

I. A critique of Sexual Mores: Satire on Capitalism in Mamet's Work.

The present research basically concentrates on the satire and analytical study of language used by the character epically in David Mamet's work *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* to dig out their attitudes to love, intimacy and sexual relations and a hopeless effort to come out from the vicious circle of sex commodified capitalistic city. This research also concentrates on the use of satire to explore the idea that how capitalistic society perverted American youth and led to frustration and alienation along with outward assumption of power and position of confidence of characters help to reveal the character's inner fear and failure in capitalistic society. Finally these two types of analysis try to show how the decadent sexuality is being critiqued. The vulgar and reductive language used in the play by male character and their outward show of confidence and sexual bravado along with their attitude to love, sex and human relationship.

The vulgar and sex dominating language used in the play is the out put of the materialistic capitalism, which plays villainy role and causes to create emptiness between Danny and Dev. They nomore find magic in their life finally their race life ends to tragedy. similarly Bernie and Joan are next young couple ,their life also can't be succeed because of Bernie's exploitative and insulting language upon Joan .so language is the matter of deep study to find out the failure of capitalism. David Mamet is the author of *Oleanna*, *Speed the Plow*, *Glen Garry Glenn Ross* which own him the Pulitzer prize for drama. He has been nominated for three Oscars for his screenplays for *The Verdict*, *The Untouchables* and *Wag the Dog*. His works often dealing with the success and failure of American dream noted for sharp and profane dialogue. By the beginning of the 21st century, Mamet was widely regarded as one of the finest American writers

for screen. Mamet also ventured into satire with the play *November* and he explored the nature of guilt and shame as they relate to racial, sexual and legal issues in *Race*.

Throughout his career, Mamet has treated the themes of belonging, the vagaries of authority, the pivotal role played by loyalty, and the importance of speaking the truth.

Sexual Perversity in Chicago is a play written by David Mamet that examines the sex lives of men and women thrust into the harsh and the lubricious world of dating in 1970s Chicago. The play is filled with profanity and regional jargon that refracts the working class language in Chicago. The characters' relationships become hindered by the caustic nature of their words as much of the dialogue includes insults and arguments. The play presents intimate relationships as a minefield of buried fears and misunderstandings. It is a play for anyone who's been in a relationship, is surfing the dating pool or has had suffered the joys of a one night stand- it perfectly captures the dilemma, confusion and fun of sexual liberation.

Sexual Perversity in Chicago presents thirty-four scenes dealing with sex. The play opens in a singles' bar, where Bernard tells his friend Danny, in graphic detail, about his recent sexual encounter with a woman. Their conversations are carnivalesque dialogues filled with obscenities and dirty jokes. Deb and Joan, the central females in the drama, seem little better off, as Bernard's sexist remarks are matched by Joan's hostile response to Danny. Clearly in this play, Mamet outlines a world in which eros has been defleshed and a fundamental and anxiety-producing loneliness dominates. Near the end of the play, Danny and Bernard stare at women on the beach, and when one does not respond to Danny's coarse remarks, he screams obscenities, which outline the intensity of his frustration and his inability to deal with loss. Sexual encounters, devoid of any genuine love, account for the title and theme of this important work.

Here, in this play *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, Characters live a world where standards are declining and intimacy is displayed publicly languages the characters use is full of obscenities and the sexual meaning of the words they use have become dulled and blunt. The four twenty something –Berine, Danny, Joan and Debarah- trawl through the city’s night life searching for a connection in a world obsessed with image and identity, hardness, artistic liberation, machismo and women’s rights. Vulgarity and perversity forms a dominant part of sexual life. Sex is found on the unlikeliest of places. There is a great focus on the non emotional aspects of sexuality which means sexuality is used for promoting the sale of clothes, food, cars, books and toothpaste. Sex no longer fulfill it’s original function for them sex is a cheap thrill and something that men do to women. The play examines void at the heart of contemporary sexual relationships. The characters are intent on cracking obscene jokes and their exploits are clued and debased.

As we go through the play we see Mamet’s satire up on the contemporary American city, Chicago dating in 1970s regarding sex, love, human relation and the language of middle class which is totally vulgar, reductive and sex dominated. Through the language used by male characters up on the female characters, we sense sexual domination and misogynistic views of playwright. Here, Mamet seems to have failed to maintain the balance between opposite sex. So, Mamet also seems to be victimized of patriarchal society.....

David Mamet is an ethicist. From his initial plays--*Camel*, *Lakeboat*--to those pivotal works that first brought him notoriety--*Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, *American Buffalo*--and from *Glengarry Glen Ross* to *Oleanna*, Mamet explores a delicate moral balance between private self-interests and larger public issues that shape modern culture. Indeed, Mamet is at his best when critiquing the tensions between his heroes' sense of public responsibility and their

definition of private liberties. Throughout his theater, Mamet presents a dialectic that, on the one hand, recognizes the individual's right to pursue vigorously entrepreneurial interests, but that, on the other, acknowledges that in an ideal world, such private interests should, but do not, exist in equipoise with a civic sense and moral duty. This underlying tension produces in Mamet's protagonists divided loyalties. Such tension also gives his theater its particular unity of vision and ambivalent intensity.

