

## Anti-capitalism in Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*

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### Abstract

Arthur Miller (1915-2005) and David Mamet (1947) are mainly interested with the modern and postmodern social issues of American society. most renowned dramatists due to writing plays like *Death of a Salesman* (1949) and *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1984) which are concerned with the theme of American dream and how the blind faith in it may lead to moral corruption. The two playwrights presents the typical American figure, the drummer and salesman as the representative of a capitalistic system which corrupts the individuality, friendships, and family values. This could be investigated clearly through *Death of a Salesman* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* which doom the deceitful capitalist society by showing the bitter reality of the American dream. Moreover, they also show how the capitalistic system eradicates all human values. The aim of this article is to display the similarities and differences between the two plays. It also shows how these playwrights criticize the capitalistic ideology and indicate to the destructive effects of this system on the human condition. Mamet in his play states that the principles of capitalistic system in postmodern era has become more powerful than capitalism in modern age. These two playwrights' fascination with this dream's falsehood is in accordance with Jean-François Lyotard's viewpoint about the death of grand narratives.

**Key Terms:** American dream, Grand narratives, Capitalism, Postmodern, Modern, David Mamet, Arthur Miller

### 1-Introduction

Both David Mamet and Arthur Miller have attempted to write plays which are mainly concerned with modern and postmodern social problems of the United States of America. The two dramatists highlights the typical American figure, the drummer and salesman as the representative of a capitalistic system which corrupts the individuality, friendships, and family values. They also show how these characters are consumed by the notion of economic success. Mamet in *Glengarry Glen Ross* states that the success in grand narrative of capitalistic ideology comes at steep price eradication of compassion, loyalty, and trustworthiness. While in Miller's *Death of a Salesman* at least has still moral and spiritual aspects. In other words, Willy's pursuit of myth of success is a bit more tragic which can be contrasted to Mamet's play, which is more brutal and faceless.

Although Mamet goes after Miller in making salesmen the metaphorical victims or ruthless, venal, and corrupted capitalistic system, their approaches reflect significant differences in politics and practices, telling more about the decline of morality and the changing nature of principles of capitalistic ideology. Mamet in *Glengarry Glen Ross* presents the salesmen are like some players and are playing in the world of capitalism which has become so powerful in way that the salesmen are not able to communication with invisible owners Mitch and Murray. Those owners who are responsible for legitimating the harsh rules of a Darwinian competition among the salesmen. Everyone is so concerned with the idea of wealth and success that encourages him to commit diverse

crimes. While in *Death of a Salesman*, Willy is still able to communicate with his boss, Howard, not only communicate but also disagree with him.

The aim of this article is to display the similarities and differences between the two plays. It also shows how these playwrights criticize the capitalistic ideology and indicate to the destructive effects of this system on the human condition. Mamet in his play states that the principles of capitalistic system in postmodern era has become more powerful than capitalism in modern age.

## 2-Discussion and Result:

### 2-1 Similarities and Differences in two plays

To illustrating the uselessness of the American dream, both these plays are similar and this similarity is in their depiction of another undisputable ideal, masculinity. Willy's job was so important for him that as soon as he was fired, he stopped to exist. In Miller's essay, "Tragedy of the Common Man", Miller detects the tragic flaw of all everymen as "inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what he conceives to be a challenge to his dignity, his image of his rightful status." (Miller, 1949, p. 1).

Willy thinks of himself as a salesman who has to prosper in his business in order to be considered as a proficient man. Mamet declares that the idea that Willy observes as being effective is the ideal that makes up the masculine personality. Mamet describes *Glengarry Glen Ross* as a "gang comedy about men, work, and unbridled competition" (Kane, 1992, p. 256), showing the idea that masculinity is capitalism, work is money, money is success, success is masculine. Mamet's opinion is basically connected to masculinity, it is a "gang" of "unbridled competition" and Willy's "inherent unwillingness to remain passive" means that he has got no place within "the gang" and so cast aside, the same that is also true about Levene.

Moreover, both playwrights highlight typical American figure, the drummer and salesman as the representative of a capitalistic system which corrupts the individuality, friendships, and family values. Those who succeed in the business world are morally, emotionally, spiritually broken; those who fails to achieve success quickly become offhand.

Naturally those classified as rejects protest, sometimes invoking the very values they have consciously or (in the case of Miller's Loman) unknowingly undermined, but they soon realize they are subject to the same laws of desuetude that are applied to mechanical objects. They have as much worth as the once-flashy, now barely functioning fridge in the Loman household. They are disintegrating old bones in the dog-eat-dog society they have helped to perpetuate. Mamet's play is a bit more on the cruel side, as it shows the level of disloyalty one salesman has towards another in their attempt to justify their claims to financial success. In other words, the dishonesty, lying, deception, and manipulation have become methods in business world. This reduces the play in any way, but rather shows a less humanistic tone that is found in Miller's play. Willy's pursuit of the American Dream is a bit more tragic which can be contrasted to Mamet's play, which is more ruthless and soulless.

However, there are also differences between Loman and Roma, Levene, Moss, and Aaronow; and they are not only the obvious ones. It hardly needs indicating to that Mamet's characters are socially more marginal, their violence greater, their ethics non-existent, that these men are perceived with greater detachment than an anti-hero for whom Miller has claimed tragic status. They are never seen in their family environment and so have even less chance to participate our sympathies.

After all, Miller and Mamet present their plays where equality has been ignored making way for the competitive world as Coolidge (1965) says "The business of America is business" (p. 3) showing that America is not "a land of opportunity" but a land of capitalism. He continues "of course the accumulation of wealth cannot be justified as the chief end of existence" (Coolidge, 2007, p.358). If looking at these two plays, it is easy to notice how Coolidge reached to this conclusion. Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* (1949) is obviously about the death of a man who was a salesman. While

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Mamet's play (1983) is clearly about the "land" and how the salesmen in this play use their skills to convince their customers to buy worthless land. The man no longer exists but has been consumed by a world where business is life. From this point, it is easy to notice how Miller and Mamet present worlds where salesmen struggle to keep their position in society as a consequence of American capitalistic culture.

The aim of Miller's salesman is not simply to sell. The paradox is that, more than any material, Willy Loman needs love, respect, gratitude, and friendship. He is influenced by the old drummer whose funeral was crowded with "hundreds of salesmen and customer". It is difficult to contemplate about the home lives of Mamet's salesmen, since only a few words from Levene suggest that any of them have any personal relationships at all, but the only way that keep them together is the business world. In Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) the American dream was deeply compromised but still had its moral and perhaps even its spiritual aspects. While Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983) had become ruthless and soulless, a Darwinian mix of dishonest contest and voracity.

Both plays stick to the idea that all people are like some tools and are subjugated by an upper power. In *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the salesmen are like some players and are playing in the world of capitalism which has become so powerful that there is no communication. This point marks the main difference between the two plays. In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy is still able to communicate with his boss, Howard, not only communicate but also disagree with him. When looking at these two plays one can see how the American culture performs to the single ideal through modernism. According to Jean-François Lyotard, modernity relies on the grand narratives such as fascism, Marxism, capitalism or any general theory or ideology which intends to establish social order. For Lyotard, these metanarratives used to give cultural archetype, some forms of legitimation or authority, have "lost their credibility" since Second World War. Hence, nobody believed in grand narratives.

