

## I. INTRODUCTION

The present research study is an attempt to analyze the mythical elements in Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed* (1962) and Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* (1978). These plays present the concept of community, family, sacrifice, degeneration, betrayal, incest, murder and disharmony. *The Strong Breed* and *Buried Child* are grounded in myth which hope for the renewal of the community and land.

The present study concentrates on the myths, particularly the Yoruba myth and the vegetation myth of the Corn-King that Soyinka and Shepard had employed in the play *The Strong Breed* and *Buried Child* respectively. The Yoruba and vegetation myth wish for the renewable and regeneration of community and land in Africa and American Society. Soyinka shows how human beings are treated as scapegoats and sacrificed for the renewable of community. Shepard shows how repressed violence and strangling behaviour pass down towards the regeneration of land.

Wole Soyinka, born in 1934 is the first African writer to win the Nobel prize in literature. He has established himself as one of the most important literary figures in the continent. He is often regarded as a universal man: poet, playwright, novelist, actor, critic lecturer, politicians, translator and publishers. Soyinka went to university college, Ibadan and then to Leeds University, England in 1956. He become involved in the new drama at Royal Court Theatre, London, where he became a play reader in 1957-59. Most of his works, especially his drama has been an investigation of the political, religious and other forces in Nigerian culture. Most of his plays offered a critique of pre-colonial history while diminishing the cultural significance of the colonial period. Most of his dramas are concerned about the need of sacrifice for the purification of the society. He thinks that the role of the artist in society is like the role of the god Ogun who has suffered for the purification of the society like Eman in *The*

*Strong Breed*. Ogun is a recurring figure in Soyinka's work and has been named by the author as his muse. Soyinka's unique style blends the traditional Yoruban folk drama with European dramatic form to provide both spectacle and penetrating satire. Soyinka states that in the African cultural tradition, the artist has always functioned as the record of the modes and experiences of his society.

Soyinka is gifted with verbal inventiveness and an ebullient imagination. He has an uncompromising sense of justice and humanity. He has also satirized pre-colonial African regimes. After working with the Royal Court Theatre, London, he founded "The 1960s Masks" in Nigeria and later the Orisun Theater. In 1965, he was accused of using gun to force a radio announcer to broadcast incorrect election results, but was acquitted. Later in 1967, Nigeria went through a bitter civil war, and he was detained and held in prison, where he was placed in solitary confinement. He continued his writing even in prison. He criticized his own tribe, the Yoruba, for murdering members of the Ibo during the war against Biafra.

Most of his plays are based on the beliefs of his Yoruba background, and its characters are the Yoruba gods. He uses Yoruba songs translated into English and adopts old rituals, music and dances to produce particular dramatic effects on the modern stage, yet they carry a caustic commentary upon violence and corruption in the society. He uses Yoruba myth, religion and employs traditional masks, drums, and dance. In *The Strong Breed*, we can find the Yoruban tradition, myth, music and dance. We can see Yoruba images, such as effigy-the carrier doll – and the appearances of human carrier in the form of Ifada in this play. *The Strong Breed* is also informed by Soyinka's studies of Greek tragedy. Like Greek tragic figures, Soyinka's strong breed are genetically linked – they are father and sons who inherit

their fathers' power. Soyinka demonstrates the universality of Greek themes in both European and African experiences.

Soyinka's drama has been an investigation of political, social, religious, and other forces in Nigerian culture. *The Swamp Dwellers* is a powerful play condemning African superstition. *The Lion and the Jewel* offers a comic view of Nigerian attitudes towards European values left over from the colonial period. *A Dance of the Forests* was written to celebrate Nigerian independence, but it also alerted people to Nigeria's past violence and warned against its return. *The Bacchae of Euripides* deals with inspiration intoxication, and a form of hysteria that affects a mass of people. His another play, *Death and the King's Horseman* reworks a moment in Nigeria's colonial past from inside the Yoruba metaphysic. It is about the halting of the ritual suicide of the equerry of the Alafin of Oyo by the local British district officer. His play *Kongi's Harvest* is about the abuse of power and the tyrant's ability to corrupt the whole people. *A Play of Giants* castigates the contemporary African strong men such as Boukassa (Central African Republic), Mobutu (then Zaire, now Democratic Republic of the Congo), first-among monsters Idi-Amin (Uganda) and many other dictators from around the world. This play is concerned with how evil takes shape.

*The Strong Breed* is a simple and more accessible play. It delivers a similar statement about a community's self deception and perversion of its ritual activity. But a detailed reading reveals it as actually Soyinka's most secretive texts, with its intimations of an interior drama played out in the author's imagination that is not made fully explicit and the sacrifice level. An inexplicable inherited destiny of the protagonist has the dramatic effect in this play. The interrelationship of ritual and community in African culture is examined by this play.

In the play, Jaguna and Oroge, the elders of the community are searching for the suitable "carrier" who can take over the burden of the community's guilt. As the New Year approaches, it is the tradition of the community that they have to choose a stranger for the society's purification. Eman, one of the "strong breeds" who has exiled himself from his own community seems a logical choice until another stranger, the idiot Ifada, comes on the scene. The "strong breed" are those men capable of the sacrifice needed annually to filter the community of its sin and make it to start over again. Ifada is unwilling to offer himself as a carrier. Eman explains to Jaguna and Oroge that no community should force a carrier to perform unwillingly because the guilt will not be carried away by the unwilling carrier. Eman then offers himself as a willing sacrifice in Ifada's place to take away the sin and guilt of the community. Eman sacrifices himself for the renewable of the community. In this play, the traditional ritual and wisdom are practiced through the character of Eman. This play is developed on the base of Yoruba myth, which hope renewable of land by the sacrifice of human beings.

Sam Shepard, born in 1943, is one of the most important American playwrights. He has won numerous awards like Obie Awards, New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and Pulitzer prize for his plays. Shepard's plays are not easy to categorize but, in general they blend, images of the old west, fascination with pop culture – rock and roll, drugs and television and bizarre family life. His love for and frustrations with music have found their way into a major theme of his work. His plays express a sense of loss, emotions, nostalgia for the original rural world and the national myths, destroyed by pragmatism, money and power. His primary themes deal with social order in conflict, family and its complications, the nature of the person,

etc. The themes of incest, murder, violence, disharmony, death and rebirth can be found in his play *Buried Child*.

His account of the career as a literary writer began with the publication of his first plays *Cowboys*, and *The Rock Garden* premiered at the Theater Genesis in 1965. Shepard's works of the mid 1970s showed a heightening of earlier techniques and themes. His *Angel City* and *Suicide in B-Flat* only made it more obvious that his plays were progressing in a consistent vein of black humour and dark criticism of the sanctity of family life. They also express the potentials of music as an expression of character.

In the 1970's Shepard began acting in major motion pictures. One of the ironies of his life is that he has become a matinee idol after appearing in movies such as *The Right Stuff*, *Fool for Love*, *Country* and *Crimes of the Heart*. His play, *Operation Sidewinder* involves a giant mechanical snake designed to make contact with outer space travelers. It includes Hopi Snake dances as well as military scenes. *The Tooth of Crime* is about turf war between an aging rock star and an up-and-coming young star. It has a brutality and directness that make it intense, exciting, and revealing of the California rock-and-roll scenes.

*Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child* and *True West* are linked thematically. These plays examine the troubled and tempestuous blood relationship in a fragmented society. These plays give a view of the American family that is painfully distant from the sentimental idealism of popular magazines of the 1940s and 1950s. These plays depict degenerated family life caused by same secrets such as incest, murder, sin, etc. Shepard emphasizes the rootlessness of the family, its emotional chill and its capacity for violence in these plays. *The True West* deals with the curse of ancestry. All the characters have tried very hard to escape the influence of the family

but their attempt become worthless. Even they can not create their own identities in relation to the identity formed for them in the family. It shows that they are incapable of dealing with life in the regular world.

His another play, *A Lie of the Mind*, is about disturbed family life. It is filled with incest, murder and sin like *Buried Child*. In this play, playwright, develops a drama where the protagonist befalls victims to a father's curse and destroys him. What distinguishes this, Shepard's most hopeful work, from his earlier ones, is that the son suffers for what he has done, as a result is spiritually transformed. Initially violent and self-deceiving, he emerges from the play gentle and contrite, having transcended his father's curse. *A Fool for Love* also deals with family life which is filled with incest, murder and sin. Incest-or potential incest is also the theme of this play. This play is set in the west and contains all the themes for which his work is known.