Mamet *is* a theatrician of the ethical. His characters, sets, and overall situations, however, map out a predatory world in which genuine communication and authentic love remain distant forces. Hence, Barker's lines in *The Water Engine* ratify, Mamet suggests, the gulf between idea and reality: And now we leave the Hall of Science, the hub of our Century of Progress Exposition. Science, yes, the greatest force for Good and Evil we possess. The Concrete Poetry of Humankind. Our thoughts, our dreams, our aspirations rendered into practical and useful forms. Our science is our self. Such practicality, for Mamet, prefigures a kind of spiritual death on both a cultural and an individual level, that can be seen on the then Chicago city aroused by capitalistic society.

David Mamet, winner of a Pulitzer Prize in 1984 (for his play *Glengarry Glen Ross*), two Obie Awards (1976, 1983), and two New York Drama Critics Circle Awards (1977, 1986) among many others, is regarded as a major voice in American drama and cinema. He animates his stage through language, a poetic idiolect that explores the relationship between public issue and private desires--and the effects of this relationship on the individual's spirit. He is known for his wit and comedy, but beyond the streetwise dialogues lie more problematic concerns. The typical Mamet play presents the near-complete separation of the individual from genuine relationships. Mamet replicates human commitments and desires in demythicized forms:

commodity fetishism, sexual negotiations and exploitations, botched crimes, physical assaults, fraudulent business transactions enacted by petty thieves masquerading as business associates, and human relationships whose only shared features are the presence of sex and the absence of love. Although he varies his plays in terms of plots and themes, Mamet seems at his best when critiquing what he believes is a business ethic that has led to the corruption of both the social contract and his heroes' moral values. Mamet's major achievements, then, concern his use of language, his social examination of professional and private betrayals and alienation, and his ability to capture the anxieties of the individual--whether he or she is a small-time thief, a working-class person, or a Hollywood executive.

Born on the South Side of Chicago on November 30, 1947, David Alan Mamet became interested in the theater as a teenager. He worked at the Hull House Theatre and at Second City, one of Chicago's richest improvisational performance sites at the time, experiences that he recognized as having exerted an important influence on his language, characterizations, and plot structures. His mother, Lenore Silver, was a schoolteacher, his father, Bernard Mamet, a labor lawyer and minor semanticist, and though the parents' intellectual awareness of language plainly influenced their son, their divorce seems to have affected the young Mamet even more greatly. Exiled to what Mamet saw as a sterile suburb of Chicago--Olympia Fields--his geographical move seemed all the more complicated because of his familial dislocations. His stepfather apparently (Mamet revealed in a 1992 essay entitled "The Rake") physically and psychologically abused the Mamet family, and it seems as if the world of the theater offered the playwright some form of reprieve and, later, recognition from a tension-filled youth. As a boy, Mamet also acted on television, an opportunity made possible by his uncle, who was the director of broadcasting

for the Chicago Board of Rabbis. Mamet often was cast as a Jewish boy plagued by religious self-doubt and concerns.

After graduating from Francis Parker, a private school in downtown Chicago, Mamet attended Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont, where he majored in theater and literature. At Goddard, he wrote his first play, *Camel*, which fulfilled his thesis requirement for graduation and was staged at the college in 1968. During his junior year (1968-1969), Mamet moved from Plainfield to New York City, where he studied acting at the Neighborhood Playhouse with Sanford Meisner, one of the founding members of the Group Theatre in the 1930's. While his talents as an actor were minimal at best, Mamet's attention to idiolect and its cadence was greatly enhanced by Meisner. After earning his B.A. in literature in 1969, he worked in a truck factory, a canning plant, and a real estate office, and he labored as an office cleaner, a window washer, and a taxi driver. He also became a drama teacher for a year at the Marlboro College (1970-1971) and, after working at more odd jobs, returned to Goddard College as artist-in-residence (1971-1973). While at Goddard, he formed a group of actors that soon moved to Chicago as the St. Nicholas Theatre Company, for which he served as artistic director. Soon, Mamet's plays became regular fare within the burgeoning theater world in Chicago. Such small but influential theaters as the Body Politic, the Organic Theatre, and then the more established Goodman Theatre presented *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* and *American Buffalo*. In 1974, Mamet became a faculty member on the Illinois Arts Council and a year later a visiting lecturer at the University of Chicago. In 1976-1977, he became a teaching fellow at the Yale School of Drama.