Marxism has become dictatorship and capitalism led to the class distinction and eradicated all human values (1984, p. xxiv). This meaning is clear in *Death of a Salesman*, there is an idea of absolute truth even within social context, and order is defined by social context. While in the case of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the idea of relativism is well developed. The disappearance of history, the death of the mortality, a circumstance of capitalism are considered the main features in postmodern age. As Lyotard (1984) claims that postmodernity is an age of fragmentation and pluralism (p.54). Lyotard also believes that the sources of knowledge has come to dominate society and economics since the Second World War. He shows that the position of knowledge has changed in this period.

These two plays can also be compared concerning modernism vs. postmodernism. Although similar in some features, these two are different in some other aspects. These differences can also be perceived *Death of a Salesman* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*. *Death of a Salesman* characterizes the modernist literature that is a style which came about after World War I. It emerged in the United States in the late 1920s. Modernism was the response to the chaos, which occurred because of war and materialism. Therefore, modern writer tries to create meaning out of the disorder through his literary works. He criticizes the modern aspects of his society.

This meaning is visible in *Death of a Salesman*, Miller tries to create meaning from Willy's tragedy. While postmodern writers declare that this chaos is undefeatable, and the only recourse against ruin is to play within the chaos. As Lyotard argues that the disorder should not be mourned, but the only way to resist this corruption by increasing the fragmentation of language games (1978, p.45). Mamet's play presents no hope to create meaning out of pathetic lives of his characters. He shows how the dishonesty, deception, ruthlessness, greedy and robbery have become methods in business world.

Miller presents Willy Loman not only as a typical of 1940s family man. But also as a typical product of American society. The play reflects the need to achieve the identity in a world where the money considers the only acceptable goal. Whereas, in *Glengarry Glen Ross* is different, the family



home has disappeared, the need to achieve success is no longer to be "well-liked"(Miller, p. 25), contrarily, as Coolidge (1965) reflects that the central idea of American culture is business.

*Glengarry Glen Ross*, on the other hand, represents the postmodernist literature which emerged during the late years of WWII and got more importance during the mid-1980s. The way this play is related to postmodernism is due to its degrading a great grand narrative. This play has ignored the importance decline of morality and this is exactly what we can see in this play in which everyone is so concerned with his own benefit that forgets about humanity.

Moreover, *Death of a salesman* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* are two plays that focus on the same theme. Both the plays show the destructive effects of capitalistic system on human conditions. Both Miller and Mamet adopt the same theme but using different approaches. Miller looks from modern lens in his play. He apparently conveys what he thinks is wrong capitalism and even suggest what ideal situation should be, on other hand, Mamet's choice a postmodern approach requires presentation of issue in an objective viewpoint. Mamet does not take a stand to reflect the social problems because there is no single truth. Truth is relative, interpreting according to social context and truth changes from one context to another.

## 2. 2 Anti-capitalism in *Death of a Salesman*

Jean-Francois Lyotard argues that the idea behind modernity is grand narratives. One of these narratives is narrative of capitalistic ideology shares a set of productive rules to give equality for all people to gain wealth and become success in the business world. Lyotard (1984) argues that "the grand narrative has lost its credibility"(p.38). He also shows how the narrative of capitalistic ideology failed to bring the social order to society. As Lyotard (1984) illustrates "capitalism and the rapid developments in science and technology since world war have put an end to grand narratives".

He considers the capitalist society as "a vanguard machine dragging humanity after it, dehumanizing it" (p. 63) because it reduces everything to a lesser being. This narrative of capitalistic ideology is clear in Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Miller tries to show the failure of the capitalism. He explores how Willy Loman has depleted by this ideology and attempts to find a new meaning from him. He shows the destructive effects of this system on human condition. In this play, Willy is consumed with notion of seeking for money and success. This does not only destroy his life, but also ruins the lives of his family.

Many critics consider *Death of a Salesman* as a completely social play which aims to criticize the capitalist society (Finkelstein, 1967; Gassner, 1954; Lewis, 1970). As Eagleton (2001) has stated, modern writers like Miller should do more than "merely reflect the despair and ennui of late bourgeois society; they should try to take up a critical perspective on this futility, revealing positive possibilities beyond it" (p. 48).

Miller in *Death of a Salesman* condemns the harsh rules of the grand narrative of the capitalistic ideology and present a bleak version of American society which strokes an overwhelming fear of failure into the hearts of its members. In the play, the capitalist world does not provide any hope or comfort to individuals who are considered weak. It proclaims and spreads false notions about success and plans to destroy any character who does not cope with norms of society. Miller reflects this point through the conversation between Willy and Howard:

WILLY: There was respect, and comradeship, and gratitude in it. Today, it's all cut and dried, and there's no chance for bringing friendship to bear - or personality. You see what I mean? They don't know me anymore. (Miller, 1998, p.58)

Willy believes that 'good personality' is the key for success in the business world. He is very obsessed by the idealized character of Singleman. He embraces Singleman's ideology of success bases on respect, gratitude, and friendship as he states that to Howard, "WILLY: His name was Dave Singleman. And he was eighty-four years old, and he'd drummed merchandise in thirty-one

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states"(Miller, 1998, p.57). Howard is not concerned in the story of Singleman because he belongs to another ideology bases on money and power. In other words, in a profit oriented society the ideology being capitalistic, the important element concerning the worth of the individual is his productivity. Miller portrays this meaning in a beautiful way through Howard's speech: "Willy's, but there just is no spot here for you. If I had a spot I'd slam you right in, but I just don't have a single solitary spot" (Miller, 1998, p. 57). Later, as the discussion increases when Willy asks Howard to find a place for him in New York office because he is so tired and exhausted to travel any more. But Howard refuses his request when he says: "kid, I can't take blood from a stone"(Miller, 1998, p.58). Howard represents the capitalistic system which has evidently separated him from any human values. Later in the scene, Howard is forced to tell Willy he is fired, he finally recognizes the reality of capitalistic world and he says: "...You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away- a man is not a piece of fruit" (Miller, p.64). Miller criticizes the cruelty of the capitalistic ideology through Will's speech and shows how this ideology dehumanizes individuals and take all their substance and strength away, as if they eat fruit and throw the peel away. In other words, this system consumes the employees till there is more left to consume.

Willy is not the only character crushed under the pressure of the harsh rules of the capitalism. Later in the same act, Biff, Willy's oldest son, affects the father's world of business, sales and success. At the progress of the play, Biff frustrates the routine of getting on these subway on hot summer morning searching for suitable job. As he states that:

BIFF: Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer. (Miller, 1998, p.14)

Biff finally decides to free himself from his father's phony dreams and harsh rules of the capitalistic system. It clearly makes him unhappy. Miller shows that through Biff's speech: "why am I trying to become what I don't want to be?" (Miller, 1998, p.105). Biff also wants to save his father and his son from their false dreams when he reveals his failure to them:

BIFF: I saw him for one minute. I got so mad I could've torn the walls down! How the hell did I ever get the idea I was a salesman there? I even believed myself that I'd been a salesman for him! And then he gave me one look and I realized what a ridiculous lie my whole life has been! We've been talking in a dream for fifteen years. I was a shipping clerk. (Miller, 1998, p.76)

Moreover, Biff continues to tell his father " You were never anything but hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can like all the rest of them"(Miller, 1998, p.98). Biff wants his father to know that he was a victim of the capitalistic society. But his brother Happy still clutches the false values of American myth of success forever. Happy loses everything except his father's "false dream". As he exposes confidently to Biff: "Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had good dream. He fought it out here, and this is where I'm gonna win it for him"(Miller, 1998, p104). As one of the critics, Koon (1983) illustrates that Willy is still under the version of his father (p.37).

