman of 20 years old who



at the beginning of her arrival home believes that Vince's family is pretty and romantic one. At the beginning she thinks this family is good but Shepard's aim in portraying such a picture-perfect family is immediately changed due to the incestuous act done by Tildin one of family member, 40 years old, an ex-football player but now exiled seems mentally ill and leads to a murder to show that the family's world is like a curse. The horrible past affect all the characters who try hardly to cope with their present bleakness.

*Buried Child* is about a family of misfits and outcasts who has tried unsuccessfully for years to cope with the emotional obliteration imposed upon them by the horrible act of incest committed between the mother Halie and her son Tikden as well as the murder of the newborn child by Halie's husband Dodge. The family tries desperately to create some sense of normalcy by hiding the horrible event in hopes that it will disappear from the family's memory. But the arrival of Tikden's forgotten son exposes everything as Vince and his girlfriend Shelly force the family to confront the incest and murder once Shelly senses that something is incorrect in the family. In fact, the important thing is that not how this awful act affects family life but the subsequent reaction to the act, the overwhelming sense of shame that crippled the whole family (Mann, 1988: pp. 81-94).

The corruption, the guilt and the secret have been identified this nuclear American family. The buried child is not the illegal child in the family but each family's member. Shepard builds several dimensional spaces and creates a chaos of narration. The first, the space is the living room and the other is the backyard. Second, for the movement, he used a circular rather than linear to emphasize that everything happened in this house has no outlet; completely closed. So, every member becomes the whole or part of the buried child as Hooti, & Shooshtarian (2011: pp.76-89) aver. Dodge insists to kill the child and refuses to tell anyone where it is buried for

feeling “couldn’t allow that to grow right up in the middle of us” (Shepard: p. 69). The incestuous nature of this child’s birth results in confused and distorted morality.

Shepard named this play *Buried Child* to confirm the constant influence of American’s family emotional and spiritual inheritance and its effect upon future generation and even deeper secrets. It is a macabre look at an American family with a dark, terrible secret. Dodge drowned and buried the child in the field behind their farmhouse. Definitely this act destroys the family and breaks down home as the father stops planting his farm instead he begins to smoke, drink and watch television. On the other hand, Halie turns to religion and seeks salvation. The sinful son, Tilden goes insane with his guilt and sorrow; spending time in jail in New Mexico but now returned to his family maybe to do something right. The secret is vanished into the light of day and the family’s curse raised with the arrival of Vince, his girlfriend Shelly and Tilden, the alienated son.

Though, Halie and Dodge married for some years seem alienated from each other as she used to stay upstairs except when she likes to leave the house whereas he sits downstairs and never goes out. From the beginning of the play, there is a sense that “something happened to this family, something mysterious, secret and tragic that has forever altered their lives” (Shepard: p. 27). At the beginning, Dodge is strong, active, successful leader of the family and its farm but now old man has disintegrated into a sloppy and drunken; spending all his time only smoking, drinking and watching television. All the day, he does nothing but these boring and bad things. He lives a monotonous life of no change or new. The change in his lifestyle is due to the incest act of his wife and his son that results an illegal child. This disgusting act threatens his life; hence he decides to kill the child and buried him in the backyard of the farm.

On the other side, Halie is the deceitful, immoral mother/ grandmother to the weird dead child for she firstly appears as a victim due to her drunkard husband's disregarded and mistreated. She used to stay upstairs in time her husband has done nothing except his monotonous and boring acts. She seems a religious woman who complains about modern ways that she finds anti-Christian. She appears only once at the end of the play dressed in black mourning the death of her son years ago. She is not a sympathetic woman despite of her claims to family morals. Her incest act with her son causes the destruction of the family; that is to say breaking down home.

For years the family has kept this awful event, the buried child a secret and each member of the family has found his/ her own way of dealing with the guilt. But in the end, Dodge confesses the family's secret because unable to live with this horrible guilt any longer; exposing the incest and murder and leave the farm to Vince, his grandson hoping he will rebuild the family's shattered inheritance and the home's breakdown (Shepard: p. 71).

