

## **Sam Shepard Quotes**

I don't want to be a playwright; I want to be a rock and roll star. Sam Shepard, 1971.

I don't know what the American Dream is. I do know it doesn't work. Not only doesn't it work, the myth of the American Dream has created extraordinary havoc, and it's going to be our demise...this notion that not only were we given this land by God somehow, but that we're entitled to do whatever we wanted with it, regardless of the consequences, and reap all the fortunes out of the land, much to the detriment of everyone else...this rampant puritanical class of European colonialism...behind the whole thing is land-hungry Europeans wanting to dominate. The move westward was promoted by advertising with words like "Free Land," "Manifest Destiny"...we always prefer the fantasy over the reality.

I think there's something about American violence that to me is very touching. In full force it's very ugly, but there's also something very moving about it, because it has to do with humiliation. There's some hidden, deeply rooted thing in the Anglo male American that has to do with inferiority, that has to do with not being a man, and always, continually having to act out some idea of manhood that is invariably violent. This sense of failure runs very deep--maybe it has to do with the frontier being systematically taken away, with the guilt of having gotten this country by wiping out a native race of people, with the whole Protestant work ethic. I can't put my finger on it, but it's the source of a lot of intrigue for me.

Language can explode from the tiniest impulse. Words are felt.

Myth speaks to everything at once, especially the emotions. By myth I mean a sense of mystery. A character for me is a composite of different mysteries.

### **About *True West***

I wanted to write a play about double nature, one that wouldn't be symbolic or metaphorical or any of that stuff. I just wanted to give a taste of what it feels like to be two-sided. It's a real thing, double nature. I think we're split in a much more devastating way than psychology can ever reveal.