Although Happy adopts his father's dream of success, the pursuit of financial success does not lead him to the happiness, as he shows that to his brother:

HAPPY: All I can do now is wait for the merchandise manager to die. And suppose I get to be merchandise manager? He's a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now he's building another one. He can't enjoy it once it's finished. And I know that's just what I would do. I don't know what the hell I'm workin' for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment all alone. And I think of the rent I'm paying. And it's crazy. But then, it's what I always wanted.

My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I'm lonely.  
(Miller, 1998, p.13)

Happy is just alone and lost as his brother and his father. Furthermore, Happy's speech shows that the brutal effects of the capitalistic system on the human beings that encourages greedy, selfishness, and jealous among people. One is expecting progress at the cost of the death of others.

Willy cannot find himself in the harsh rules of the capitalistic society that has defined and limited his life. He at some points in the play realizes how the society works, when he says "...after all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than live"(Miller, 1998, p.78). Charley also reinforces this meaning when tell Willy, "The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell"(Miller, 1998, p.70). Finally Willy comes to suicide as the only way to return his dignity in his family's eyes, he sells himself for twenty thousand dollars which he still sees the money as key for his son's success life. As he says to his son Biff, "can you imagine that magnificence with twenty thousand dollars in his pocket" (Miller, 1998, p. 100). Miller condemns the American society when he says, Willy's suicide is hopeless cry in the face of capitalistic society that ignore the humanity. (2005, p.110)

### **2-2-1 Willy Loman as a Victim of Capitalistic Society**

Willy's hardships are due to the nature of capitalistic American society. In this highly commercial and competitive society, Willy cannot turn down the false pride that is imposed upon him. He believes that the key for success in the business world is 'personality', 'being well liked', making a good appearance and being attractive by others. He highly estimates these suggestions and spends his whole life to achieve his goal but fails to reach into the extreme goal because of his misunderstanding of the concept of success. It is a matter of great regret that Willy confines himself with his self-created illusions and at the end of the day he finds that his illusions comes into nothing and there left only alone. Porter (1969) is one of the critics says: "way he can make his life payoff is by self-destruction" (p. 149). Willy reveals about one of the basic beliefs that it is essential to be well-liked. Willy says that the key for success is "personality". The talent is to be able to convince the customers of one's own worth. This notion repeated several times in the play to show how Willy is fascinated by this belief. This meaning can be touch in Willy's speech with his son, Biff:

WILLY: Bernard can get the best marks in school, y' understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y' understand, you're going to be five times ahead of him. That's why I thank God Almighty you're both built like Adonises. Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world. The man who creates the personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want (Miller, 1998, p.21).

Since the meeting with Dave Singleman, Willy decides to build up his career as a salesman because of Signalman's prosperous career in salesmanship. Emphasizing on Signalman's "personality" and "well liked look", Willy appeals to die a death as outstanding as that of Dave Signalman: "When he died, hundreds of salesmen and buyers were at his funeral" (Miller, p. 63). Dave Signalman's death becomes symbolic because he may show some typical qualities in his service and that's why all were remain present even in his interment. This meaning can be touch in Willy's speech,

"And when I saw that, I realized that setting was the greatest career a man could want. Cause what could be more satisfying than to be able to go, at the age of eighty-four, into twenty or thirty different cities, and pick up a phone and be remembered and loved and helped by so many different people?" (Miller, 1998, p.57).

Miller almost certainly intended the irony implied by Willy's interest in a job that required no more than lifting a phone, but the more frightful irony relates to the explanation of business which Willy takes from Signalman's ideology. Willy looks at only surfaces of reality. His knowledge is based on subjective outlook. What Singleman's achievement symbolizes to Willy is a demonstration



of the co-operative and generous nature of capitalism. Signalman's ability to sell by phone at the age eighty-four was proof to Willy that he was remembered, loved and helped by so many different people. This conclusion seemed to be confirmed by Signalman's funeral which was attended by hundreds of salesmen and clients. In other words, Singleman epitomized free enterprise with a human face and it is part of Willy's tragedy that he never realizes that such a system does not exist.

Willy dreams for, individuality and being love and respect. He wants to keep his position in society as successful businessman and thereby respected and loved, this meaning can be touch in Willy's speech: "someday I'll have my own business and I'll never have to leave home any more" (Miller, p.23). Willy assumes that Ben has achieved the ultimate goal in life and he tries to follow Ben in the dream to be a successful salesman. Ben says: "William, when I walked into the jungle, I was seventeen. When I walked out I was twenty-one. And, by God, I was rich!"(Miller, pp. 40-41).

Yet Willy never finds the diamonds and adopts a 'low man's' life. Willy is dissatisfied in his professional life where "Ben's promise is the promise of all the self-help prophets of the nineteenth century" (Porter, p. 144). Willy's concept of success is embodied by two figures, Ben and Dave Singleman. To him, Ben represents the capitalistic values, who is hard-hearted, selfish, unscrupulous, and full of self-confident. While Willy adepts Singleman's ideology which bases on "good personality". The meaning is clearly in Willy's speech with Ben, during one of his recurring misconceptions:

Without a penny to his [Biff's] name, three great universities are begging- for him, and from there the sky's the limit, because it's not what you do, Ben. It's who you know and the smile on your face! Its contact, Ben, contacts! The whole wealth of Alaska passes over the lunch table at the Commodore Hotel, and that's the wonder, the wonder of this country, that a man can end with diamonds here on the basis of being well liked! (Miller, p.62)

And yet, Willy is puzzled about his own values, for he seems wedged in moving somewhere between the ideology of an old-fashioned business world and modern commercial world. And it is a measured of Willy's insecurity that in the speech he is asking Ben as well as telling him. But Ben ignores Willy's remarks and only sounds the call to action once more: "there is a new continent at your doorstep, William. You could walk out rich" (Miller, p.62). Society constructs Willy's thought and imbues a sense of attaining success at any cost. However the society does not show him the way of achievement and relatively the strain of cost-effective increase in the society makes Willy confused at his situation: "[t]he pressures of economic growth in capitalistic society created the salesman puzzled and these same forces punish the unsuccessful inexorably" (Porter, p.144- 145).

Willy is entrapped by the Economic Depression of 1929. Having failed to achieve the diamond from selling, he becomes a victim of the American success myth. One of the important themes of Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is the struggle to achieve the identity in the world increasingly dominated by capitalistic system: in this world there is no place for love, respect, and friendship. Miller in his play *Death of a salesman* shows the destructive effects of the capitalistic system on individuals and family values. It provides no hope or comfort to individuals who are alienated and fragmented.

It also presents and circulates false concepts about the success and plans to destroy any individual who is out of the society's norms. This meaning can be touch through the conversation between Willy Loman and his boss Howard Wagner. The conversation between Willy and Howard stands for the struggle between the old- fashioned business values and the new capitalistic values and the extreme triumph of the latter. Howard represents greedy, selfish, heartless capitalist, and he belongs to this ideology that believes in "business is business", this ideology which eradicates all human values.