Shelly comes to visit Vince's family whom she thinks a typical, content and friendly American family, Instead, she meets a scary family of oddities who insults and degrades her. It is opposite to her expectation that Vince's family will respect and welcome her. The family's abnormal behavior makes her believe that Vince does not belong to this family or even has no blood relation. Regardless of all these bad things, she seems a strong woman by nature who never believes in submission telling Vince; "I'll cook the carrots and I'll do whatever I have to do to survive; just to make it through this thing" (Shepard: p. 60). Though Halie and even Vince ignore her, she feels the responsibility of caring for the crazy family telling Venice "I can't hang around for this. I'm not even related" (Shepard: p. 65).

From Tilden, his parents expect great things especially to take care of his younger brother Bradley after losing his leg to a chainsaw but he disappointed them. He disappeared for many years and spends some time in jail in New Mexico that causes his fire from the state. His return to the family shows that he is completely destitute, withdrawn and mentally unstable. He insists to harvest the farm despite the refusal of his father. His ability to pull crops that buried in the farm symbolizes the exposing of the shameful secret that buried for many years ago. It is the secret of the buried child Tilden committed incest with his mother. Tilden's virility confirmed that the family's undoing, and his ability to pluck corn and carrots from thin air indicates his unlucky aptitude still exists. At the end of the play, after Dodge confesses the horrible truth to Shelly, Tilden walks out into field, disinters the corpse of his murdered son / brother, and takes it to his mother in order to be together, a ghastly little family.

Dodge like other American fathers supposes to talk about necessary things in society like family, work, farm but he is not the loving nurturing father who knows best "You think just because people propagate they have to love their offspring?" he growls. "You never had seen a bitch eat her puppies?" (Shepard: p. 83). This means that he is not a good father. The same, his wife is also not better though she pretends religious devotion and longs for the days of traditional values, in her old age she is carrying on an affair with the family's priest and in her younger age committed incest with her eldest son. This reveals that the American family is certainly not well balanced and unhappy.

Vince describes his driving all night through the rain "clear to the Iowa border" examines his likeness and "sees his face changing into the faces of generations of his past "every last one. Straight into the corn belt and further. Straight back as far as they'd take me" (Shepard: p. 95). His

experience is regarded a cue of both family/ American society that gives a hope; reviving and stirring from immoral things.

Shepard used symbols that related to nature and fertility in order to strengthen the main image in the play that is the dead, buried child in the field. One of them is the vegetables Tilden always carries into the house. For many years the harvest has not been raised on the family's farm, so the fields become bare. Still, Tilden insists to harvest the unplanted fields just as his incest act with his mother years before. Though his harvest is ridiculous, it matches his awful act of incest and proves the passion for losing his child and the need to pull life from the dead ground. The rain outside is regarded as an image of both punishment and renewal.

The vegetables that Tilden has found in the back yard during the rainstorm symbolize the detection of the family's past secret that when it revealed the farm becomes more productive. Before his death, Dodge admits his crime of killing the child, telling Halie "Things keep happening while you're upstairs, ya know. The world doesn't stop just because you're upstairs. Corn keeps growing; rain keeps raining" (Shepard: p. 81). Haile sees the farm full of harvests indicating that what left of the family the future just as the farm itself is. In other words, both the farm and the family are able to move beyond their sinful past. When Tilden brings the corn from the backyard, his father tells him to give it back, thinking he has stolen it and saying "I haven't planted corn back there since 1935, so take that damn corn back from where ever you got it" (Shepard: p. 86). Hitherto, Tilden contends that the entire back yard is filled with tall stalks of corn, carrots and potatoes.