Thus, the mid-1970's were pivotal years for the playwright. In 1975, *American Buffalo* opened at the Goodman Theatre and soon moved to the St. Nicholas Theatre; the play won a Joseph Jefferson Award for Outstanding Production, as did *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* that

same year. Moreover, Mamet in 1975 finally saw his work staged in New York City: *Sexual Perversity* and *Duck Variations* opened at the St. Clement's Theatre and, in 1976, moved to the Off-Broadway Cherry Lane Theatre. In 1976, *American Buffalo* opened at the St. Clement's Theatre and Mamet won an Obie Award for *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* and *American Buffalo*. No fewer than nine Mamet plays appeared in 1977 in theaters in New Haven, New York, Chicago, and, among other cities, London. *American Buffalo*, for which Mamet received the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, premiered on Broadway in 1977, starring Robert Duvall. In 1980, Al Pacino starred in a revival of *American Buffalo* in New Haven. Such successes confirmed Mamet's reputation as a new and vital theatrical voice in the United States.

Mamet has written more than thirty plays, a number of sketches, poetry, essays, children's plays, several important Chekhov adaptations, a book concerning film directing, and more than a dozen screenplays. He has also garnered many awards, including a Pulitzer Prize for *Glengarry Glen Ross* in 1986. Mamet in the 1990's has been honored for his brilliant use of language and characterizations that capture important aspects of American cultural poetics. His play *Oleanna*, which opened at the Orpheum Theatre in New York City in October, 1992, and featured William H. Macy and Mamet's wife, British-born Rebecca Pidgeon, has only added to the dramatist's reputation for staging serious plays about serious matters.

Since the publication of Mamet's drama *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, received many critical responses. Many critics view this drama from different perspectives. Samuel G. Freedman maintains that "Mamet's experiential realism to the paradoxical American exaltation of an artist creative rejections" (13). Here, Freedman found Mamet's play expressing American urban societies' paradoxical realism, hypocritical life, race for nothing and modern capitalist society as a creative rejection. Similarly, CWE Bigsby, remarks, "his play feature man as an

endangered species” (48). Through the activities of male character of Bernie and Danny, their artificial confidence and inner insecurity really seems a new kind of challenges to come in their life. So, they used over confidential and dominating language to feel oneself secured.

Likewise, Hellman Lillian remarks:

The Characters speak as if calling for help out of a deep well each is isolated, without real identity. They talk to find it. I speak therefore I am and comic and torching involution of their language is the evidence of their isolation and track lessens. Their world is full of lesson learned but learned of the unreasonable ferocity the cack of shape or instruction of middle American life. (48)

Here, Lillian directly comments on the identity crisis of modern American city. Character speak as if screaming. Through speaking they try to feel secure. Their life is full of learning and experiment but in vein topic. They relate language with self identity and means to avoid alienation.

Similarly, Peter Brunette Views this play as, “The dramatist as being victimized by the male mythology he seeks to parody and overthrow” (2). Brunette directly criticizes the playwright of being victim of patriarchal society. So male mythology is found in his language where women were just shown as an object of sex. More than that intentionally women are reduced to the sex satisfying object.

Whereas, William B. Collins says, “Although Mamet portrays chauvinistic sexist behaviour”(2). Collins here supports the idea of Mamet whatever he showed in the drama, women as an object to satisfy the male. In Collins’s idea Mamet is just promoting their activities.

However, the research does not go against these voices but concentrates to find the language carrying the thrust of satire and masculinity. Using the theoretical modality of the satire and masculinity propounded by Lucile, Horace and others the text analyzed in the full vigor to prove into how Mamet is a hero to propound the decadent sexual mores of people living in urban America of 1970's by focusing in the language and attitude of sexuality and relationships between male and female. The limitation of the research is that it doesn't expand the arena of satire and masculinity while presenting on Mamet's text. The significance of the research is to find the well notion of satire in the work of Mamet that is the milestone in analyzing the situation of the people located in America during 1970s who are satirizing the decadent sexuality and lack of emotional attachment in the relationship that the male endeavour to maintain with their female counterparts.

As a literary tool, 'Satire' is originated in the second century B.C.. It was first used with reference to a poetic form by the Roman satirist, Lucile. The word 'Satire' come from Latin word 'satura lanx' and means 'medley, dish of colourful fruits' - it was held by Quintilian to be a "wholly Roman phenomenon"(173). By implication it means a hotchpotch in literature. A satire is both a specific literary genre and literary manner though in practice it is also found in the graphic and performing arts. In satire, human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony or other methods, ideally with the intent to bring about improvement. Mamet regards:

In a morally bankrupt time we can help to change the habit of coercive and frightened action and substitute for it the habit of trust, of self-reliance, and co-operation. If we are true to our ideals we can help from an ideal society [. . .] –

not by preaching about it, but by creating it each night in front of the audience- by showing how it works. In action. (13)

Mamet argues that with the help of the satire we can bring the change in the habit of people by showing their follies, abuses and shortcoming before the audience and we can correct them. The satirist usually cannot speak openly or does not wish to do as he chooses means that allows him to utter the unspeakable with impunity.