Howard treats Willy harshly and tells him that there is no place for him in the office; it is simply a matter of dollars and cents:" kid, I can't take blood from a stone. "(Miller, p. 37). He fires

him easily without even listening to him. In capitalistic society the employee are treated like a juice fruit and when there is no juice to take, puts the fruit aside. Miller reflects this idea in the conversation between Willy Loman and Howard Wagner that made Willy desperate:

WILLY: God knows, Howard, I never asked favor for any man. But I was with the firm when your father used to carry you in here in his arms. Howard: I know that, with, but---  
WILLY: your father came to me the day were born and asked what I thought of name of Howard, may he rest in peace. (Miller, 1998, p, 76)

But all of this simply irrelevant now. Howard is a stronger and Willy is alone, and the only relevant point is that Willy can't sell anymore. He is a powerless and a victim of harsh rules of capitalism. Later, Willy tells Howard:

WILLY: I'm talking about your father! There were promises made across this desk! You mustn't tell me you've got people to see—I put thirty- four years onto this firm, Howard, and know I can't pay my insurance! You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away—a man is not a piece of fruit (Miller, p.64).

And so Willy beats away powerlessly at the undefeatable ideology of economic productivity. Later, Willy tells Charley that he's been fired: "That snotnose. Imagine that? I named him. I named him Howard"(Miller, 1998, p.70). But Charley only scolds him for his gullibility: "The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell. And the funny thing is that you're a salesman, and you don't know that" (Miller, 1998, p.70).

Howard stands for the firm and capitalistic values, and presenting no interest in Willy conveys how the business world ignores the individuality. Miller shows to the reader the destructive effects of the capitalistic system on individuals. Moreover, Miller in his play *Death of a salesman* condemns capitalist values and conveys a harsh criticism of American society by presenting very dark vision of modernity and capitalism which dehumanizes and corrupts entire families. In capitalistic society, men work to gain power and self-interest, and there is no place left for creativity and individuality.

They have to struggle to keep their position in the society. Willy at some points in the play realizes how the society works, when he says "...after all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than live"(Miller, 1998, p.78). Willy's speech reveals how capitalism exploits everything for its own interest, man must give every piece of strength and work, and leaves him with no money, no reparation, and without any human values. Miller portrays this meaning in a beautiful way through the conversation between Willy and his boss Howard Wagner "...You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away- a man is not a piece of fruit" (Miller, p.64).

In the end, man feels that it is better to die than to live in a world that exhausted and enslaves him.

## 2-2-2Disintegration of Family life

In this play, Loman is both a typical 1940's family man and a representative character of American culture. He attempts really hard to become a successful, famous and rich salesman. He tries to live in American dream. And many problems that happen in this story are the result of this dreams. However, he suffers because he had a flawed value-system. He thought that whoever is well-liked among the people and has an overall attractive personality can easily achieve the success in life. Moreover, he thinks that 'salesmanship' is the best profession through which one can gain admiration, love, social status and success. Millet shows this point through Willy's speech:

WILLY: That's just what I mean. Bernard can get the best marks in school, y'understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y'understand, you are going to be five times ahead of him. That's why I thank Almighty God you're both built like Adonises.



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Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want. You take me, for instance. I never have to wait in line to see a buyer. »Willy Loman is here!

« That's all they have to know, and I go right through. (Miller, 1998, p.21)

But at the progress of the play he understands his faults as he fails to become successful man. However the society does not show him the right path of success makes Willy puzzled at his situation:" the pressure of economic growth in urban society created salesman mystique and these same forces punish the unsuccessful inexorable" (Porter, 1969, p. 144). Willy is captured by the harsh rules of capitalistic society. Having failed to achieve the success, he becomes a victim of the American notion of success.

Because of his work for the same firm for thirty five years, he becomes unproductive for the owner of the company, Howard. Miller reflect this meaning when Howard dismisses Willy because he is an old and he is unable to sell any more, Howard: "Kid, I can't take blood from the stone" (Miller, 1998, p.58) Willy's situation exposes the Lyotard's view that capitalist society as "a vanguard machine dragging humanity after it, dehumanizing it" (1984, p. 63). Willy's dismissal from the company draws his disintegration from unreachable dream. This thing makes Willy fall into disillusionment and he creates his own world. He pretends to be happy in his job: "They don't need me in New York. I'm the New England. I'm vital in New England"(Miller, 1998. P.6).The conflict between American capitalistic values and Willy's values pushes him to self-destruction. As one of the critics, Porter believes that" way he can make his life payoff is by self-destruction" (1969, p.149).

Willy's disintegration includes his family as well. He desperately attempts to transfer his dream to his sons. He hopes them to fulfill a great success which he is unable to do. The method Willy embraces in bringing up his sons has great faults, as one of the critics, Ford (1988) believes that "path is agonizingly descending" (p. 559). Unfortunately, his sons never strive to fulfill their father's longing for them. At the progress of the play, Willy's well-liked ideology does not lead Biff to be successful salesman. Miller reflects this point through the conversation between Biff and Happy:

BIFF: Well, I waited six hours for him, see? All day. Kept sending my name in. Even tried to date his secretary so she'd get me to him, but no soap.

HAPPY: Because you're not showin' the old confidence, Biff. He remembered you, didn't he?

BIFF (stopping Happy with a gesture): Finally, about five o'clock, he comes out. Didn't remember who I was or anything. I felt like such an idiot, Hap.

HAPPY: Did you tell him my Florida idea?

BIFF: He walked away. I saw him for one minute. I got so mad I could've torn the walls down! How the hell did I ever get the idea I was a salesman there? I even believed myself that I'd been a salesman for him! And then he gave me one look and — I realized what a ridiculous lie my whole life has been! We've been talking in a dream for fifteen years. I was a shipping clerk. (Miller, 1998, p.76)

Biff also understood that he had been brought up on false ideals and that it wasn't necessary that a person who is well-liked, popular and has an attractive personality will certainly flourish in life. He understood that his real talents lie in his interests in creative manual labour. Consequently, he tries to reveal his father the actual reality when he says:

BIFF. Pop! I'm a dime of dozen, and so are you! . . .

BIFF. I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash-can like all the rest of them! . . . I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home! (Miller, 1998, p. 98)



Finally, Biff is able to free himself from the false dreams of his father while his father is still in darkness. As he states that "I know who I am, kid" (Miller, 1998, p.98). Koon points to this fact that Biff at least recognizes the inner self (1983, p.55).

On the other hand, Happy who has a well-paid job still suffers from desolation and a sense of being lost; thus, he tries to fill this emptiness by hanging around with many women, even married or engaged. Miller reflects this meaning through the conversation between Happy and Biff:

HAPPY: I know that's just what I would do. I don't know what the hell I'm workin' for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment all alone. And I think of the rent I'm paying. And it's crazy. But then, it's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I'm lonely. (Miller, 1998, p.13)

Although he is crushed under the grand narrative of American dream, he takes the burden of fulfilling his father's dream, as he says to Biff in the end of the play: " I'm gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Loman did not die in vain. It's the only dream you can have to come number one man. He fought it out here, and this where I'm gonna win it for him (Miller, 1998, p. 104).