The Pulitzer prize winning play *Buried Child* is one of the family trilogy of plays that includes *Curse of the Starving Class* and *True West*. The play, *Buried Child* includes the recurring theme that is tension between fathers, sons and brothers. The play is beguilingly ordinary at first glance. The simple interior is dominated by an old, dark green sofa and a television set. When Shelly, Vince's girlfriend, visits the house for the first time, she finds the house as a Norman Rockwell painting – a stereotypical American house. Though, beginning with the ordinariness of the setting, the ordinariness of Tilden's walking with armful of corn, and Dodge's wracking cough, Shepard builds a portrait of an extraordinary family.

Dodge's one-track alcoholic mind and Halie's nagging activity seem normal. Even Tilden's distant relationship with his father seems close to ordinary. But when Vince and Shelly walk in and Vince identifies himself to his grandfather and then to his father, whom he doesn't expect to find, one begins to see that something is odd and

that the situation is anything, but ordinary. He is not recognized neither by his grandfather nor father. But later on when Vince Smashes the bottles after bottles on the wall, in his anger, Halie identifies him. After the Halie's identification of Vince, Dodge also recognizes him Dodge takes Vince as a healthy successor and offers him to look after all. When Vince accepts the responsibility of Dodge, the land regenerate and crops begin to produce. This shows that Dodge's spirit is transmitted to Vince. Here Dodge is the weak and old corn-king and Vince is the stronger and younger successor to take the responsibility. This play is developed on the base of vegetation myth, which hope for the regeneration of vegetation and land by the successful transmission of responsibility from old Corn-King to his healthy successor.

*Buried Child* is a domestic play. This play is a macabre look at an American Mid Western family with a dark, terrible secrets. Years ago, Tilden, the eldest of three sons belonging to Dodge and Halie, Committed an act of incest with his mother Halie. She gave birth to his child, a baby boy named Vince which Dodge, drowned and buried in the field behind their farmhouse. Throughout the play it is assumed, but never made totally clear, that Tilden committed incest with his mother Halie and produced the buried child.

The sinful act committed by Halie and Dodge destroyed the family. Dodge stopped producing vegetables in the farm and start to drinking, smoking and watching television. He is slowly decomposing and never moving from the family's old and dusty sofa. Halie turned to religion with fervor for seeking salvation. She spouts Christian platitudes and cavorts with the hypocritical father Dewis, a Protestant minister. Tilden became as the stage directions state, profoundly burnt out perhaps caused by guilt and grief and spent his mysterious time in jail in New Mexico. He has only recently returned to the farmstead, thinking to make everything in order. The

secret of the family is broken out into the light of day, and the family curse is clearly lifted up with the arrival of Vince, Tilden's estranged son and his girlfriend Shelly.

My fundamental focus in this research study will be on the mythical aspects of these plays. I will see the mythical elements of Yoruba Myth in *The Strong Breed* and the vegetation Myth of Corn-King in *Buried Child*. In doing this, the study will give special attention to compare and contrast the main events and characters of these plays with the events and constant characters in these two myths. The research will also make a brief comparison and contrast between two plays. The study will not cover the performatory aspects such as stage setting, use of music and light, etc. and the social, economic aspects of these plays.

This research work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter mainly provides an introductory outline of the study. It incorporates the explanation of the hypothesis in terms of how myth works as a hope of renewal in these two plays. It also provides a brief introduction to the playwrights and their works.

The second chapter is the development of theoretical modality that is to be applied in this research paper. It gives a short introduction to mythical study and develops critical tools by making ideas from the study of myth. This part of work also deals with the Yoruba myth and the vegetation myth of corn-king which will be the critical approaches to study these plays.

The third chapter of the research is an analysis of the text at a considerable length on the basis of the second chapter. It will cite out some extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the study. This chapter will serve as the core of this work. The chapter also provides similarities and differences between two plays in brief, to compare and contrast the other issues of these plays which the research work do not focus.



The fourth chapter is the conclusion of the whole study. On the basis of the analysis of the text done in chapter three, it will concludes the explanations and arguments put ahead in preceding chapters and show that myth hopes for the renewable.

## II. MYTH CRITICISM

Myth is a conception which runs through many areas of contemporary thoughts i.e. anthropology, psychology, comparative religion, sociology and others. So it is very difficult to define exactly what the term means. However, within the boundary of present study, myth is taken as a living reality, believed to have once happened in primitive times, and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destiny. To clarify the nature of myth etymological distinction is often made between 'Logos' and 'Mythos'. 'Logos' refers to the rational facilities expressed in the forms of analytical or dialectical research. On the other hand 'Mythos' is as expression of truth as a totality, a totality inclusive of reason but not reducible simply to reason. It is a narrative expression of a total mode of perception of the reality of the world. Myths in its journey often collide with legend, folktale, religion, ritual, etc. Myth is a symbol of human experience that embodies a form, faith or belief in the cosmic view which is preserved by every culture tenaciously. Myth embodies feeling and concept with explanation of the natural order and cosmic forces.

Many people regard myth as a story or narrative about gods or legendary heroes. This generalization is true to some extent for there are myths dealing with these characters. Another group of people comment myth as natural phenomenon. However, again there are some more which neither deal with gods nor with nature but with some rituals. The origin of myth goes back to historical past. It is generally believed that mythical stories are the outcome of anonymous origin, accepted by primitive people as truth concerning supernatural beings. Myths are born but not made. They are born in the infancy of the people. They owe their fathers to the imaginative efforts of generations of story tellers, not to any historical individual.

Myth is a story made or invented which might be true for particular cultural group or society that makes codes of behaviour for the betterment of the society. Myth is a product of a race, highly endowed with imagination and in artistic sense. Myth makes them see beauty even in things which may be otherwise taken as ugly and tries to express their thoughts in the form of stories. In this connection, Mary Douglas regards myth in *The Meaning of Myth* as “Contemplation of the unsatisfactory compromises which, after all, composes social life” (52).

On the assumption that it is the nature of myth to mediate contradictions, the method of analysis must proceed by distinguishing the opinions and the mediating elements. And it follows, too, that the function of the myth is to portray the contradictions in the basic premises of the culture. The same goes for the relation of myth to social reality. People can recognize indirectly what it would be difficult to admit openly; and yet what is patently clear to all and sundry, that the idea is not attainable.

Myth is not historical account rather a tale or saga of super human will but this fact does not minimize its importance and place in human life and culture. Though myth often emerges out of imagination and invention, myth often— a dominant race, is the development of our rules. It is believed that mythical stories are not made, they are rather born. They cannot be invented or permanently suppressed. They are spontaneous productions of human psyche. It is very interesting that mythical stories are demonstrated through unique rituals and rites that have been performed or reported from the primitive tribes and great civilization of the past. For example, Greek People used to dance around the "alter", celebrating the joy in the name of Zeus. Further more they tell why a particular animal has a certain characteristics (e.g.: why the bat is blind or flies only at night), how and why rituals and ceremonies began

and why they continue. It does not mean that each and every originated story is myth but it must have religious backgrounds. Precisely speaking its principal actors and actresses are deities.

Myths hold remarkable difference from other literary aspects as folktale, legend and fable. The main difference between myth and folktale is that the gods and semi-gods appear in myth and the gods and semi gods do not appear in folktale. By this, it is clear that a myth remains properly a myth only as long as the divinity of its actors or actresses is recognized. When a hero is a man rather than a god, myth becomes legend. In other terms, the celebration of human heroism instead of god or spirit is the typical feature of the legend. Gautam Buddha, for instance, is a legendary figure in this context.

Likewise, fable holds remarkable distinction from myth. It is in the fable, a story of animals from the motive of instruction, uses animal tale not to explain characteristics or behaviours of animals but to include moral lesson for human beings or to satirize the conduct of human beings.

Various approaches developed to interpret the myth after the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Psychology is one of them. Psychologically speaking, there is externalization of what happens in the human psyche. Psychology further interprets myth being closely related to biological science. Obviously, psychology reflects the unconscious desires, anxieties of individual. Sigmund Freud, one of the prominent psychoanalytical critics, has pointed out many parallels between myths and symbols by expressing the unacknowledged static physical attitude. He has coined terms like 'Electra complex' and 'Oedipus complex'. The term 'Electra complex' refers to daughter's erotic attachment for her father with co-existing jealousy of the mother.

Similarly, the term 'Oedipus complex' represents the sexual attachment of son for his mother which is hidden and expressed in various other ways.

