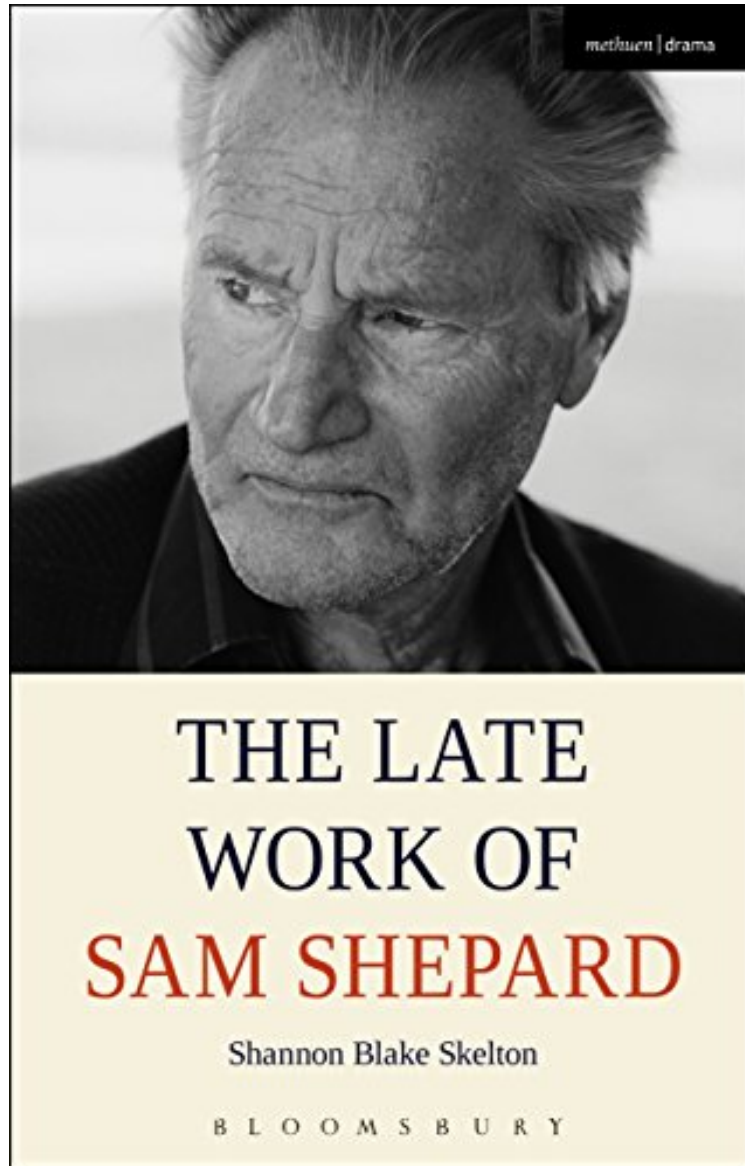


(Mobile pdf) The Late Work of Sam Shepard

## The Late Work of Sam Shepard

*Shannon Blake Skelton*

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**Shannon Blake Skelton : The Late Work of Sam Shepard** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Late Work of Sam Shepard:

Hailed by critics during the 1980s as the decade's 'Great American Playwright', Sam Shepard continued to produce work in a wide array of media including short prose, films, plays, performances and screenplays until his death in 2017. Like Samuel Beckett and Tennessee Williams in their autumnal years, Shepard relentlessly pressed the

potentialities and possibilities of theatre. This is the first volume to consider Shepard's later work and career in detail and ranges across his work produced since the late 1980s. Shepard's motion picture directorial debut *Far North* (1988) served as the beginning of a new cycle of work. He returned to the stage with the politically engaged *States of Shock* (1991) which resembled neither his earlier plays nor his family cycle. With both *Far North* and *States of Shock*, Shepard signaled a transition into a phase in which he would experiment in form, subject and media for the next two decades. Skelton's comprehensive study includes consideration of his work in films such as *Hamlet* (2000), *Black Hawk Down* (2001), *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (2007) and *Brothers* (2009); issues of authenticity in the film and screenplay *Don't Come Knocking* (2005) and the play *Kicking a Dead Horse* (2007); of memory and trauma in *Simpatico*, *The Late Henry Moss* and *When the World was Green*, and of masculine and conservative narratives in *States of Shock* and *The God of Hell*. Lauded by critics in his lifetime and since his death in July 2017 as 'one of the most important and influential writers of his generation' (NY Times), Shepard 'excelled as an actor, screenwriter, playwright and director' (Guardian); this is a timely and important assessment of his work spanning the last three decades of his life.

The best chapter charts all the echoes of Shepard's biography, media persona and actual writings in the variety of film and television roles he has played since his Oscar-nominated turn as Chuck Yeager in *The Right Stuff* ... [Skelton] is also good on Shepard's cultural status. \* Times Literary Supplement \* Shannon Skelton has produced an excellent, insightful, and unique study of the later plays of Sam Shepard. This is an intelligent book, one that is essential for anyone interested in Sam Shepard and the contemporary stage. -- Matthew Roudane, Georgia State University, USA Skelton's *The Late Work of Sam Shepard* addresses a lacuna in Shepard scholarship. Most of the critical attention given to Shepard's work centers on his early productions, and the playwright's waning popularity has certainly contributed to this lack of attention. Skelton (Kansas State Univ.) examines nine works written since 1988, looking at how Shepard's later style reveals, as she writes in the introduction, "a maturing of the Shepard persona" and a willingness to explore "different media, subjects, and aesthetics and ... to pose solutions to dilemmas previously considered yet never resolved." Skelton examines both the intertextual and the transmedial ("a mode of storytelling that transcends one medium and develops on various platforms") qualities of these works. A key feature of the later works is the ability of characters to resolve issues and concerns raised in earlier works: as an example, Skelton compares *The Late Henry Moss* (2002) with *True West* (1980), looking at how the later work solves the issues of personal conflict left unresolved in the earlier play. Offering a range of critical approaches and exhibiting scholarly sophistication, this is an intelligent, overdue contribution to the literature on Shepard. Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty. \* CHOICE \* About the Author Shannon Blake Skelton teaches at Kansas State University, USA.