Linda is the only character that knows the Loman family lives in denial; however, she loves her husband so much that she also adopts his illusions. She has chosen a difficult path and has stuck to it. Indeed it is possible to suggest that part of the power the play can be found not only in the way other members of the family tear each other apart, but in the way Linda attempts to hold them together. She has a painfully realistic insight into the character and situation of the man she married. She knows that the fifty dollars which he gives her as his pay cheque has actually been borrowed from Charley, as she said that to her son Happy, " LINDA: When he has to go to Charley and borrow fifty dollars a week and pretend to me that it's his pay?(Miller, 1998, p.40).

### 3-2 Anti-capitalism in *Glengarry Glen Ross*

*Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983) is thoroughly about the unethical and deceitful hierarchical business system in which those who are in power have vehemently reached power and right to define the legality in the business. These unethical wishes and dreams have almost subjugated the values just to achieve business success. In addition, he tried to reflect his viewpoint towards the place of American dream and its changing implication in his play because it has always been a very important issue for him to talk about the unethical business world. So, the analysis of Mamet's plays, especially *Glengarry Glen Ross*, is an inevitable echo of his criticism of the American society, its capitalist spirit, and loss of spirituality. As one of critics King (2004) illustrates: "*Glengarry Glen Ross* depicts the essential role of the business ethic in shaping American society"(p.95)... As a result the characters in *Glengarry Glen Ross* are grasped in moral crisis, imprisoned between their desire to have land or gain its sale and their long for old value system (p.97). In fact, Mamet is too much concerned with this matter because he believed that the American society has now lost all its connection with the chase of myth of success and because the birth of America was first stimulated by this dream that was supplemented with the honest hard work.

However, the depression period in America and the consequence financial collapse brought about some moral breakdown in the American society. Moreover, it resulted in the American society. Moreover, it resulted in disbelief and hopelessness. Pointlessness, barrenness and loss of identity were among the other unpleasant results of this phase. Mamet's concern obliged him to reflect upon this condition, in his literary works. Thus, his plays mostly flout the insincerities of an American society. Among all his plays, *American Buffalo* (1975), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1982), and *Speed-the-Plow* are of too much importance because of their thorough investigation of the social and economic change that is the result of the myth of success. Mamet's criticism is primarily associated with the capitalist business world that ignores any sign of religion and morality. Bigsby (1985) precisely notes: Mamet is by instinct, a social dramatist – if by that we mean someone concerned with exposing the

myths, the values and the processes of society, with examining the nature of relationship between private and public worlds. (p. 68)

The American dream was once associated with a truthful socio-economic system and morality. However, after the depression phase, this honesty or morality was valued not any more. The need and desire to be successful forced everyone to be indifferent towards the values and morals, turning America into a capitalist business society. This is why Mamet has always been concerned with the competition in such a capitalistic society, greed, loneliness, and alienation in his plays, including *American Buffalo*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and *The Water Engine* that criticize the decline of American dream.

Mamet in his play *Glengarry Glen Ross* condemns the dishonest current society and shows how the illegal and immoral means have become methods in business world. What we face in this play is that the contemporary American society is overlooking all the values and is looking for the success that leads to hopelessness and failure.

*Glengarry Glen Ross* also challenges the American dream. This play is the story of four salesmen working for real estate deals in Chicago. They are so much involved in a competition that they have to perform better than the other ones in order to survive. The company they work for has organized a contest that requires them to act as well as possible to assure an award and monetary encouragements; if not, they are going to be fired ((Tokofsky, 1993). This competition has caused a sense of anxiety, causing betrayal, robbery, immorality, and corruption as the usual strategies to achieve triumph.

As Piette (2004) states "*Glengarry Glen Ross* offers a portrait of a battle for survival, a Darwinian struggle in which the salesmen offer a dream of possibility. In a play about real estate there is, in fact, very little real in *Glengarry Glen Ross*"(p. 78), therefore, "the characters of *Glengarry Glen Ross* are eradicated of any human warmth and compassion and are constantly drenched in an atmosphere of fear, greed, and ruthlessness: the higher the pressure, the lower the ethics"(p. 78). Moreover, as Brietzeke (2007) illustrates: Mamet in *Glengarry Glen Ross* "reduces the world of the play to a series of sales transactions in which the man who succeeds—and it is the man's world—is the one who can successfully close the deal and exert his will upon a victim . . . . How much money they make, what cars they drive, if they're married or not, where they live . . . and how many kids they have remains a mystery" (pp. 125-6). As Bigsby (2004) says: "In a utopian society such as America only the past and the future offer a true form. . . . In between is a provisional world in decline, reaching for a perfection beyond immediate reach, existing between impure nostalgia and importunate hope" (p. 20).

In *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the search for the American dream is regarded as a significant point for every character. However, they become so obsessed with reaching success that they are ready to commit any crime and so, they ignore any kind of morality, causing the audience to become aware of the dark and bitter side of the American dream because as it is suggested by Mamet, there is an absolute absence of spiritual, religious and ethical values in the current American society for those pursuing the American dream. As Kane (1992) declares:

(*Glengarry Glen Ross*) is a play about a society with only one bottom line: How much money you make, the play concerns how business corrupts . . . American capitalism comes down to one thing . . . The operative axiom is 'Hurrah for me and fuck you.' Anything else is a lie. (p. 123)

As it mentioned above, Lyotard shows that even the sources of knowledge has changed in postmodern era, so it has the nature of social bond, practically as it clear in society's institution of knowledge. Moreover, in postmodern era, Knowledge has become mainly a saleable commodity. Knowledge is produced to be sold. This meaning is vivid in Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*. The office in *Glengarry Glen Ross* is one of capitalistic institution of knowledge. Mitch and Murray are the



invisible owners of the company. They are responsible for establishing the rules of this ideology among the salesmen.

The first rule is the one who can achieve the high profit for the company wins a Cadillac, the runner-up gains a set of steak knives and the rest will be fired. In such a competitive environment there is no communication because every character thinks only to his own success which depends upon his colleagues' failure; for instance, Levene questions Williamson about his motives to report him to the police, Williamson response, "Because I don't like you" (Mamet, 1982, p.62). By the same token, J. Ronald Oakley asserts that the Americans are "consumed by desires for status, material goods, and acceptance, Americans apparently had lost the sense of individuality, thrift, hard work, and craftsmanship that had characterized the nation" (Oakley, 1960). Oakley also notes that this money-oriented America is the result of World War II and that it "exacerbated the ethical shift as a consumer culture blossomed and Americans became preoccupied with material goods" (Oakley, 1960).

Moreover, one of the critics, Klaver shows that Cadillac stands for an "excess, not as an excess of speed but as an excess of competition, the Cadillac as the ecstatic prize of American middle-class success" (173). For the successful salesman, a Cadillac car is not just a reward. It is significant motif. It is a vehicle that motivates the winner to do everything to become in the top. It magnifies money and saves time and efforts for more business deals. Hence, the car stands for the growth of the company and motivation for the salesmen. While the second prize salesman is more oppressed than rewarded: for him, success is always in question. "Here, the term *cutthroat* takes on new significance; it is no coincidence that the second prize ... is a set of knives.