Although satire is usually meant to be funny, the purpose of satire is not primarily humor in itself so much as an attack on something of which the author strongly disapproves, using the weapon of wit. A very common, almost defining feature of satire is its strong vein of irony or sarcasm, but parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently used in satirical speech and writing.

A satire, generally speaking, is an attack on foolish or wicked behaviour by making fun of it often by using humor, sarcasm and parody. Gilbert Holeman defines satire as “a literary manner in which the follies and foibles or vices and crimes of a person, humankind, or an institution are held up to ridicule or scorn, with the intention of correcting them” (293). This manner may be present in various forms of art and may employ many methods. Satire is also applied in magic songs and ritualistic invective in Greek, Old Irish and Arabic literatures, where the ritual curse was believed to have powerful effects. Satire has usually been justified as a corrective of human vice and folly. With regard to a satirist, Gilbert Holeman comments, “His viewpoint is ultimately that of the cold eyed reality, which penetrates sham and pretense for a didactic purpose. The portrayals generally are at variance with outward appearances, but they contain recognizable truth and it is this that gives the satirist his license to attack” (298).

Satire is jokes about serious things. Satire is often comic, its object is to evoke not mere laughter but laughter for a corrective purpose. It always has a target such as pretense, falsity, deception, arrogance, which is held up to ridicule by the satirist's unmaking of it.

Satirists always aim at revealing the bitter truth; no matter whatever motives they may have behind their works. In this regard, Howard Stein says:

In fact, most satirists seem to belong to one of two main classes. Either they were bitterly disappointed early in life, and see the world as a permanent structure of injustices; or they are happy men of overflowing energy and vitality, who see the rest of mankind as poor ridiculous puppets only half-alive, flimsy fakes and meager scoundrels.(241)

Early experiences of life make the people view the world differently. Satirists wish to stigmatize crime or ridicule folly, and thus to aid in diminishing or removing it.

A satire, on the surface, appears to be full of aesthetic feelings or like a romance, but its underlying intentions attack a particular target in a disguise. Satire, according to Abrams, is "the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation"(187). *New Encyclopedia Britannica* defines it as "artistic form, chiefly literary and dramatic in which human or individual vices, follies, or shortcomings are held up to ensure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony or other method, sometimes with an intent to bring about improving" (467). A very common, almost defining feature of satire is its strong vein of irony or sarcasm, but parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently in satirical speech and writing.

Mamet is very successful in capturing the rhythms of urban life in his language, but it is never a simple reflection of what is heard on the streets. Mamet includes female characters in his plays *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* who were taken as a further evidence of Mamet's misogyny who is blamed for depicting submissive female stereotypes. However, identifying the author's personality with his fictional characters is a very limited critical approach. Although Mamet admits being fascinated with the communal aspect of male bonding, he cannot be accused of misogyny since he exposes the sexist language of his male character as an indicator of their powerlessness. Beside Hersh Zeifman remarks:

The exclusion of women from Mamet's plays implies that the values the male characters traditionally associate with the feminine- compassion, tenderness, empathy, spirituality- are seen as threatening to their business ethos; in the business world such values are characterized as weakness, and weakness is despised as effeminate and dangerous. By banishing women and the values they purportedly represent from his plays, Mamet thus shifts the focus to an examination of the cocoon of the traditional 'American masculinity myths' inside which he himself was raised. It is these values of machismo- toughness, strength, cunning- which have become appropriated and apotheosized by American business, alchemized into the fool's gold of power, greed and competition. (124-125)

Zeifman argues that by representing the submissive female characters, Mamet's women constantly resist the labels attached to them, and expose how the male system of oppression works. Within this system they are consistently tried to be made the object of male desire. Yet they both literary and metaphorically escape male capture. In fact, Mamet's women are

revolutionary because they cannot be fixed within male representation. Again Steven Price explains further as:

Mamet ironizes the monomyth: there are no successful love stories anymore. His plays are masculine not because they objectify women but because they acknowledge their inability to objectify them; they question the validity of their own representations precisely because women are the objects of desire; they do not attempt realistic portrayals of women because such portrayals would always be an illusion masking the lack within the protagonist himself. (58)

Here, Price argues that Mamet does not objectify the female characters. Indeed, it is crucial to understand Mamet's view of language to fully acknowledge the role of his female characters. To him, language is not a tool to convey plot or subjects, but it is the very subject of his plays. In his plays language becomes both a central theme and a poetic device. He is concerned with how language affects social interaction, and how it influences the thoughts and action of people. He believes that language is a powerful element that determines the actions of human beings rather than the other way around.

Similarly, the researcher analyzes men's power over women, particularly in relation to the power that men often perceive women have over them. The researcher also analyzes the men's power with other men, and men's power in the society more generally and suggests how these power relationships interact with men's power over women.

Here, the researcher concentrates on the psychological sources of men's needs for power over women. The most common sense psychological analysis of men's need to dominate women, which take as its starting point the male child's early experience with women. The male child perceives his mother and his predominantly female elementary school teachers as

dominating and controlling. These relationships do in reality contain elements of domination and control, probably exacerbated by the restriction of women's opportunities to exercise power in most other areas. As a result, men feel a lifelong psychological need to free themselves from their domination by women.