C.G. Jung elaborates Freud's idea and says that the mythical characters are not only the symbols of hopes, wishes, passion, but also they are historical individuals. The mythical stories of Greece end in tragedy because of the realization of extreme wishes. Narcissus, Oedipus and Trojan War can be taken as proofs for this. They deal with human problems as love, war, pain, courage, tyranny, man to man and man to divine, which are sometimes just and sometimes cruel.

One of the remarkable approaches is archetypal which has been prominent aspect of interpreting myths. This approach has been developed by anthropologist like J.G. Frazer, Carl G. Jung, Northrop Frye and Joseph Campbell. Archetype is their certain commonalities even though they slightly differ from each other. The term archetype means the recurrent narrative designs, characters types, patterns of action or images which are said to be identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature as well as myth, dream and even ritualized models of social behaviour.

According to C.G. Jung, archetype motifs are part of collective unconscious. The archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear. To state simply, archetypes are universal symbols and these symbols manifest themselves through the unconscious mind in myth, dream and folklore. In other words, myths are the means by which archetype, essentially, unconscious forms become manifested and articulated themselves with the sphere of conscious mind. Jung further indicates that dreams are "Personalized myths" and myths are "depersonalized dreams". Myths are, by nature, collective or communal. They bind a tribe or a nation together in common, psychological and

spiritual activities. It is dynamic factor that resides everywhere in human society. It transcends time uniting the past with the present and reaching toward the future.

C.G. Jung in his *Collective Unconscious* conceives the psychological factors in the evolution of new society and says, "The union of conscious and unconscious contents is consummated. Out of this union emerge new situation and new conscious attitudes. I have therefore called the union of opposites the transcendent function" (289). All the mythologized process of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, and the rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences, rather they are symbolic expression of the inner unconscious dream of the psyche which become accessible to man's consciousness by the way of projection — that is mirrored in the events of nature. Jung remarks, "Myths are first and foremost psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul" (6). The archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts themselves. In other words, they are patterns of instinctual behaviour. The concept of collective unconscious is neither a speculative nor a philosophical but an empirical matter. Jung points out dreams as the source of archetypes. He says, "The main source, then, is dreams, which have advantage of being involuntary, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche and are therefore pure products of nature not falsified by any conscious purpose" (48).

Northrope Frye has associated archetypes and myths particularly with primitive and popular literature. Archetypes are most easily studied in highly conventionalized literature: that is for the most part, naïve, primitive, and popular literature. Fry in the essay, "Ethical Criticism: Theory of Symbols" has defined archetype. He says, "Archetypes are associative clusters and differ from signs in being complex variables. Within the complex is often a large number of specific learned

associations which are communicable because a large number of people in a given culture happen to be familiar with them” (1061).

Some archetypes are so deeply rooted in conventional association that they can hardly avoid suggesting that association, as the geometrical figure of the cross inevitably suggests the death of Christ.

Myth is the identification of ritual and dream. It gives meaning to rituals and narrative to dream. Frye says, "The union of ritual and dream in a form of verbal communication is myth" (1063). The myth accounts for and makes communication, the ritual and dream. Myth is more distinctively human, as the most intelligent partridge cannot tell even the most absurd story explaining why it drums in the mating season.

C.G. Jung in his same book *Collective Unconsciousness* elaborates the psychology of rebirth. He has related rebirth with archetypes. He says:

Rebirth is an affirmation that must be counted among primordial affirmations of mankind. These primordial affirmations are based on what I call archetypes. In view of the fact that all affirmations relating to the sphere of the suprasensual are, in the last analysis, in variably determined by archetypes. (116)

Rebirth is not a process that we can observe. We can neither measure nor weigh it. We can not photograph it. It is entirely beyond sense perception. The concept of rebirth is not always used in the same sense. Since this concept has various aspects, it may be useful to review its different meanings. Jung has classified the five different forms of rebirth: metempsychosis, reincarnation, resurrection, rebirth (renovation) and participation in the process of transformation.

The first form metempsychosis is known as transformation of souls. It is a life—sequence interrupted by different reincarnations. The second form is reincarnation. This concept of rebirth necessarily implies the continuity of personality. Human personality is regarded as continuous and accessible to memory. The third form is resurrection. This means a reestablishment of human existence after death. The fourth form is rebirth (renovation). This concerns rebirth of the strict sense; that is to say, rebirth within the span of individual life. Jung remarks:

Rebirth may be a renewal without any change of being, in as much as the personality which is renewed is not changed in its essential nature, but only its functions, or parts of the personality, are subjected to healing, strengthening, or improvement. Thus even bodily ills may be healed through rebirth ceremonies. (114)

Another aspect of this fourth form is essential transformation, i.e. total rebirth of the individual. Here, the renewal implies a change of his essential nature, and may be called a transmutation. The fifth form is participation in the process of transformation. Here the transformation brought about not directly, by passing through death and rebirth oneself, but indirectly, by participating in a process of transformation which is conceived of as taking place outside the individual.

Myths and rituals are necessary in every society. Myth exists at the conceptual level and ritual exists at the level of action. Complementing each other myth and ritual functions as response to men's need for action. When such rituals are performed as social ceremonies, they make possible for individuals to identify with certain culture. Joseph Campbell describes myth as the living inspiration for human beings. In his *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, he writes:



The myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of what ever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation. (3)

Joseph Campbell describes myth and ritual as the symbols that lead human spirit forward. He says, "It has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back" (11). Campbell takes myth as a directory of the mind. He further says:

"Myth is the revelation of a plenum of silence within and round every atom of existence. Myth is a directing of the mind and heart, by means of profoundly informed figurations, to that ultimate mystery which fills and surrounds all existences. Every in the most comical and apparently frivolous of its moments, mythology is directing the mind to this unmanifest which is just beyond the eye. (267)

He examines religion as myth in his *The Masks of God*. He claims that all myths have the same message. He points out that "Stories People tell tend to have beginning, middle and ending parts and a protagonist who does interesting things are monomyths. They involve the hero whose role consists of three parts; departure, fulfillment and return" (57). This was the only universal connection they saw through out literature. Other critics point out that one can manipulate, edit and ignore parts of stories to end up with message.

Myth contains extraordinary power to the individual to interact in his society and plays divergent roles ranging from moral, legal and social to psychological

character for the followers. It explains all the mysterious concepts and gives validity to human thought. Myth provides a pattern, a way of controlling and ordering and giving shape to what is shapeless and chaotic. It is very necessary to preserve culture for the continuity of human civilization so myth is revalued in society. This continuity gives birth to new idea and develops new concept and new mode of thinking.

Many critics have seen the functions of myth from different angles. Some critics examine myths in relation to literature. Some others have approached myth with relation to social ground and culture. The myth critics wish to discover how certain works of literature become "classic". Myth provides structural pattern in relation to both levels of narrative and meaning. Myth interprets the position of mythical significance of cultural values. These values of culture differ and transform through time to give birth to new values. From this perspective, it can be argued that myth is a kind of story invented or made from time to time and every existing culture provide subject matter to it. Myths, are not merely a guide to culture, they too point to the generation power underlying human life, a power that from time to time oversteps cultural limits.

Myths have an immense power to lead human civilization forward. It is integrated with the acquisition of knowledge and reality in the profound sense. It generates the umbrella power that protects the believers from any danger because this power is venerated for its holiness. It comes into play when rite, ceremony or social or moral rule demands justification, warrant of antiquity, reality and sanctity.

As we have already pointed that myth plays important role in social surroundings to preserve its meaningfulness. In this regard, myth always represents the form of culture background, as it exists in society. Myths are told and retold to preserve the meaning fullness and purposefulness of social and moral role. Myth

functions to reconcile the waking consciousness and interpretation of the total images as known to the contemporary consciousness. The primary function of myth is narrative and explanatory. To give continuity in nature, society and culture, myths play vital and necessary role. Northrop Frye in his *Anatomy of criticism* says, "Traditions, political causes, esthetics, radicals all these cultures are treated as a human production power which in the past has been like other productive powers, exploited by other ruling classes and in now to be revalued in terms of better society" (346).

It is worthless to study myth without an examination of its connection with literature. Literary forms are often grounded on mythologies as literature is the most effective medium for expression of myth. Frye says that, "literary shape can not come from life, rather it comes only from literary tradition, and so ultimately from myth" (33). Showing his brilliancy Frye identifies myth with literature, asserting that myth is a "structure organizing principal of the literary form" (341).