Betrayal is always a possibility, and a metaphorical knife in the back is a likely outcome of a botched deal or error" (Dean, 1996, p. 47). The second prize is a form of warning for the salesman who comes second: position a step below, he will be cruelly stabbed by a cook's knife. The failure is impossible for those salesmen. Homey (1989) says: "the chances of failing are much greater than those of succeeding, and because failures in a competitive society entail a realistic frustration of needs. They mean not only economic insecurity, but also loss of prestige and all kinds of emotional frustrations (p.285).

The competition is a well-ordered model for a brutally capitalistic society. Since priority is given to the successful, this is a world in which success breeds success. Dean (1989) states this meaning:

The premise upon which *Glengarry Glen Ross* is based is, in a way, a paradigm of capitalism.... That the successful salesman is given the best leads while the runners-up are forced to accept inferior leads from the 'B' list or are even dismissed underlines the unfairness of a system that penalizes those, who are weak and needy but rewards those, who least need such support" (p.192).

The suitable answer to such a competition is what Levene says, "That's fucked. That's fucked" (Mamet, 1982, p.15). As one of the critics, Chevey (1992) claims that, "The true villain of the play (and this accounts for its great success) is the *system*, not the tribe of hustlers who implement it by cheating others out of their hardearned saving. (p. 106)

In addition, Mamet tells Roudane that his thematic concerns are obvious. They are an accusation of the system that pushes the salesmen to commit diverse crimes:

The play concerns how business corrupts, how the hierarchical business system tends to corrupt. It becomes legitimate for those in power in the business world to act unethically. The effect on the little guy is that he turns to crime. And petty crime goes punished; major crimes go unpunished. (Mamet, pp. 178-179)

Mamet in *Glengarry Glen Ross* does not direct to people like Levene, Roma, Moss and Aaronow. It is mainly directed to Mitch and Murray or rather to the system as a whole. Shelly Levene,



Ricky Roma, Dave Moss, and George Aaronow are the real estate agents and the main characters of *Glengarry Glen Ross*. These four characters are different from each other; for example, Levene was in the past, 'the machine' but now he is the victim of his hard luck and is always pressed to save his career and life. On other hand, he is unsuccessful salesman because he is not able to convince his customers. This thing can be seen from his first line in which muttering out seven words and pauses before he can complete his sentence. Therefore, he is not suited to the business world. Even he does anything that might help him to be successful salesman, but he fails and all attempts end up hastening his professional demise. As the next character, Roma is a successful salesman in his forties and at the top of his career because he is cunning, manipulative, liar and knows very well how to persuade his clients. John Williamson is their manager. The salesmen do not like him since he is a paid man who has to follow the orders of the possessors, Mitch and Murray. This character is the one who gives the salesmen their leads.

At the play's climax, Levene asks Williamson why Williamson is going to report him to the police, and Williamson responds, "Because I don't like you." This response is borne partly of Levene's having recently insulted Williamson, this meaning can be touch when Levene describes him as "white breed" (Mamet, 1982, p.77). He sits in the office distributing leads while they are out in the real world, in Levene's words, walking up to the doors of people they do not know and "selling something they don't even want" (Mamet, 1982 p. 47), but it is also because Levene has been producing an air of failure from the start of the play, and Williamson, a businessman himself, has been trained to fear and hate failure.

Dave Moss is another prosperous salesman. He is very aggressive and this anger is what makes him successful. However, Roma is superior to him because of his talent in speaking. George Aeronow is like Levene and about to get canned for his weakness in their business. He can easily be overcome by violence. These are the major characters in the play and are employed expertly by Mamet to convey the main themes.

All these characters are so concerned with their competition that they don't care about anything like humanity or morality; for example, Levene who used to be of great aid for his colleagues now is completely alone. This situation just happened to Willy because just like Levene, he would serve his company for a very long time but now he is fired by his boss who considers him as a useless worker. Arthur Sainer (1975) illustrates:

Miller's Willy Loman feels worthless because he judges his own being according to the standards of market place. But Mamet's little business monsters have neither time nor any place for emotions in their dealing. (p. 13)

We can see how Mamet portrays the difference between the weak and the strong people through the success of Roma and failure of other characters. It is truly shown how in a capitalist society someone like Roma who represents the powerful and rich becomes more successful and richer while the weaker side faces more failures. It is true that everyone is encouraged by the American dream, but they are so involved in it that they become greedy with no respect for human values. The dialogue between Roma and Aranow shows how the human feelings are completely absent, when Roma asks Aaronow, "How are you?" (Mamet, 1982, p.35) Aaronow observes that Roma's question had nothing to do with his health when he says "I'm fine. You mean the *board*? You mean the *board* . . . ?" (Mamet, 1982, p.35). Moreover, when Aaronow says, "...I'm fucked on the board ... .I can't close 'em" (Mamet, 1982, p.35), Roma feels comforted and self-satisfied.

Moss and Aaronow feel insecure and anxious that their sales numbers are so low that they will be unable "to get on the board" (Mamet, 1982, p.29) and consequently will lose their jobs. They decide to steal the leads because they consider robbery as the only way to keep their job. These two know that stealing is immoral, but they think it is the best way to achieve success. One of the critics, Roudane (1996) believes that "the pursuit of money under the guise of free enterprise becomes a

simple excuse to deceive and steal" (p. 369). Bigsby (2004) also comments on the unethical society of the business world and proclaims:

*Glengarry Glen Ross* offers a portrait of a battle for survival, a Darwinian struggle in which the salesmen offer a dream of possibility. In a play about real estate is, in fact, very little real in *Glengarry Glen Ross*... This is the play about trust and trust betrayed, about dreams cynically manipulated ... the characters are deprived of any human warmth and are constantly steeped in an atmosphere of crime, fear, insecurity and ruthlessness: the higher and pressure, the lower the ethics. (p. 78)

Another critic, Nightingale (2004) states:

The jungle law which prevail in the real—estate office itself. Mamet stated that "three cheers for me, to hell with you" is the operative axiom of American business. He has gone still further, saying that in a culture founded on the idea of strive-and- success, "your extremity is my opportunity...it's American business. He has gone still further, saying that in a culture founded very divisive...Economic life in America is a lottery. Everyone's got an equal chance but only one guy is going to get to the top. 'The more I have the less if you do not exploit the possible opportunities. (p. 90)

The cruelty of the business ethics causes the salesmen to absorb the spirit of competition. The grand narrative of capitalistic ideology has destroyed all human values and turns them into machines having no feelings. Their greed makes them incurious and inimical to one another. Each salesman appeals to practice power over the others. Hence, the world depicted in the play is a Darwinian jungle where survival of the fittest or rather the greediest is the dominant motto. As a result, the personal relationships among them are so breakable that each one feels disintegrated, alienated and fragmented. This is a notion shows why Lyotard criticizes capitalism and he considers the capitalist society as "a vanguard machine dragging humanity after it dehumanizing it" (1984, p.63) because it reduces everything to a lesser being.