According to this analysis, the process operates in a vicious circle. In each generation, adult men restrict women from having power in almost all domains of social life except child-rearing. As a result, male children feel powerless and dominated, grow up needing to restrict women's power and thus cycle repeats itself. It follows from this analysis that the way to break the vicious circle is to make it possible for women to exercise power outside of parenting and parent-like roles and to get men to do their half share of parenting.

The first power that men perceive women having over them is expressive power, the power to express emotion. It is well known that in traditional male-female relationships, women are supposed to express their needs for achievement only vicariously through the achievements of men. The second form of power that men attribute to women is masculinity validating power. In traditional masculinity, to experience oneself as masculine requires that women play their prescribed role of doing the things that make men feel masculine.

If we look for the psychological sources of men's deeds for power over women, their perception that women have expressive power and masculinity-validating power over them are critical to analyze. This is the power men perceive women as having, which they fear women will no longer exercise in their favor. This is the resource women possess which men fear women will withhold, and whose threatened or actual loss leads men to such frantic attempts to reassert power over women. Here, Joseph H. Pleck remarks:

There is reason to think that over the course of recent history- as male-male friendship has declined, and a dating and marriage have occurred more universally and at younger ages- the demands on men to be emotionally inexpressive and to prove masculinity through relating to women have become stronger. As a result, men have give women increasingly more expressive power and more masculinity validating power over, them and have become increasingly dependent on women for emotional and sex role validation. (60)

Men's dependence on women's power to express men's emotions and to validate men's masculinity has placed heavy burdens on women. By and large, these are no power over men that women have wanted to hold, these are power that men have themselves handed over to women, by defining the male role as being emotionally cool and inexpressive, and as being ultimately validated by heterosexual success.

In the context of this increasing dependency on women's power, the emergence of the women's movement now, with women asserting their right not to play the role for men, has hit men with special force. It is in this context that the men's movement and men's groups place so much emphasis on men learning to express and experience their emotions with each other, and learning how to validate themselves and each other as persons, instead of needing women to validate them emotionally and as men.

Men's power over women in the final context is in the context of men's power in the large society. At one level, men's social identity is defined by the power they have over women and the power they can complete for against other men. Men's role in economy and the way men are motivated to play it have negative effects on women. The husband's job makes many direct and indirect demands on wives. In fact, it is often hard to distinguish whether wife is dominated

more by the husband or by the husband's job. Sociologist Ralph Turner writes, "Because the husband must adjust to the demands of his occupation and the family in turn must accommodate to his demands on behalf of his occupational obligations, the husband appears to dominate, he perceives himself as controlled rather than as controlling" (66). The wife is bound to her husband by her economic dependency on her husband, and the husband in turn is bound to his job by his family's economic dependence on him.

To summarize, understanding of men's power over women, when men have needed it, and what is involved in changing it, is enriched by examining men's power in a broader context. To understand men's power over women, we have to understand the ways in which men feel women have power over them, men's power relationships with other men, and the powerlessness of most men in the larger society. Rectifying men's power relationship with women will inevitably both stimulate and benefit from the rectification of these other power relationships.

In the society in which we live men are by and large brought up to be powerful, aggressive, competitive and tough or manipulative, and not to show feelings- particularly of weakness. As children, the world is hard on our inborn softness, we learn to endure pain, and to expect rewards and approval for our obedience. We learn to respect the authority that controls these rewards, and so we assume authority over others particularly authority over women, whom we learn to see as inferior.

Historically and developmentally, masculinity has been defined as the flight from women, the repudiation of femininity. Since Freud, we have come to understand that developmentally the central task that every little boy must confront is to develop a secure identity for himself as a man. All masculinities are not created equal, or we are created equal, but any hypothetical equality evaporates quickly because our definitions of masculinity are not

valued equally in our society. One definition of manhood continues to remain the standard against which other forms of manhood are measured and evaluated. Within the dominant culture, the masculinity defines whites, middle class, early middle-aged, heterosexual men is the masculinity that sets the standards for other men, against which other men are measured and more often than not, found wanting.

II. Satire on capitalistic Chicago City in David Mamet's *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*

Sexual Perversity in Chicago dramatizes the urban routines and relationships of four people through 34 scenes in a monologue pattern. The time of the play is approximately nine weeks one summer. The setting as bars, apartments, and offices represents the urban Chicago life. An urban male in his late twenties, Dan Shapiro works in the same Loop office with his friend and associate, Bernard Litko. Their conversation are mostly based on sex talk. On the other hand, the commercial artist Deborah Soloman, a woman in her late twenties, shares the same room with her friend Joan Webber who is a kindergarten teacher. Bernie comes across Joan in a bar, and wants to meet her but Joan openly indicates that she does not find him sexually attractive Bernie assumes a derogatory attitude during the later course of their talk and we do not see the two together again. In another scene Deb and Danny meet in a library; they are attracted

to one another and they end up sleeping together. Later they try to deepen their relationship. When their affair flourishes, Deb moves in Danny's apartment. But as they see each other more often, their friendship with Bernie and Joan gets worse. Bernie starts to have sex talks with another pal, and Joan gets cross with Dev since she leaves her. However, after a short while Deb and Danny start to fight over small matters, and soon they part their homes. And in the end both return to their friends Joan and Bernie.

