

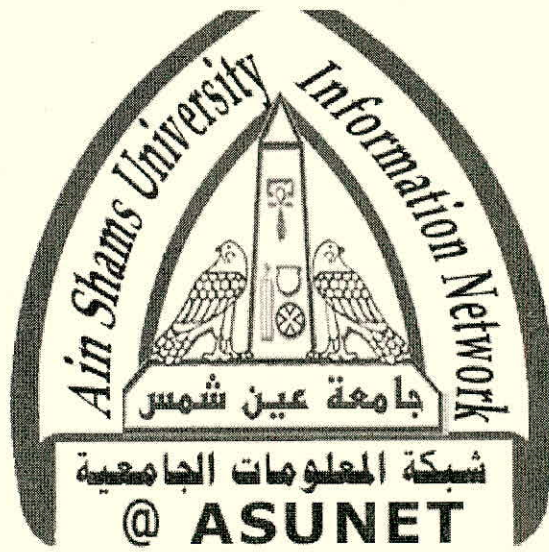


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VIOLENCE IN THE PLAYS OF JOHN WHITING
AND
SAM SHEPARD
A STUDY OF THEME AND TECHNIQUE IN
WHITING'S SAINT'S DAY, MARCHING SONG
AND THE DEVILS
SHEPARD'S TOOTH OF CRIME, BURIED CHILD
AND
FOOL FOR LOVE

**Ph.D Thesis
Submitted To
Department of English
Faculty of Al Alsun
Ain Shams University**

Submitted By
GIHAN EL-ASSY

**Under The Supervision Of
PROF. M. SHEBL EL-KOMY**

2000

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Approval Sheet

**Ain Shams University
Faculty of El-alsun
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**Title of Thesis: Violence in the Plays of John Whiting and
Sam Shepard: A Study of Theme and
Technique in Whiting's SAINT'S DAY,
MARCHING SONG AND THE DEVILS
SHEPARD'S TOOTH OF CRIME, BURIED
CHILD AND FOOL FOR LOVE.**

Degree: Ph.D.

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**VIOLENCE IN THE PLAYS OF JOHN WHITING AND
SAM SHEPARD
A STUDY OF THEME AND TECHNIQUE IN
WHITING'S SAINT'S DAY, MARCHING SONG AND THE DEVILS
SHEPARD'S TOOTH OF CRIME, BURIED CHILD AND
FOOL FOR LOVE**

By
Gihan M. Refaat El-Assy

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to examine the nature of violence in the plays of John Whiting: Saint's Day, Marching Song and The Devils and Sam Shepard's The Tooth of Crime, Buried Child and Fool for Love. The thesis deals with various kinds of violence portrayed in their plays besides the motives that drive their characters towards such a violent path. Whether man is violent by nature or due to cultural motives is the subject of study for many researchers. They try to reach some means of overcoming violence or at least, of eliminating some of its undesirable motives.

Regarding the motives of violence, the thesis examines two main approaches concerning the major drives for violence: Instinctivism and Environmentalism. Whereas Instinctivism regards violence as innate and aroused by certain instincts and passions, Environmentalism returns violence to environmental factors: Cultural, social, political and religious. Environmentalists believe that man is good by nature but turned violent due to surrounding condition.

Whiting portrays violence in his plays as innate and as aroused by certain instincts and passions. He not only deals with violence directed to others but also with self-destruction. He believes that innate violence, if not released, is turned upon the self and turned to self-destruction. Like Instinctivists, Whiting portrays violence as unconscious, spontaneous and thus, more dangerous.

Whiting's choice of themes reflects his obsession with violence. Moreover, his technique reflects an atmosphere of violence. Most of the violence portrayed in his plays is physical rather than psychological. His setting, images and language reflect man's sense of isolation and his comprehension of the meaninglessness of life. Thus, his tone is pessimistic.

Shepard portrays violence in his plays as a result of various environmental factors. Shepard portrays the engagement of the Americans in the world of violence, drugs and rock music. The effect of family disintegration, racial conflicts and the Vietnam War is also great. The violence Shepard portrays is conscious, predictable and controllable. Thus, violence in Shepard's plays is less dangerous and his tone is less pessimistic than Whiting's.

Shepard's choice of themes reflects the effect of the American culture and atmosphere on the characters' violent behaviour. Psychological violence is more outstanding in Shepard's plays. He employs various visual and aural techniques to reflect the violent behaviour of his characters. Thus, Whiting and Shepard share many themes and techniques but with varying degree of weight. However, Shepard is more optimistic than Whiting in believing in the possibility of man's salvation.

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INTRODUCTION