### 3.2.1 "Always Be Closing": Masculinity and Capitalistic System

The grand narrative of masculinity claims a set of rules that determine the salesman's identity. As it stated before. According to Lyotard, knowledge and power are the same sides for the question, who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided. This meaning is vivid in *Glengarry Glen Ross*. The office in of *Glengarry Glen Ross* is one of the postmodern institution of knowledge and this knowledge is legitimated by the invisible owners, Mitch and Murray who are responsible for establishing these rules. The first rule is what Levene says to Williamson "A man's his job" (Mamet, 1982, p.46). It is significant that being a man is conditional on doing a job. This process is the core of the man's identity. Tuttle illustrates that, "Levene ... must ultimately recognize that his acceptance of the proposition that 'a man's his job' (p. 75) effectively eliminates his own sense of identity, and with it, morality" (p. 168). Making use of his belief and observing his present status on the sales board, Levene is not a man at present. As a result, Levene's words reveal his self-delusion: his longing for the past leads himself into the wrong conviction that he is manly enough. He cannot communicate correctly even with himself.

Masculinity is firmly dealt with the American dream. The characters of this play know that they have to act in an independent way. Thus, they just concentrate on how they may get authority over the others. As I said earlier, the plot of *Glengarry Glen Ross* is chiefly about the myth of the American dream in which the capitalist bosses make four real estate salesmen against each other, as Nightingale (2004) states, "economic life in America is a lottery. Everyone's got an equal chance but only one guy is going to get to the top. 'The more I have the less you have'. So one can only succeed at the cost of the failure of another" (p.95). They challenge and compete very hard in order not to be removed from this competition; because it is for them the matter of maintaining not only a safe place in the firm but their sense of masculine identity.

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Hence, *Glengarry Glen Ross* is a bitter but real depiction of a capitalist business world that degrades what is meant by the American dream because it opposes equality and the fact that success is the result of the hard work. The work ethic and equal chance are opposed, and we have got a dog-eat-dog competition. They are ready to trick not only their customers, but also Mamet shows that these men are likely to betray each other for their own profit. As Piette (2004) illustrates "*Glengarry Glen Ross* offers a portrait of a battle for survival, a Darwinian struggle in which the salesmen offer a dream of possibility. In a play about real estate there is, in fact, very little real in *Glengarry Glen Ross*"(p. 78), therefore, "the characters of *Glengarry Glen Ross* are deprived of any human warmth and compassion and are constantly drenched in an atmosphere of fear, greed, and ruthlessness: the higher the pressure, the lower the ethics"(p. 78).

This is surely true of the salesmen in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, who indubitably identify themselves by capitalism and competition. The world of business, therefore, is essentially connected to masculinity. In fact, much of the language in *Glengarry* uses the logical, masculine terms of the business world. Zeifman (1992) comments to reflect this idea, "Always be closing (Mamet, p.45)," the slogan of Mamet's salesmen, and the quotation that appears in the book's epigraph. He says: "Always be closing" might also stand as Mamet's credo in *Glengarry*. For Mamet has once again "closed" this play about American business to women, excluding the "feminine" and its reputed values from the sphere of dramatic action; once again there is no place for such values in a world ruled by machismo (p. 132).

Roma tries to persuade Lingk, Roma's mark, that Lingk's decision to withdraw on their real estate deal is unwise. Roma (the youngest, and currently the most successful salesman of the group) uses the language of the boardroom to convince him to revolt against his wife's wishes. He tells Lingk, "You have a contact with your wife. You have certain things you do jointly, you have a bond there . . . and there are other things. Those things are yours. You needn't feel ashamed, you needn't feel that you're being *untrue* . . ." (Mamet, 1982, p. 93). Marriage is reduced to a "contract," a business transaction—like buying real estate; the world outside of this male universe stops to exist, and when its values do intrude, as in the case of Lingk's unnoticed wife, it is viewed with doubt and scorn. The conversation between Roma and Lingk is an example of a cunning salesman.

LINGK: But we have to before Monday. To get our money ba

ROMA: Three business days. They mean three business days.

LINGK: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

ROMA: I don't understand.

LINGK: That's what they are. Three business if I wait till Monday, my time limit runs out.

ROMA: You don't count Saturday.

LINGK: I'm not.

ROMA: No, I'm saying you don't include Saturday in your three days. It's not a business day.

LINGK: But I'm not counting it. (Pause.) Wednesday. Thursday. Friday. So it would have elapsed.

ROMA: What would have elapsed? (Miller, p.51).

Roma is pretending not to understand what Lingk's saying. Roma is masterful at intricate psychological cons, but in this part he resorts to the simplest, silliest form of trickery to try to fool Lingk. Lingk's wife has told him that, by law, he has three days in which he is allowed to remove the deal that he has signed with Roma the previous night. Roma is trying to delay discussing this matter with Lingk till Monday, when it will be too late for Lingk to break the deal. Lingk, however, is aware of this timeframe. Roma ludicrously tries to convince Lingk that he is incorrectly including Saturday as a business day when Lingk knows that he is not. When this technique does not work, Roma pretends that he is confused. Though most of the characters in the play are planning deceptions and frauds, this is the most plain-faced example of an endeavored deceive. What Roma is doing here to

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Lingky lying to him and confusing him. Lying, deception, manipulation, and cheating have become methods in business world.

The play socially defined qualities of masculine versus feminine behavior and values. Roma laments to Levene:

I swear it's not a world of men, Machine ... it's a world of clock watcher, bureaucrats, officeholders ... what it is, it's a fucked up world ... there's no adventure to it. Dying breed. Yes it is. We are the member of a dying breed (Mamet, p. 105).

During the play, the salesmen define themselves as "men," as if salesmen were a choice order of people, as Roma states it here, near the end of the play, a "dying breed." They are speaking not just of gender, of course, though that is relevant; there are women offstage in the play, and the only woman who has any bearing on the action is Mrs. Lingky, whose feminine authority to dominate her husband makes her an adversary for Roma. Self-determination appears to be the main definition of masculinity. The "clock watchers, bureaucrats, officeholders" (Mamet, 1982, p.62) that Roma describes are not true men: they take orders and their personality has little bearing on their work. Like Williamson, non-salesmen are despicable "company men," mere cogs in a corporate machine. There is, of course, an irony in complaining of the disappearance of true men to someone who is nicknamed "Machine": Levene's former success is related with ruthlessness.

Mamet shows that Levene, at the height of his success, determined his own fate but did so mechanically. If a "Machine" can be a true "man," then the definition of manhood in this world has less to do with compassion or self-confidence or integrity than it does with the ability to succeed. The conversation between Levene and Williamson, the boss of the company, implied that Williamson is not a man at all. "A man's his job you're *fucked* at yours.... You can't run an office.... You don't have the *balls*" (Mamet, 1982, p.46) Levene tells Williamson that his job is merely to take orders from Mitch and Murray and give those orders to salesmen. He says:

LENE: That's cold calling. Walk up to the door. I don't even know their *name*. I'm selling something they don't even *want*. You talk about soft sell ... before we had a name for it ... before we called it anything, we did it" (Mamet, 1982, p.47).

Levene states this fact that Williamson is not able to work with men. Williamson's position of power (and masculinity) is given him by the capitalist owners (Mitch and Murray), and therefore, Williamson has no need to respond since he is inoculated from the competitive environment of the salesmen. Roma also emasculates Williamson because Williamson removes a deal between Roma and Lingky.

ROMA: You stupid fucking cunt.... You cost me *six thousand dollars*.... And one Cadillac. Where did you learn your *trade*? You stupid fucking *cunt*. You *idiot*. Whoever told you, you could work with *men*? (Mamet, 1982, p.57).