Mythology is inevitably an inherent necessity of language and myth is the power exercised by language as thought in every possible sphere of mental activity. In this, sense, language produces literature while it is also the medium for the expression of myth and literature is very heed of human for the continuum of life. The leading archetypal critics Frye's vision is quotable in this regard, "The archetypal view of literature shows as literature as a tool from and literary experience as a part of continuum of life in which one of the poets fiction is to visualize the goals of human works" (15).

Mythology is a verification and validation of the well-known social practices and norms in the society. The study of mythology enables us to judge in the perspective, our rather usual relationship with the dark hinterland of our own

consciousness. The historical basic of some of the myths makes them particularly significant for many readers, for history is what has survived and is still surviving. But mythology can be defined as what has survived even longer than history.

Myths contain profound truths regarding ourselves. They reflect man's ever recorded first attempts to impart some specific form to his bewildering universe. Myths are universal. Despite their bewildering variety they share certain common characteristics. For instance, they create gods in the form of man. These similarities arise because man everywhere faces the same basic problems and asks the same questions. He wants to know why the human beings are? What they are? Why nature behaves to them as it does and how cause and effect are linked? It is human nature to search meanings as well as causes for everything that arises in consciousness.

Myths are the creation of the ancient people which interpret the cyclic events of nature. They explain the cycle of nature in relation to different vegetation gods. Due to interrelationship between the nature and the gods, the worship of gods took place in different societies in the form of rituals and ceremonies. These rituals and ceremonies were observed to bring regeneration and productivity in vegetations and animals. All primitive nature—myths follow a common pattern—death, rebirth and death. This recurrent pattern centers round the cyclic, seasonal change in nature. Thus winter is the death of year. It follows stirrings of life in all nature once again. This process was reenacted in a number of vegetation rituals and ceremonies.

The recurrent pattern of birth, death and rebirth in different vegetation myths is exploited by different literary genres by great literary figures like T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, Wole Soyinka, Sam Shepard, etc. But they applied some modification in forms and patterns to prevent regeneration in nature. The position of vegetation gods is occupied by Corn-Kings.

The Corn-King's life is related with the vegetation in the land. The Corn-King's health guarantees the well being of the tribe and fecundity of the land. When the Corn-King becomes old and weak, the vegetations die and the land becomes barren. James G. Frazer in his book *The Golden Bough* describes about the Corn-King. He says, "King's life or spirit is so sympathetically bound up with prosperity of the whole country, that if he fell ill or grow senile the cattle would sicken and cease to multiply, the crops would rot in the fields, and men would perish of widespread disease" (354).

To prevent the land becoming barren, the Corn-King must be put to death while he is still healthy. So that the Corn-King's spirit may be transmitted to healthier and more energetic successor. In this context, Frazer describes:

The only way of averting these calamities is to put the king to death while he is still hale and hearty, in order that he divine spirit which he has inherited from his predecessors may be transmitted in turn by him to his successor while it is still in full vigour and has not yet been impaired by the weakness of disease and old age. (354)

In this regard, Frazer's view is quotable again. He says:

The fertility of men, of cattle, and of the crops is believed to depend sympathetically on the generative power of the king, so that the complete failure of that power in him would involve a corresponding failure in men, animals and plants and would thereby entail at no distant date the entire extinction of all life, whether human, animal, or vegetable. No wonder, that with such a danger before their eyes the shilluk should be most careful not to let king die what we should call a natural death of sickness or old age. (354)

In many African myths we can find the pattern of sacrifice and renewal. There are certain ceremonies in which human beings are used as scapegoats. They are performed annually to take away the sins of the land at the last day of the old year. The sacrifice of human beings will carry away the sin, guilt, misfortune, iniquities of the land and death. In this connection, Frazer says, "Among the Yoruba negroes of West Africa the human victim chosen for sacrifice and who may be either a freeborn or a slave, a person of noble or wealthy parentage, or one of humble birth, is, after he has been chosen and marked out of the purpose, called an Oluwo" (747). Furthermore, Frazer States, "Ashes and Chalk would be employed to hide his identify by the one being freely thrown over his head, and his face painted with the latter, whilst individuals would often rush out of their houses to lay their hands upon him that they might thus transfer to him their sin, guilt trouble and death" (747).

In African myths there is also a ritual of firing effigy-a carrier doll during the celebration of certain ceremonies. The young people make up a figure of straw or the like materials, dress it in old clothes, which they have begged from house in the village. People believe that burning effigy will take away the death from the society. Frazer says, "No one will die within the year in the house out of which the figure of Death has been carried and supposed to be protect against sickness and plague" (409).

Myth provides special concepts and patterns to interpret work of literatures for various types of critical studies. The present research mainly evaluates the mythical elements in the text. This research mainly focuses on the mythical pattern of sacrifice and renewal of Yoruba myth in *The Strong Breed* and the vegetation myth of Corn-King in *Buried Child*. Both Yoruba and vegetation myth hope for the renewal and regeneration of the land.

### III. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

#### Mythical Elements in Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*

The story of this play *The Strong Breed* is grounded in Yoruba tradition with its initiation rites and concepts of heredity, community, sacrifice and renewable.

This is an one-act play with more than a dozen characters. The story of the play, moves around Eman, One of the "strong breed" who has exiled himself from his own community. The "strong breed" are those men capable of the sacrifice needed annually to purify the community of its sin and allow it to start over again. The community's sacrifice signals the beginning of a new year. This play examines the interrelationship of ritual and community in African culture, describing one process by which a society renews itself.

Eman is a teacher and healer. He refuses to exploit those around him. He lifts up the weak and helpless. He has sympathy for everyone including the idiot Ifada. Eman sacrifices himself for the community after Ifada protests himself in terrified confusion. Eman explains to Jaguna and Oroge, the elders of the community that no community should force a "carrier" to perform unwillingly. "Carrier" are those men or women who can bear the burden of the community's guilt. If the "carrier" is unwilling, the guilt will not be carried away. Eman then offers himself as a willing carrier to sacrifice in Ifada's place. Eman knows that even if the community is unworthy, it shaves in purification by the sacrifice of the willing.

Jaguna and Oroge, elders of the community search for the appropriate carrier in the community to carry away the sin of the land. They find out the idiot Ifada, another stranger in the community. Ifada seems heaven-sent to serve the community. But Ifada protests himself in a terrified way. Then Eman offers himself as a willing carrier in Ifada's place. Sunma, Jaguna's oldest daughter and friend of Eman, tries

very hard to save Eman to be a carrier but she becomes unable and Eman sacrifice himself to carry away the sin, guilt, misfortune, inequities of the land at the last night of the passing year. Eman died for the community and he secured its renewable.

*The Strong Breed* employs the elements of Yoruba myth that hope for the renewable and redemptions by the sacrifice of human beings. Soyinka uses this myth that develops from the ancient time specially in west Africa. James G. Frazer's discussed this myth of sacrifice and renewable in *The Golden Bough*. In this myth, human beings are used as scapegoats to take away all the sins and guilt of the land. The person who is selected for the sacrifice is called Oluwo. Sacrifice of Oluwo will carry away the sins, guilt of the community. Soyinka implies this myth in his own way by developing Eman as an Oluwo, who is chosen for the scapegoat. Eman's willing sacrifice to take away the burden of the community signals the beginning of a new year. Now, all these elements will be discussed thoroughly by citing the lines from the text.

Eman is a stranger in the community. He is spending his life to the people of this new community, who are not taking him friendly and usually. Eman was born in a strong breed family. He becomes strong breed as his father. According to their tradition, strong breed should sacrifice themselves to purify the community's sin and guilt as needed annually. The dialogues between Eman and his father, Old Man, hints about this. Old Man explains to his son, "Ours is a strong breed, my son. It is only a strong breed that can take this boat to the river year after year and wax stronger on it. I have taken down each year's evil for over twenty years. I hope you would follow me" (1186).

Eman denies to follow his father. He puts different ideas about it with his father. He wants to live in peace as his wife Omae. He wants to go far away from his



own community to live in peace. He thinks he is not fit to do work as his father has done. He tells his father, "I was a tired man. I needed peace. Because Omae was peace, I stayed. Now nothing holds me here" (1187). But his father insists him to do as the strong breed. He further says, "Other men would rot and die doing this takes year after year. It is strong medicine which only we can take. Our blood is strong like no other. Anything you do in life must be less than this, son" (1187).

But Eman leaves his own community in search of peace and becomes stranger in the community of evils as Sunma indicates. Sunma says to Girl, 'She is as evil as the rest of them' (1180). Eman is totally blinds about the evil behaviours of the people living in that community. He likes to stay where nobody likes him. His blindness towards the community is recognized by Summa in the play. Sunma says to Eman, "You are wasting your life on people who really want you out of their way" (1181).