This dissertation examines David Mamet's play *Perversity in Chicago* with particular attention to the use of language viewing the author and his texts on an almost microscopic level. Since the publishing of *Perversity in Chicago*, has viewed the play as the authoritative answer to every question about Mamet's gender coding. Examining several recent approaches to Mamet's play, research sees that fostering a critical methodology of the author's play should include a reading that neither reduces interpretation to merely familial influences, nor serves to re-codify the author as an icon of masculinity. Toward these ends the research examines the determining cultural factors surrounding the publication of *Perversity in Chicago*, namely the era 1970s, which ultimately played the vital role to pervert the urban youth with the defects of capitalism that of night club life ,restaurant ,singles bar and supermarket culture. Studying this moment demonstrates that many of Mamet's so-called androgynous predilections as well as his preoccupation with masculinity to the point of homophobia and misogyny and the commodification of sex are as much a result of societal forces surrounding his middle-class upbringing as they are the result of any personal influences upon the author. Many of the issues present in Mamet's plays devolve from the tension between a middle-class American culture struggling with its masculine identity and a more sexually permissive culture in the United States during 1970s basically in Chicago. Analyzing Mamet's play *Perversity in Chicago* in light of

this conflict between cultures should demonstrate the determining impact of these cultures upon the author and his work.

Mamet portrays in his works, a disintegrating society that has lost its sense of community, and sense of values apart from the ones offered by a competitive capitalism. Mamet denounces the brutality and ruthlessness of capitalism, and exposes the alienations generated by urban capitalistic life. He is a kind of moralist who regrets the transformation of real values into artificial ones, of humanity into commodity, and the decay of language hardly expressive of real human needs. Given this lack of communality, the loss of the sense of belonging, the theater exists, for Mamet, “to lies at the heart of his plays” (34). Indeed, theater is the place where the ideals come true in action of the stage, and he praises theater as to transcend the individual conscious mind, to put the spectator in a communication with his or her fellows on the stage and also in the audience, so as to address the problems that cannot be addressed by reason.

In his critique of society, Mamet actually aims the American dream rather than its realities. There is a strong sense of betrayal and loss in his plays, deriving from the great American myth that fails to meet its promises. He depicts a nation that has lost its purpose in the hope of the possession of that myth. The creation of that myth, in fact, has its roots in the possession of the continent; the story which began by an act of theft actually follows its course with its successors. As Bigsby points out, “. . . the supposed frontier virtues of a sturdy masculine self-sufficiency that took by force what denied by right are echoed in his plays by people who deploy that rhetoric and dispose those myths in a world that has lost its epic dimensions” (16). America is like a new Eden where its inhabitants fell into with hope to find their ideal, yet disillusioned in the end. However, the irony of Mamet’s characters derives not from a collapse of faith in the American dream but from the persistence of that faith beyond

reason, and from the prosaic nature of the dream they choose to embrace.

First performed in 1971 by St. Nicholas Theatre Company, *Sexual Perversity In Chicago* is the first play that brought Mamet his national reputation, it was voted best Chicago play of 1974, and won an Obie Award for Best New Play after its off-off Broadway production at St. Clement's Theatre, New York in 1975. The play concerns four people, Dan Shapiro, Bernard Litko, Deborah Soloman, and Joan Webber, living in urban Chicago. Apart from the portrayal of Dan and Deborah's friendship with Bernard and Joan, which is apparently representative of gender's relation to society and culture. In other words, David Mamet asks the same question here, "Why don't men and women get along?" (13). And his answer is once more the same; instead of trying to communicate, characters use language to influence and persuade others, and "man, in both their language and behaviour, regard women as objects of conquest, as beings who possess what men want yet refuse to yield it" (30). Ruth and Nick find a way out in their quest since they have defined and redefined their relationship through language but in the city milieu where the acquisition of capitalistic values is the only way to survive, Dan and Deborah can only produce and reproduce the gender roles through language and widen the gap between them. Thus, language is once again David Mamet's central theme in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, as he seeks how sexism is produced within society and culture through language using mostly the media, and examines the nature of verbal interaction between people. When Mamet's characters indulge in the philosophical theory, their language inevitably takes on a heightened, linguistically more sophisticated tone. There is little time for romance or sweets words. Moments of self perception fleeting acknowledgement of life outside sex, are undercut by the relentless pragmatics of everyday life. As earlier bout of Joan's lamentations is interrupted by the unavoidable aspect of modern life:

Joan: It's a puzzle. Our efforts at coming to grips with ourselves . . . in an attempt to become 'more human' (which, in itself is an interesting concept). It has to do with an increased ability to recognize clues. . . and the control of energy in the form of lust . . . and desire. . . (And also in the form of hope). But a finite puzzle. Whose true solution lies, perhaps in transcending the rules themselves. . . and pounding of the fucking pieces into place where they DO NOT FIT AT ALL. . . some things persist. 'Loss' is always possible . . . (pause. Phone rings)

Deb: I'll take it in the other room. (29-30)

This speech is unnatural; it is contrived, pretentious and didactic. Joan speaks as she seldom does at such times, her streetwise banter is suddenly replaced by careful phrasing and evaluated terminology and only once does a familiar obscenity intrude. Joan tries to sound authoritative, impressive and in command of what she avers but there remains a sense that Mamet is satirizing this level of awareness. The Mamet constantly undercuts high-flown sentiments with crass banalities or ringing telephones is perhaps his way of suggesting that nothing these people can say is truly authentic. It is all the manufacture of a false society.

Sexual Perversity in Chicago depicts mid-1970s' urban America, and Mamet himself defines this period as the "jejeune super-sophistication" (30) of the American people, and he presents us an "urban microcosm that is inhabited by rugged, unsophisticated, often inarticulate men" (69). What we obtain from the play in general is the panorama of a degenerate society which has inherited the most negative aspects of 60s' sexual revolution. The lack of true affection and intimacy are predominant in relationships, and physical attraction acts as a substitute for love and commitment. The need for affection is sensitively spelled out in *Sexual*

Perversity in Chicago when Danny, unsure of his position with Deborah in the latter stages of their relationship, presses for a response to his questions in the middle of the night. As he says, “Danny: Deborah. Deb? Deb? You up? (pause.) You sleeping? (pause.) I can’t sleep. (pause.) you asleep? (pause.) Huh? (pause.) You sleeping Deb? (pause.) What are you thinking about? (pause.) Deb? (pause.) Did I wake you up?” (43).

It is plain that Deborah is sleeping, Danny childishly insists upon awakening her. The short, simple sentences are indicative of the insecurity he feels, their brevity and repetition bring some form of comfort to one who craves assurance. As Danny and Deborah’s affair crumbles, each vies for the last word during their arguments. It is their growing impatience with and lack of tolerance for their partner’s position that prompts them into endless verbal sparring. Their quick fire dialogue temporarily disguises the emptiness that lies just beyond their words:

Danny: You know very well if there’s any shampoo or not. You’re making me be ridiculous about this. (pause) You wash yourself too much anyway. If you really used all that shit they tell you in cosmopolitan (and you do) you’d be washing yourself from morning till night. Pouring derivatives on yourself all day long.

Deb: Will you love me when I’m old?

Danny: If you can manage to look eighteen, yes.

Deb: Now, that’s very telling. (41)

This is well-observed and painfully accurate reflection of the absurdity of many arguments between the sexes. Danny blames Deborah for making him be ridiculous about the existence of shampoo, in a neat jump, he shifts the responsibility. Danny ridicules her need to keep up with all the beauty hints in cosmopolitan, at the same time requiring her to look eighteen even when she’s old. Since this is both unrealistic and absurd, it compounds the superficiality of their love

and underlines the all- embracing obsession with physical attractiveness to the exclusion of all else.

Their conversation continues in the similar vein:

Danny: I love your breasts.

Deb: Thank you (pause.) Is that right?

Danny: Fuck you. (23)

Deborah's parody of the stereotyped response expected from a woman prompts Danny to lash back with a coarse expletive. Furthermore the verbal recriminations reach an almost frightening level of intensity:

Danny: Count

Deb: That's very good. "Count", good. Get it out. Let it all out.

Danny: You count.

Deb: We've established that.

Danny: I try.

Deb: You try and try . . . You're trying to understand women and I'm confusing you with information. "Count" won't do it. "Fuck" won't do it. No more magic. (46)

Danny pretends that he wants to understand Deborah but deep inside, he can't really be bothered. He wants to learn painlessly, by a kind of osmosis, not by having to make any effort. Danny now seems to be as insensitive as his influential friend, although he must be aware that her self-defense is to call her a cunt. Communication between them having reached such a nadir, it is little wonder that Deborah should reflect that there is simply no more magic. Nothing either of them can say could inject life into what is now moribund and wretched. Whatever romance once

existed had dissolved, and the sexual attraction that once passed for true love has been reconstituted into something fetid and obscene.

Throughout the play, Bernie and Danny reduce the women they encounter to purely physical dimensions, but this activity reaches its apotheosis in the final scene when they lie on the beach admiring the women who pass by them. It is vulgar tragic and very funny.

Bernie: Hey! Don't look behind you.

Danny: Yeah?

Bernie: Whatever you do, don't look behind you.