Roma and Levene believe that being good at work means you are a man. The failure is impossible in the salesman's world. The salesman must exploit and control his clients. As Levene says, "I'm selling something they don't even *want*" (Mamet, 1982, p.47). The business world bases on exploitation and it is the essence for one's identity. If you are exploitative enough, you have correctly achieved identity and vice versa.

Because Mamet's characters are not just men, but *salesmen*, they are formed by American capitalism. While there are similarities between Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *Glengarry*, the most apparent similarity is the contention that both Willy Loman and the salesmen in *Glengarry* are consumed by the notion of economic success. But success in this capitalistic context comes at an abrupt price the obliteration of sympathy, faithfulness, and honesty. The discourse of capitalism is transformed into what Jonathan Cullick (1994) has called the "discourse of competition," a linguistic environment created by the need to gain (p. 23). This transformation is made obvious through the characters' use of language and their ability to manipulate, cheat, and lie others.





Mamet portrays the office in his play like pure capitalistic society. Every salesman is very interested in the idea of wealth and success that motivates him to forget the human values. It is built on, the top salesman gets a Cadillac and to other extreme the bottom salesman gets dismissed. In some way this system is brutal and ruthless, destroying all human relationships. At the end of the play, Lenene asks Williamson about his stimulates to report him to the police, Williamson response, "Because I hate you"(Mamet, p.62). Mamet (1987) believe that: "This capitalistic dream of wealth turns people against each other ... we are finally reaching a point where there is nothing left to exploit. The dream has nowhere to go so it has to start turning in on itself"(p.14). Finally, the bribable, greedy salesmen of Mamet's play are representations of masculinity gone diverted; the ideological powers of capitalism with its emphasis on unbridled competition, deception, and manipulation. Mamet proposes, increase the predatory nature of masculinity.

### 3.2.2 Deception, Manipulation, Lying, and Robbery as Demands of Capitalism:

*Glengarry Glen Ross* produces four distressed salesmen who work with a real estate office in Chicago which is managed by a cold manager, Williamson, who hands them out leads and sends them out to convince naïve customers to buy worthless land in Florida. The play proves how for these men all human relationships are narrowed down to business transactions and how their lack of morality pushes them to commit diverse crimes such as robbery, lying, deception and manipulation. As Hayman (1994) illustrates:

Cleverly and disturbingly, Mamet plays with the idea that the difference between robbery and Chicago salesmanship is only a difference of degree. These hardboiled real-estate salesmen have no moral scruples; and what they are selling has no value—tracts of undeveloped land which cannot be developed. The only commodity that has value—for them—is the “lead,” the contact with the potential buyer. Some leads are valueless, the value of the lead depending on the wealth and gullibility of the client. (p. 228)

However, despite their impoverished from the beginning of the play we clearly observe that the salesmen are under severe pressure more than any other time since half of them are at the edge of failure. This is because Mitch and Murray, the owners of the company, have announced a sales contest according to which the top seller wins a Cadillac, the runner-up wins a set of steak knives and the other two get fired. On other hand, Nightingale (1994) describes the situation that the salesmen are trapped in: “It happens in and around a real estate office in Chicago, a jungle-within-a-jungle where the only unalterable law is starkly Darwinism. Sell and survive; fail, and be fired” (p. 331).

It shows that the salesmen not only deceive the gullible clients, but also they lie on each other whenever they get a chance. Moss cunningly tries to encourage Aaronow to rob the leads from the office and when Aranow does not accept this, he threatens him and accuse Aaronow for being his helper to his temptation, since he listened to the plan: Aaronow demands to know why he has been put in this position. Moss tells him, "Because you listened." (Mamet, 1982, p. 45). In doing so, Moss implies that Aaronow, by having listened, is *already* guilty of a crime. Even if Aaronow does not break into the office. As Bigsby illustrates, their conversation starts off in a friendly tone, and ends with Moss threatening Aaronow as an accomplice to a not yet committed crime, on the grounds that he just listened, AARONOW: “Why? Why, because you only told me about it? That’s right” (Mamet, 1982 p.45). On other hand, Cullick (1994) states the “real crime here is that by listening” (p.31).

Hence language is a trick, merely to listen makes you guilty, and the friendly relationships between the salesmen are apparently a deception, because if there was a relationship, betrayal would not be so clear (Bigsby, p. 220). Cullick also indicates that the salesmen are operated by the drive for the benefit over others and she describes their language as interjectional, oppositional, and omnidirectional, and she thinks of it as a language of manipulation, deception, and self-interest (p.23). This deceitful method could also be seen at the beginning of the same conversation between Aaronow

and Moss, in which Moss, by continually exploring something, but not clearly stating it, tries to trick Aaronow into doing something he does not want to do:

MOSS: I want to tell you what somebody should do.

AARONOW: What?

MOSS: Someone should stand up and strike back.

AARONOW: What do you mean?

MOSS: Somebody . . .

AARONOW: Yes ...?

MOSS: Should do something to them.

AARONOW: What?

MOSS: Something. To pay them back. Someone, someone should hurt them. Murray and Mitch.

AARONOW: Someone should hurt them

MOSS: Yes.

AARONOW: How?

MOSS: How? Do something that hurts them. Where they live.

AARONOW: What?

MOSS: Someone should rob the office (Mamet, p. 23).

Cullick shows that each characters checks the intents of the other by uttering statements of double intention and then checking the reaction of the other, a method that proved to be useful for Moss, as the succeeded in his intention (p.28). According to Nikčević, Aaronow is another loser. He is unable to make deals and he is not on the board anymore (p.94). This is evident in Aaronow's conversation with Roma, AARONOW: "I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm fucked on the borad. You. You see how... I ... I can't ... my mind must be in other places. 'Cause I can't do any..." (Mamet, p. 56). One can conclude that manipulation, lying, stealing, and deception have become methods in American business world.

One of the critics Bigsby states that "the salesmen's own fraudulent activities, by contrast, in deceiving their customers, is regarded simply as good business, sanctioned by the ethics of a world in which success is a value and closing a deal an achievement" (p.219).

#### 4-2 Conclusion

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* follow similar themes. They highlights typical American figure, the drummer and salesman as the representative of a capitalistic system which corrupts the individuality, friendships, and family values. Although both Miller and Mamet criticize ideals of American dreams and capitalistic system, their outlooks are different. Miller looks from modern lens in his play. He apparently conveys what he thinks is wrong capitalism and even suggest what ideal situation should be, moreover, Miller tries to create meaning from Willy's tragic life. While Mamet's choice postmodern approach requires presentation of issue in an objective perspective. Mamet in his play makes no hope to create meaning out of pathetic lives of his characters. His characters do not lament the corruption of society, but they accept it in a way that manipulation, deception, lying, and robbery have become means of survival in the business world. Miller's *Death of a salesman* shows that play is undoubtedly about the death of a salesman who spends his whole life struggling to keep his position in the society, but finally, he discovers that the ideals of American dreams are false and nothing more than lies. While Mamet's play *Glengarry Glen Ross* is about a plot of land, a product that is being sold. The man no longer exists but has been consumed by the world where business becomes life and Mamet also shows that the land of equal opportunities has become a lottery in which one will reach to the top by defeating the others. Each salesman longs for dominate over the others. Moreover, the competitive world of the play is portrayed as a Darwinian world where survival for the greediest.

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