The early narrative lines of the play give us some hints about the ceremony going to occur in that community at the last night of the passing year. The lines explain, "Sunma continues her work, more, nervously. Two villagers, obviously travelers, pass hurriedly in front of the house, the man has a small raffia sack, the woman a cloth-covered basket, the man enters first, turns and urges the woman who is just emerging to hurry" (1178).

The farewell and welcome ceremony of passing and coming year by the sacrifice of stranger, going to occurs, in the community makes Sunma indifferences towards Eman. She insists Eman to leaves the community. As she is the member of the same community, she is well aware about the way of celebrating festival. So she is requests Eman to move far away from the community to enjoy the new year festival. Sunma says:

Tonight. Only tonight. We will come back tomorrow, as early as you like. But let us go away for this one night. Don't let another year, break on me in this place . . . you don't know how important it is to me, but I will tell you, I will tell you on the way . . . but we must not be here today, Eman, do this one thing for me. (1181)

This shows a kind of horror inside Sunma about celebrating the festival with stranger Eman.

Eman is very much kind towards Ifada. Eman thinks Ifada is little more unlucky than other children in the society. So Eman shows sympathy towards him but Sunma cannot bear the sight of him on the eve of new year. Sunma takes him like some horrible insect, crawling round here and there to bring bad fortune to them in the coming year. Sunma in her dialogue with Eman states, "I have always merely tolerated him. But I cannot anymore. Perhaps . . . perhaps . . . it is the new year. Yes, yes it must be the new year" (1179).

The people in the community believe that the carrier will take away all kinds of sins, guilt in the community by sacrificing the stranger. All the people get ready to celebrate new year. They all hope that sacrifice of human being as a carrier will take away all kinds of sickness, guilt and brings new life. A female character in the play, Girl beliefs that her sickness will take away by the carrier in the festival. Girl in dialogue with Eman says, "Do you mean my carrier? I am unwell you know. My mother says it will take away my sickness with the old year" (1180).

During the time of celebration all the houses should be closed. All the people in the community close the doors of their houses to prevent carrier to enter in their house. If the carrier goes inside the house, then the house will be contaminated. If the house is contaminated, it should be burnt. So nobody in the community gives

shelter to the carrier. Jaguna elaborates about this process. He says, 'A carrier should end up in the bush, not in a house. Anyone who doesn't guard his door when the carrier goes by has himself to blame. A contaminated houses should be burnt down' (1184).

Community people are so strong about their believe over the process of sacrificing the stranger as a carrier. They have a clear purpose of celebrating it. They hope for the renewable of land in the sacrifice of human beings. They believe that no carrier should return to the community. If anybody comes, then he will be stoned to death. Oroge informs about this to Eman. He states, "I am sorry you wouldn't understand mister Eman. But you ought to know that no carrier may return to the village. If he does, the people will stone him to death. It has happened before. Surely it is too much, to ask a man to give up his won soil" (1185).

The ritual of not giving shelter to the carrier is common among people. This can be supported by the saying of a woman. She says, "Oh, my head. What have I done ! Forgive me, neighbour . . . Eh, it is the carrier ! He is here. The carrier is hiding in the passage. Quickly, I have found the carrier" (1186).

The villagers in the community believe that Ifada is godsend to serve their community. Jaguna says, "Ifada is a godsend. Does he have to be willing?" (1184). Supporting Jaguna's view Oroge says, "No one in his senses would do such a job. Why do you think we give refuge to idiots like him? We do not know where he come form. One morning, he is simply there, just like that. Form nowhere at all. You see, there is a purpose in that" (1184). So they chose him as a carrier according to their traditions. During the process of celebration Ifada protests in a confused and terrified way and takes shelter in Eman's house. Eman told that unwilling carrier cannot take away the sins of the land to the elders of the community. His dialogue with Jaguna

and Oroge explains it. He says, "Why did you pick on a helpless boy? Obviously he is not willing" (1184). To protest innocent Ifada to be an Oluwa, Eman further says, "You can see him with your own eyes. Does it really have meaning to use one as unwilling as that" (1185). In this regard, Eman's dialogue with Oroge is again quotable. He says, "Do you believe the spirit of a new year is so easily fooled?" (1185). Eman becomes able to convince Oroge and Jaguna that only willing can serve the community. Then they put their all efforts to prove Ifada is willing. Oroge says, "He shall be willing. Not only willing actually joyous. I am the one who prepares them all, and I have seen worse. This one escaped before I began to prepare him for the event. But you will see him later tonight, the most joyous creature in the festival. Then perhaps you will understand" (1185).

By this, it is clear that only the willing can be Oluwo. As Ifada is not willing one alternative stranger to be an Oluwo is Eman. Eman becomes ready to serve the community as an Oluwo willingly. Though Eman becomes ready to serve the community, Jaguna still fears for the poor beginning of the coming new year. He shows his fearness with Oroge. He says, "It is a poor beginning for a year when our own curses remain hovering over our homes because the carrier refused to take them" (1186). Oroge tries to convince Jaguna. But Oroge is full of confidence about the willing sacrifice of Eman as an Oluwo to serve the community. He tries to remove the fears of Jaguna. He says, "I think he is the kind who would let himself be beaten from night till dawn and not utter a sound. He would let himself be stoned until he dropped dead" (1186).

Eman runs each and every corner of the community by whitening his body with a floury substance, to transfer all the sin, guilt, trouble, death and iniquities of the land in his body as an Oluwo. This process takes time upto midnight. Jaguna tells

about it with Oroge. He says, "The year will demand more from this carrier than we thought" (1187). This is the festival of death which promise to bring life, the disturbing and notorious ambiguities or oracles notwithstanding. Community members assume that sacrifice and ritual can transform or transfigure all to the greater glory of some ancestral god, self or community. This is expressed in the fullness of Jaguna's Oriki, a Yoruba praise song. He sings, "When Jaguna sets the trap, even elephants pay homage - their trunks downwards and one leg up in the sky. When the carrier steps on the fallen twigs, it is up in the sacred trees with him" (1191).

The aforementioned quote signifies the sacrifice of the Oluwo by hanging up in the sacred tree. The narrative line is the last scene of the play also indicates the sacrifice of Eman by hanging in the branch of a tree. The lines explain, "There is a sound of twigs breeking, of a sudden trembling in the branches. Then silence" (1192). After the sacrifice of Eman as an Oluwo, Jaguna says with Oroge that, they had celebrated the festival for the betterment of people and community. He says, "We did it for them. It was all for their own common good. What did it benefit me whether the man lived or died. But did you see them? One and all they looked up at the man and words died in their throats" (1192).

Firing the effigy, a carrier doll, at the time of sacrifice of Oluwo is also an important part of celebrating new year. People in the community believe that hanging the effigy at the branch of tree and firing it from the bottom will carry away the sickness of them. Girl ordering Ifada to hang the effigy on the tree indicates this. Her voice when she addresses Ifada, 'You will hang it up and I will set fire to it. But just because you are helping me, don't think it is going to cure you. I am the one who will get well at midnight, do you understand? It is my carrier and it is for me alone" (1180).

From this long discussion, citing the dramatic lines of the play, we can reach the conclusion that Soyinka has employed the Yoruba myth that hopes for the renewable through sacrifice of human beings. In short, Eman is treated as an Oluwo to serve the community's guilt. Willing sacrifice of Eman can be taken as the symbol of cultural cleansing and renewable of the land. *The Strong Breed* accepts the comprehensive union of religious and secular intuition in the traditional Yoruba community.

#### Mythical Elements in Shepard's *Buried Child*

The story of the play *Buried Child* is grounded on agriculture myth of corn-king, which deals with degeneration of land, fertility of men, death, rebirth and renewable.

This is a three-act play with more than half a dozen characters. The first act provides the necessary background of the play. It also provides information about the lives of family members. The second act functions as the developing action of the play in which the conflict between Dodge and Halie on the identification of Vince. The third act of the play provides resolution of the play in which the secret of the family is brought into light.

Dodge is one track alcoholic, coughing, and complaining old man. He parks himself for the most part on the sofa. He is sardonic, frustrated curmudgeon, possessed of the kind of repressed violence that makes him commit a murder. He has become a cruel, unfeeling, embittered old man. As an old man, he is powerless and dependent, but he has not lost his voice. Halie, wife of Dodge, is no more kind-hearted than Dodge. she first appears as an enduring and loving mother. Then Shepard changes her role by presenting her as an amorous mistress, who loses her control and moral leadership when she seduces her son Tilden to have incest relation with her,

and walks freely with Father Dewis, a protestant minister. Her relation with father Dewis represents her passion and in sincere religious morality.