In addition, the heavy rain symbolizes the redemption of this detestable guilt and soon the secret is disclosed the rain stops. Moreover, the rain gives chance to dead harvests grows indicating Dodge's ability to

confess his sin so the family lastly can live in peace. Tilden, because of his horrible act becomes a criminal with psychological disturbance and

Stephen Bottoms observes that both rain and water symbolize the cleansing and purification (1998: p. 9). At the beginning of the play, when the rain falls on the family's farmhouse all its visitors washing away the dirt symbolically means the past's sin. The sun shining brings harvest back as Dodge died, Bradley is expelled and Vince becomes the home's responsible. In fact the most important symbol used in the play is the dead child as it offers hope for redemption from incest. Bottom adds that:

“The play ends like a miracle play with the symbol of the resurrection. The child is taken from the tomb, tended by its father and carried up, not to the patriarchal figure who lies dead on stage before us, but to the mother who is waiting above. *Buried Child* leaves the audience with hope for a revitalized America, for one that nourishes its children and holds the promise of the American dream once again” (Bottoms, 1998, p. 14).

Shepard's plays have many illusions of frustration for making the audience believe in something real (Brustein, 1991: p. 121). The first impression of the main characters seems like a normal American family. Dodge an intoxicating cognizance, Halie's infuriating nature and Tilden's cold and away from his father appears normal family but the reality is different. Dodge's unhealthy cough gives impression that he is extremely sick not only bodily but psychologically as well.

Unfortunately for this play, the dreadful secret is exposed too late. Hence, its ending reveals that this family is completely lost and can never be a normal family as before. Shepard emphasizes that any shameful act in spite of hiding it along time it must be revealed, as the hidden secret tears a family and makes its members go insane. Shepard creates this ending to



explore the inside pressures of a country existence, husband/ wife, father/ son and mother / son relationship. Hence, this play is an accurate image of disturbing family converted to represent America's devoid of virtue and morals.

This play used several current fundamentals like, impressive description, imitation and imagery of the accurate family drama in order to reveal the worldwide difficulties of the American families, an endless sense of forfeiture dominates the characters that can be seen through their dialogues loaded with lamentations. In other words, the dishonesty confirms the reality that not only the dead child is illegitimate but all of them. Haile said "That's a terrible thing ..... That's the kind of statement that leads people right to an early grave... It's no wonder people have turned their backs on Jesus!" (Shepard: p.113). The audience's opinion of her is further aggravated when she walks on stage, "dressed completely in black, as though in mourning. Black handbag, hat with a veil, and pulling on elbow-length black gloves" (Shepard: p.117). This affirms that secrets are hard to be kept.

The absence of trust and relationship among the family's members in addition to the hidden secret create an aggressive setting for them. The relationship between Halie and Dodge is so bad and she does not accept that he talked about something happened in the past for believing that if one has no mysteries, his interactive will be easy. She prevents him to tell Shelly and Vince about the secret for not losing confidence in time they feel something is hidden. The play's end shows that everyone has a secret seeks to hide.

Shepard chooses this title *Buried Child* to portray a disastrous matter. He expresses deeply "the falling out that a family can endure when you do not deal with things, but it is up to individual to be able to admit the truth and move on from it" (Lyons, 1993: pp.115-130). Both, Halie and Dodge feel that is their fault of turning out the way Tilden is today as it is their

responsibility to take care of him. Their negligence changes Tilden's behavior and even passions towards his parents. Moreover, she feels responsible for Ansel's death who died in a motel in time she hopes he died an honorable death. In fact, the parents think of a happy and wealthy family but the reality is not due to their inability to admit their wrongs that make them live in the past rather than in present.

Postmodern dramatists concentrate on analyzing literary works through philosophical theories. Shepard, one of them exposed the distress of the family that has been exhausted. The focus will be on Baudrillard's theory of reality's death to show the different characters escaping from the reality because of the pessimism caused by society. According to Baudrillard "It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing that fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of the saving the reality principle" (Baudrillard, 1988: p. 172). Hence, in this play Shepard wants to reveal the absence of reality in this world.

Shepard's main concern is home, family, heredity and society to study of oneself in relationship to others in the same family. So, at the end of the play, Vince states:

"I studied my face, studied everything about it. As though I was looking at another man. As though I could see his whole race behind him. Like a mummy's face. I saw him dead and alive at the same time. In the same breath. In the windshield, I watched him breathe as though he was frozen in time. And every breath marked him. Marked him forever without him knowing. And then his face changed. His face became his father's face..... And his father's face changed to his Grandfather's face..... Then it all dissolved. Everything dissolved" (Shepard: p.130).

