Inner landscapes : the theater of Sam Shepard

Mottram, Ron

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Abstract
“Sam Shepard has so often been called the preeminent playwright of his generation that the statement goes almost unchallenged today. Some have gone further in their praise: Partisan Review, for example, has described him as one of the two greatest dramatists of the American theater, the other being Eugene O'Neill. But despite that praise, and despite the fact that his plays have won numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, there have been until now no extended studies of his work. Although primarily giving literary and dramatic analysis, Mottram also constructs a biographical context for the plays that is a blend of straightforward fact and Shepard's imaginative recreations of significant events in his own life. Shepard once wrote, 'I'm taking notes in as much detail as possible on an event that's happening somewhere inside me'; that 'event,' fueled by what Shepard has called a library of stored images and experiences, constitutes an inner landscape that is expressed throughout the plays as well as in his collections of prose and poetry. This study traces some of the prominent features of that inner landscape, showing that Sam Shepard, like Walt Whitman before him, celebrates himself while simultaneously projecting a vision of America that is often profoundly disturbing.”--Book jacket.

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