Tilden, the eldest son of them, is a former football player. He had returned home after facing some troubles where he was living in New Mexico. Now he is spending his time in harvesting corn outside their house where there was not any corn since long. In the same way, Vince Tilden's son, has not been home for six years and now none of his family members recognize him. His feeling of exclusion and resulting frustration become the catalyst for the ultimate revelation of family secrets. Shelly, Vince's girlfriend, has come with him in his heritage for the first time. She regards Vince's house like a Norman Rockwell painting, a stereotypical American house. She also acts as a catalyst to reveal the sin committed by Dodge. Bradley, the violent psychotic son of Dodge and Halie, with the prosthetic legs, loves to cut Dodge's hair while she sleeps, and frightens shelly by compels her to open her mouth to insert his hand into it.

*Buried Child* is about a rural Illinois family sinking into spiritual ruin in the aftermath of a horrifying infanticide. This is a master work that captures dramatic tension, terror and mystery. Shepherd builds the dramatic opening scene where we meet Dodge as a sickly old man spending his time by watching T.V., smoking and drinking. After a long silence, his nagging wife, Haile uses monologue that combines about her life before marrying Dodge, and a running commentary of the family.

The setting depicts a run down wooden farm house complete with screen in front porch and a dusty old green sofa that dysfunctional family saga will. This play deals with a family turn apart by a dark secret that leads all members of the family to psychologically and physically deteriorate condition. The conflicts rises when the eldest son Tilden brings cash and seems retarded. Halie emerges form the upstairs

room in completely black dress. She leaves to meet father Dewis. She is delusional and is obsessed with getting a monument to their son, Ansel, basketball star, who died on his honeymoon in a hotel.

In the morning, Shelly adjusts herself somewhat to this crazy family but in a beginning scene she gets Dodge, to reveal the entire family secret. The secret of the family that Halie seduced her eldest son, Tilden to have incest relation. Due to this relation, she gives birth to Vince. But Dodge, did not like the act, and drowned and buried the child in the backyard of their house, but nobody knew it. Due to this sin done by Dodge, the family turned into disintegration and the farm to barrenness. After revelation of this secret of the family, when Vince returned drunk, he throws bottle after bottle against the porch wall in an amazing temper. At last, family members recognize him and accept as the inheritor of their house. He too rows to revitalize the land. In this way, the play ends with the death of Dodge and the revitalization of the land as it is indicated by the references of rain, corn, carrots, peas, etc from the voice of Halie who had suspected the coin in the beginning of the play.

*Buried Child* employs the vegetation myth of Corn-king that hopes for the renewable of land. Shepard uses this myth which develops from ancient fertility rituals focusing on the pattern of death, rebirth and renewable. James G. Frazer's discussed this myth in *The Golden Bough*. In this myth, the Corn-king's health guarantees the well-being of the tribe and the fertility of the land. When Corn-king becomes old and weak, the crops die and the land becomes idle. To prevent this, Corn-king must be put to death in the hope of transmitting the king's divine spirit to the energetic and effective successor. Shepard implies this myth in his own way by developing Dodge as the dying king of his family and his land. The land had become barren due to Dodge's falling power, but no worthy successor has arrived to take his



responsibility. In this condition arrives Vice Teldon's son. In the last act of the play, Dodge recognizes him as a deserving inheritor and wishes him the farmland. In a vigour attempt to fulfill his new role, Vince promises to regenerate the farm. This ritual process incarnates the magical power which is signified by the mysterious revitalization of the land. Now, all these elements will be discussed thoroughly by citing the lines from the text.

Dodge is sick and feeble in his seventies. He uses pills to minimize coughing. He never moves from his old, dark, green sofa. He always drinks whisky and smokes cigarette and watches a large, old-fashioned brown T.V. from the sofa. His weakness and feebleness as that of the corn-king is supported by the narrative lines of the play. It narrates, "He is very thin and sickly looking, in his late seventies. He stares at T.V. He starts to cough slowly and softly. The coughing gradually bulbs. He holds one hand to his mouth and tries to stifle it" (1199).

Dodge's sickness and old-age is directly responsible to cause the bareness of the farmland. His well-being guarantees the productivity of the land. The infecundity of the land since nineteen thirty-five is indicated by the suspect of Dodge when Tilden appears with Corn. Dodge says, "There hasn't been corn out there since about nineteen thirty-five ! That's the last time I planted corn out these !" (1201). Dodge further says, "I haven't trouble with neighbours here for fifty-seven years. I don't even know who the neighbours are ! And I don't Wanna know ! Now go put that corn back where it came from !" (1201).

In the same way, Helie's suspect about the corn brought by Tilden, too indicates the barrenness of the farmland. Halie says, "We haven't land corn here for over thirty years. Where'd you get that corn anyway? Why is the house suddenly full

of corn?" (1203). She further suspects "There isn't any corn outside, Tilden ! There's no corn ! Now, you must've either stolen this corn or you bought it" (1204).

Both Dodge's and Halie's suspect about the corn brought by Tilden indicates the barrenness of their farm. Hence the farmhouse of Dodge is parallel to the barren land of the corn-king is vegetation myth and Dodge himself as the maimed corn-king of his family. As Dodge has turned old and sick, the farmhouse, has become barren.

Dodge and Halie have three sons. They are Tilden, Bradley and Ansel. Ansel is already dead. Bradley have lost his leg and become physically weak. Tilden who is seduced by his mother Halie, is weak and unable, to look after himself due to grief and remorse for the act he had done. Thus, both Bradley and Tilden, as Dodge and Halie think, are unable to take the responsibility of Dodge. They are not healthy successors to inherit the property of Dodge and to uplift the barren land by taking the position of Dodge. Tilden's weakness, it may be physical or mental, can be traced in Halie's voice when she addresses Dodge. She says, "You've gatta watch out for him. It is our responsibility. He can't look after himself anymore, so we have to do it. Nobody else, will do it. We can't just send him away somewhere. If we had lots of money we could sent him away. But we don't. We never well" (1202). She further says, "We have to watch him just like we used to now. Just like we always have. He is still a child" (1204).

Similarly, Bradly will be unable to take the responsibility of Dodge because he has wooden leg. His weakness, too can be traced in Halie's voice. When she dialogues with Dodge," Bradley can't look after us. Bradley can hardly look after himself. I was always hoping that Tilden would look out for Bradley when they got older. After Bradley lost his leg. Tilden's the oldest. I always thought he'd be the one to take responsibility. I had no idea in world that Tilden would be so much trouble" (1202).

Dodge also does not like Bradley. He says, "He was born in a goddamn hog wallow ! That's where he was born and that's where he belongs ! He doesn't belong in this house !" (1204). He further shows his hateness towards Bradley, "He is not my flesh and blood ! My flesh and blood's buried in the backyard !" (1204).

Thus, both Dodge and Halie have no hope of their sons Tilden and Bradley to take their responsibility. There is vacuum for their successors. At this situation Vince appears there, Tilden's son , for the first time after six years of long period, with his girl friend, Shelley, in his way to Mexico to meet his father, Tilden. But he meets Tilden there all of a sudden. In this condition, nobody recognizes him rather Dodge says, 'You didn't do what you told me. You didn't stay here with me" (1208). Though Vince. Would be Dodge's effective successor, he rejects to recognize him in the beginning. Vince calls him grandpa but he becomes furious and says, "Stop calling me Grandpa Willya' ! It's sickening. "Grandpa." I am nobody's Grandpa"' (1210). He further says, "stay where you are ! keep your distance !" (1209).

Dodge's rejection to identify him builds the conflict that leads to reveal the secret act of family. When the conflict is at the climax, Vince goes to the liquor store to bring whiskey for Dodge. In absence, of him, Tilden in his conversation with Shelley states, "I thought I recognized him. I thought I recognized something about him. I thought I saw a face inside his face" (1214). Hence Tilden recognizes his son Vince to some extent but Dodge and Haile not. Tilden becomes able to recognize Vince by observing his childhood behaviours that he used to bend his thumb behind his knuckles. After that Tilden reveals the secret act of Dodge is shelly. He says, "we had a boy (motioning to Dodge). He did Dodge did. Could pick it up with one hand. Put it is the other. Little baby. Dodge killed it" (1215). He further says, 'Dodge drowned it" (1215).