This confirms that any shameful, vicious or evil act definitely affect not only the one who committed it but the whole family that easily can be seen

through their behaviors/ thoughts; without suspicion this horrible act has changed them negatively.

The idea of broken home is also embodied by Vince character that left his family home and went to New York for being a musician. His coming back is connected with discovering himself that has opposite result. Instead of gaining a sense of self after his coming back, he loses what he has established for himself outside his family. Home should be a shelter and a place where man can find peace, love and safe, but it becomes a place that destroys the family's members. Because of his home, Vince becomes confused, corrupted and in the end of the play he becomes completely different one.

The same for Shelly completely affected by this family though she is from outsider. Becoming unlike herself and no longer recognizing herself, Shelly said "I don't even know what I'm doing here" (Shepard: p.42) meaning that she is absolutely scattered, shattered and lost. The breaking home affects her passively.

Tilden used to encourage his father to talk 'You've got to talk or you'll die' (Shepard: p.91) but the father prefers to keep silent "I don't want to talk about anything" (Shepard: p.94) and he dies without exposing or saying anything. But despite the permeating darkness, there is a sense of hope as Vince decides to challenge the destruction of his family.

Shelly believes that Vince comes back to rejoin them for short time, "Vince has this thing about family now. I guess it's a new thing with him... He wants to know you again, after all this time. Reunite" (Shepard: p.77). They think that Vince's changing is a spirit of dead child. Shelly wants to know whether Vince is Tilden's son or not, the latter said, "I had a son once but we buried him" (Shepard: p.84). Vince wants to know who is Dodge, the latter tells him "It's me, your Grandfather! Don't play stupid with me! Where's my two bucks?" (Shepard: p.89). This shows that he knows Vince

but pretending stupid not knowing him. Dodge recognizes nothing, what's to recognize; answering Shelly's question about recognizing Vince.

Shepard tries to reject the family's effect averring that "I always did feel a part of that tradition but hated it. I couldn't stand those plays that were all about the turmoil of the family. And then I realized, well that was very much part of my life, and maybe that has to do with being a playwright, that you're somehow snared beyond yourself" (Crank, 2012: p.31) revealing that *Buried Child* is an autobiographical play of Shepard's family background as his grandfather possessed a farm and his father is a drunker.

### 3. Conclusion:

Family disintegration indicates a failure in the main educational role of the family, as the level of its contribution to the socialization process, building the individual's personality on an ongoing basis, and controlling the individual's behavior and directing it according to the requirements of life. Therefore, family disintegration increases the collapse of the family unit and the dissolution of the social role structure of family members.

Although, *Buried Child* is about worldwide social problem in a mechanized society where humanity, feelings and care are distorted and buried as people has become anxious, depraved, alienated and indifferent at the same time, society has become chaotic with the dominance of indiscipline.

The revived backyard symbolizes the regeneration of the new society though the father's soul, Dodge fails to become the savior who can bring rebirth to his family. Therefore, the silence and black lights may allude to the sun but not revitalization.

Without suspicion, the separation, the irresponsibility and the absence of intimacy between the wife and the husband cause the broken home in

addition to many other reasons like poverty, homeless, etc. that spread in the entire world affecting negatively the family and society as well.

We have to look into the causes of family problems that lead to broken home as the family is one of the most important components of society and upon depending the goodness or misery of a person. Definitely, a happy family capable of overcoming and treating the problems that occur between them is like a solid building block in creating a bright and happy future and giving birth to a healthy, mature, successful and superior future.

Studying the pattern of relationships within the family is complicated because family relationships are characterized by complexity, overlap, and internal and external interaction. Therefore, presenting the causes of family problems is not without difficulty, and separating the causes from each other is extremely complex, and is therefore only a theoretical matter. The causes remain intertwined and successive, and cannot be isolated from each other or abstracted.

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