The above mentioned dialogue fully indicates that Dodge has killed the baby by drowning. He never told about it to anyone even to Halie. The boy disappeared, copes looked for it. Neighbours searched it but they could not find it. Only Dodge knew but not other members of the family. Tilden reveals, though Dodge forced him not to. Tilden says:

He is the only one who knows where it's buried. The only one. Like a secret buried treasure won't tell any of us. Won't tell me or mother or even Bradley. Especially Bradley. Bradley tried to force it out of him but he wouldn't tell. Wouldn't even tell why he did it. One might be just did it. (1216)

When Tilden reveals the secret, there is incessant resistance to Dodge. But, Shelley insists Dodge to tell the whole truth of the family. Then Dodge explains Shelley about it. He says, "I remember the whole thing from start to finish. I remember the day he was born" (1223). Bradley, and Halie tried to stop him. But Dodge explains:

We were a well-established family once well established. All the boys were grown. The farm house was producing enough, milk to fill lake Michigan twice over. Me and Halie here were pointed toward what looked like the middle part of our life. Everything was settled with us. All we had to do was ride it out. Then Halie got pregnant again. Outa' middle a' nowhere, she got pregnant, we weren't planning on havin' any more boys. we had enough boys already. In fact, we hadn't been sleepin' in the same bed for about six years. (1123)

The above quote explicitly hints that their well established family encounters degeneration due to Halie's immoral behaviour with Tilden. The following lines hint the insert between Tilden and Halie in Dodge's voice:

Halie had this kid. This baby boy. She had it. I let her have it on her own. All the other boys I had had best doctors, best nurses, everything. This one I let her have by herself. This one hurt real bad. Almost killed her, but she had it, anyway. It lived, see. It lived. It wanted to grow up in this family. It wanted to pretend that I was its father. She wanted me to believe in it. Even when everyone around us knew. Everyone, all our boys knew. Tilden knew. (1124)

The aforementioned quote explicitly lays emphasis on Tilden that he had incest relation with Halie. Even Tilden's behaviours with the child also hint that the child not belongs to Dodge but to Tilden. Dodge further says:

Tilden was one who knew. Better than any of us. He'd walk for miles with that kid in his arms. Halie lethem take it. All night sometimes. He walk all night out there in the pasture with it. Takin' to it. Singn' to it. Used to hear him singing to it. He'd make up stories. He'd tell that kid and kinds a' stories. Even when he knew it couldn't understand him. Couldn't understand a word he was sayin'. Never would understand him. We couldn't allow that to grow up right in the middle of our lives. It made everything we'd accomplished look like it was nothin'.  
Everything was canceled out by this one mistake. (1124)

By this, shepherd reveals the sin committed by Halie and Dodge through Dodge's voice. Halie's incest with Tilden and Dodge's act of murdering their son destroyed the

family and farmland. Dodge, himself accepts his sin. He says with Shelly, "I killed it. I drowned it. Just like the runt of a litter Just drowned it" (1224).

In this way, it is clear that their farmhouse has turned into barren due to the sin committed by Dodge. There is none to take his responsibility. Dodge becomes unable to recognize Vince when he arrives. Dodge has already revealed his secret act to Shelley when Vince returns from liquor store. Vince being furious, returns smashing of bottles after bottles on the wall. In his anger, due to rejection of his family members, speaks, "I am a murdered. Don't underestimate me for a minute ! I am the midnight stranger ! I devour whole families in a single gulp" (1224/25). He further says, "May be I should become in there and break them ! May be I should come in there and usurp your territory !" (1225).

His destructive acts and words are very much similar to the destructive acts of his grandfather Dodge. Vince inherits it from his family ancestors. By observing these destructive activities of Vince, Halie identifies him. She asks, "Vincent ? Is that you, Vincent ?" (1224).

After the identification of Vince, she accepts him as their angel. She says:

He used to sing in his sleep. He'd sing. In the middle of the night. The sweetest voice. Like an angel. (She stops for a moment). I used to lie awake listening to it. I used to lie awake thinking it was all right if I died. Because Vincent was an angel. A guardian angel. He'd watch over us. He'd watch overall of us. (1225/26)

In the same way, Dodge, too recognizes Vince and accepts as a healthy successor and requests him to look after all. Dodge speaks, "Go ahead ! Take over the house ! Take over the whole goddamn house ! You can have it ! It's ours. It's been a

pain in the neck ever since the very first mortgage. I am gonna die nay second now. Any second. You won't even notice. So I'll settle my affairs once and for all" (1226).

Thus, the above saying obviously states that Dodge accepts Vince as his healthy and energetic successor and handover his house and farmland to him. His feeble and weak body at the old age also states that he is going to die soon. It also indicates that Dodge is only waiting the healthy successor to handover his property and responsibility. In this context, he finds Vince. He declared his last wish and testament in a traditional way. He speaks, "The house goes to my Grandson, Vincet. All the furnishings, accoutrements, and paraphernalia therein. Everything tacked to the walls or otherwise resting under this roof" (1226).

Vince accepts the property and responsibility of Dodge when he makes a will of it. He further promises to utilize the land. In this situation, he says, "I just inherited a house. I've gotta carry on the line. I've gotta see to it that things keep rolling" (1226). He further says, "This is my house now, ya' know ? All mine. Everything. Except for the power tools and stiff. I'm gonna get a new equipment anyway. New plows, new tractor, everything. All brand new" (1227).

As soon as Vince promises to regenerate the land, Dodge died. Halie informs about the change occurs in the land. She calls to Dodge from the above:

Dodge ? Is that you, Dodge? Tilden was right about the corn, you know. I've never seen such corn. Have you taken a look at it cately? Tall as a man already. This early in the year. Carrots too, potatoes, peas. It is like a paradise out there, Dodge. You oughta' take a look. A miracle. I've never seen it like this maybe the rain did something. Maybe it was the rain. (1227)

Halie further says:

Good hard rain. Takes everything straight down deep to the roots. The rest takes care of itself. You can't force a thing to grow. You can't interfere with it. It's all hidden. It's all unseen. You just gotta wait till it pops up out of the ground. Tiny little shoot. Tiny little white shoot. All hairy and fragile. Strong though. Strong enough to break the earth even. It's a miracle, Dodge. I've never seen a crop like this in my whole life. Maybe it's the sun. May be that's it. Maybe it's the sun. (1227)

The above cited quote signifies the revitalization of the barren land as it is indicated by the reference of corn, carrot, peas, potatoes, etc. This miraculous change is caused by the rain and sun. Rain and sun symbolize fertility and growth. The regeneration of land predicts that Dodge's spirit is transmitted to younger, energetic hands of Vince.

From this long discussion, citing the dramatic lines of the play we can reach the conclusion that shepherd has employed the vegetation myth of Corn-king that hope for the regeneration and renewable of land. In short, Dodge is treated as the Corn-king, who is weak and feeble as in the vegetation myth. Dodge's farmhouse can be taken as the unfertile barren land of the Corn-king, where nothing grows. Vince is taken as a healthy and younger successor to take the responsibility of Dodge as in vegetation myth. There is regeneration of the idle land as in the myth. When Vince promises to take the responsibility to regenerate the land. Buried Child accepts the vegetation myth of the Corn-king to show the renewable in natural world.

Comparison and Contrast Between *The Strong Breed* and *Buried Child*

*The Strong Breed* and *Buried Child* are based on Yoruba and vegetation myth respectively, which hope for renewal and redemptions. In these plays, responsibility is transmitted from father to son. *The Strong Breed* deals with the traditional African



community, Yoruba music, dance, effigy and sacrifice. Soyinka has rooted this play in the religion and folklore of Yoruba people. *Buried Child* deals with rural American family, incest, murder and sin. Shepard has emphasized the rootlessness of family, its emotional chill and its capacity for violence in this play.

*The Strong Breed* and *Buried Child* are grounded on myth. The former is grounded in Yoruba and later is grounded in vegetation myth. Both Yoruba and vegetation myth derives from James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. In Yoruba myth, human beings are treated as scapegoat to carry away sins and guilt of the land. Sacrifice of the human beings hope for renewal. The person who is chosen for the sacrifice is known as Oluwo. Sacrifice of Oluwo, as a carrier, will carry away the sins and guilt of the particular community. The playwright has developed this myth, in the play, *The Strong Breed*, by making Eman as a willing Oluwo. Eman sacrifices himself for the community at the last night of the old year and has guaranteed its renewal. Jaguna and Orage, elders of the community believed that, the festival of death will bring new life in the community, its people and land. So they had managed the sacrifice of Eman by hanging up in the Sacred tree. After hanging Eman, Jaguna says, "We did it for them. It was all for their own common good. What did it benefit me whether the man lived or died" (1192).

In the vegetation myth of Corn-King, the death of Corn-King, symbolize the regeneration of the land. The Corn-King's health is directly related with the well-being of the tribe and fecundity of the land. If the Corn-King becomes old and weak, the agriculture will die and land become barren. To stop degradation of the land, Corn-King should be put to death hoping that his spirit will be transmitted to the new healthy successor and land becomes fertile and productive. The playwright has developed his myth, in the play *Buried Child*, by making Dodge as the dying king.

Dodge requests Vince to accept the land. Vince accepts it and Dodge dies. After that land becomes fertile and productive. Halie says, "I have never seen such corn. Have you taken a look at it lately? Talk as a man already. This early in the year carrots, too. Potatoes. Peas. It's like a paradise out there" (1227).

In these plays, the responsibility of father is transmitted to son. The transmission of responsibility leads to renewal and redemptions of the family, community and land. In *The Strong Breed*, old man transmitted his responsibility to his son Eman, the responsibility to sacrifice which is needed annually to purify the community of its sins and allow it to start over again. Eman at the beginning denies to take the responsibility from his father. So he leaves his community and becomes stranger in the another community. Those who are of the strong breed do not escape their fate. Eman becomes ready to sacrifice himself to carry away sins of that community. After that, he takes the responsibility from his father. He says, 'I shall go with you' (1192). He further says, "Wait father. I am coming with you . . . wait . . . wait for me, Father . . ." (1192). Thus, the aforementioned saying obviously states that, Eman accepts the responsibility from his father to sacrifice for the community.

In *Buried Child*, Dodge transmitted his responsibility to Vince, who assumes the role of Tilden and Halie's offspring, the child who is buried on the arid land. Vince accepts the responsibility given by Dodge. Vince says, "This is my house, now, ya know? All mine. Everything" (1227). In the terms of the *Strong Breed*, Vince can be thought as a "carrier," willing or unwilling. When Dodge bequeaths the house of Vince he seals Vince's fate. During the course of play, we begin to see that a change is at the hand. The rains have come. Halie, who doubted the existence of the corn, calls down at the end of the play, "It's like a paradise out there, Dodge. You oughta' take a

look. A miracle" (1227). But the old king Dodge, is dead. Vine has come to take his place.

*The Strong Breed* examines the interrelationship of ritual and community in the African culture. In the play, we can find two communities, one of Eman's father and the other of Jaguna and Oroge's. In the community of old man, there is a tradition of carrying the boat to the river year after year and wax stronger to carry away the evils of the community by the strong breed. Strong breed are those persons who can sacrifice themselves needed yearly to purify the community of its sin and guilt. In the play Eman and his father belong to strong breed. Eman's father says to Eman, "Ours is a strong breed, my son. No woman survives the bearing the strong ones. Son, it is not the mouth of boaster that says he belongs to the strong breed. It is the tongue that is red with pain a block with sorrow" (1186/87). The community's sacrifice symbolizes the opening (starting) of new year.

In the community of Jaguna and Oroge there is a tradition of choosing a stranger as "carrier" who can take away the burden of the community's sin. In the community, Ifada and Eman are strangers. Ifada denies to sacrifice but Eman sacrifices himself willingly to carry away the evils and guilt of community. In both the community, we find the tradition of sacrifice for the betterment of the community. In *The Strong Breed*, we find Yoruba music and dance. We can also find the traditional Yoruba images such as the effigy – the carrier doll – and the appearance of human carrier in the form of Ifada. Traditional music and dance is the soul of play. Sometimes we can listen to the hooting with a rhythmic patterns; sometimes we can listen to the sound of drumming. The music indicates the changes in the scene of the play. The Oriki by Jaguna is very remarkable in the play, "When Jaguna sets the trap, even elephants pay homage – their trunks downwards and one leg up in the sky. When

the carrier steps on the fallen twigs, it is up in the sacred tree with him" (1191).

Dragging effigy in the ground and hanging it in the tree also show that the play is full of Yoruba image.

*Buried Child* deals with the rural American family, incest, murder and sin. We can see the rootlessness of the family in this play. In the beginning of the play we see Dodge, a sick old man, sitting on an old green, sofa and watching the T.V. The rundown wooden house of Dodge family shows the rural American life style. Once they were well established family. Dodge produced much enough for their family from the farm. They were producing enough milk for them. All of a sudden, Halie becomes pregnant. We see the incest relationship with Halie and Tilden. The well established family of Dodge ruined due to the Halie's immoral behaviour with her own son Tilden. Halie and Tilden look after the baby but Dodge didn't like it. He didn't like to pretend that he is father of this baby among his neighbours. So he drowned and buried the baby nearby his farmhouse. Dodge murdering and Halie's incest with Tilden destroyed the family. Dodge stops to work in the farmhouse. The farmhouse turned in to barren land due to the Dodge's and Halie's sin. This sin and murder of Halie and Dodge makes the family rootlessness and boundlessness. Dodge' stops working in the farm, Tilden left the house and Halie walks freely with father Dewis without thinking about other family members.

In a nutshell, *The Strong Breed* and *Buried Child* are grounded in myth, which hope for the renewal. The responsibility of father is transmitted to son, in these plays. *The Strong Breed* is based on African Yoruba community and *Buried Child* is based on middle class agriculture American family.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The present research study arrives at the following conclusion, which is drawn in the light of critical analysis done in the preceding chapters.

Wole Soyinka, the first African writer to win the Nobel Prize in literature, employs the Yoruba Myth in his one-act play *The Strong Breed* that hopes renewal of community after the sacrifice of human beings as an Oluwo. Sam Shepard, one of the greatest contemporary American playwrights, employs the Vegetation Myth of the Corn-King in his masterpiece *Buried Child* that hopes for the renewal of land after the transmission of spirit of old Corn-King to the new successor. Soyinka and Shepard, employ different myths in their work but both the myths hope for renewal and regeneration in community and land.

According to the Yoruba Myth, human beings are used as scapegoats to carry away the sins and guilt of the land. The scapegoat who is selected for the sacrifice is called Oluwo. Sacrifice of Oluwo will take away the sins of the community. After the sacrifice of Oluwo, the community will purify all the sins and begin it to start over again. Soyinka has outlined this myth in his own manner by establishing Eman as an Oluwo. Eman is a stranger in the community after he left his own community. As he is a stranger in the community, he becomes ultimate stranger to be an Oluwo after another outsider Ifada protests in confusion and terror to be an Oluwo. Eman offers himself as a willing Oluwo to sacrifice himself for the purification of community. Eman is aware about the idea that, even if the community is unworthy, it saves in purification by the sacrifice of the willing. Eman's willing sacrifice to carry away the burden of the community indicates and arrival of a new year. Eman died for the community and he secured the renewal of it.

According to the Vegetation Myth of the Corn-King, the king's well being guarantees the well being of the tribe and the fecundity of the land. This myth is related to the productivity of land. It indicates the potentiality of regeneration in barren land. As the king becomes old and sick naturally or due to sin committed by him, the land loses its capacity to produce crops and nothing grows. Before the development of this situation, the king must be ritually put to death so that the king's spirit may be devolved to a younger, effective and energetic successor. When this ritual is performed, the barren land is regenerated. Shepard draws this myth in his own manner by establishing Dodge, the family head, as the dying king of his family and his land. The playwright treats Dodge as the Corn-King since his powers are falling and the farmhouse has become barren. In such a condition, there is a lack of a healthy successor to take over the responsibility of Dodge. At the same time, Vince, Dodge's grandson, arrives to fill the gap. At first, he is not recognized by any member of the family but at last, Dodge recognizes Vince as a deserving inheritor and gives him the farm. Vince becomes ready to take up his new role and vows to restore the farm. This ritual process brings magical regeneration of the land as it is pointed out by the reference to rain, corn, potatoes, carrots, etc. which can be taken as symbols of growth, productivity, regeneration and renewal.

In a nutshell, Soyinka has employed Yoruba myth and Shepard has employed the Vegetation Myth of the Corn-King in their plays which hope for renewal. They have employed different myths to show the capacity of renewal and regeneration in African and American societies. Thus, the above conclusion drawn on the basis of preceding chapters helps to prove the hypothesis of this research work.

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