Danny: Where?

Bernie: Right behind you, about ten feet behind you to your right.

Danny: Yeah?

Bernie: I'm telling you.

Danny: (Looks.) Get the fuck outta here!

Bernie: Can I pick' em?

Danny: Bernie . . .

Bernie: Is the radar in fine shape?

Danny: . . . I gotta say . . .

Bernie: . . . Oh yeah . . .

Danny . . . that you can pick'em. (51)

As the words are uttered it is clear that Bernie wants Danny to do exactly the opposite, it is essential for Danny to look behind to see the object of Bernie's disbelief. He even issues exact directions. Both men use humor as a means of boosting morale and confirming their macho bravado, thoroughly enjoying their game. Mamet utilizes the mock-irony of remarks like

“Whatever you do, don’t look behind you” (28) to suggest the renewed camaraderie between two men.

As Anne Dean, “Because of the dominating influence of all things sexual, erotica flourished, pornography boomed, and sex could be found in the unlikeliest of places” (51). It is such a time that kindergarten teachers are raped and children are sexually abused at cinemas, and these have become ubiquitous events. The real perversity is the fact that people have forgotten their most humane aspects and offer themselves only as sexual beings. The four characters and their relationships Mamet portrays in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* belong to such a society in which

“sex really has become a dirty word, a sniggering pastime for the easily bored. Rather than fulfilling its original function as an integral part of an emotional relationship, sex is for them little more than a cheap thrill, something men do to women and for which women should be grateful”. (51)

In this capitalistic urban society the only value left to human beings is the exchange value, human relationships have been corrupted, and the existing language is not expressive of real human needs. As Bigsby contends, “What is missing from his characters’ lives is any definable sense of values beyond the material, any clear conception of need unrelated to immediate physical urgencies (49). And people are alienated and lost to themselves. But this sense of loss Mamet’s characters experience does not totally emanate from a consumer society, the forward to their recovery. They yearn for certainty, stability, coherence, and dominance, thus they create fantasies. The first scene sets the tone for the play, it is fast, funny and outrageous:

Danny: So how’d you do last night?

Bernie: Are you kidding me?

Danny: Yeah?

Bernie: Are you fucking kidding me?

Danny: Yeah?

Bernie: Are you pulling my leg?

Danny: So?

Bernie: So tits out to here so.

Danny: Yeah?

Bernie: Twenty, a couple years old.

Danny: You gotta be fooling.

Bernie: Nope.

Danny: You devil.

Bernie: You think she hadn't been around?

Danny: Yeah?

Bernie: She hadn't gone the route?

Danny: She knew the route, huh?

Bernie: Are you fucking kidding me?

Danny: Yeah?

Bernie: She wrote the route. (7)

Bernie lovingly outlines for Danny the details of a ludicrously unlikely story about a recent erotic exploit. Bernie's tale is something of a tour-de-force of sexual fantasy, and the longest and most involved of a number of stories he relates throughout the play. What is ironic is that he wants Danny to believe every word he utters. This hymn to sexual excess is hypnotic not only for Danny but for Bernie as well. Here, Bernie works Danny up into a kind of verbal frenzy merely

by refusing to give him anything other than strongly implied hints of sexual success. Bernie encourages Danny's lasciviousness through his carefully constructed routine, Danny's Breathless 'Yeah?' increases in intensity until one can almost hear his jaw drop open in erotic anticipation.

The alienation these characters experience cannot be eliminated solely by a change in the social system. With the reductive and sexist language deployed by the media, they themselves constantly produce and reproduce the system, that is to say, they are both victims of the capitalistic system and of themselves. Mamet's characters are not only alienated from the product of their work, but also from human life, testifying to Marx's observation:

What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work, and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their and labor, and to the objects of their labor. . . . each man is alienated from others, and . . . each of the others is likewise alienated from human life. (50)

Alienated both from their labor and humanity, everyone establishes an exploitative relationship with the other. People treat each other as commodities, and use power to obtain what they want and meet their need in this material. Possessing and consuming become the sole purpose of their lives, thus they regard everything, including the human relationships, in these terms:

This commodity-man knows only one way of relating himself to the world outside, by having it and by consuming. The more alienated he is, the more the sense of having and using constitutes his relationship to the world. (51)

The very structure of *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* enacts its meaning, "scatological, powered by a neurotic energy, it has the pace of the city – furious, relentless; its style is that of its characters, apparently flip, laid back and hip (51). Episodic with 34 scenes, the play's structure suggests the alienation and dislocation its characters' experience in the fast pace of capitalistic

urban life. Congruent with this relentless urban rhythm, each successive scene takes place in a different location, and locations including apartments, offices, porn movie theatres, and singles bars are highly significant of the city milieu. A number of scenes in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* are set in night clubs and bars, the one –night stand and casual barroom encounter are obviously familiar occurrences for the individuals dramatized here. In particular, the frequenting of singles bars –those peculiarly horrible inventions of the fake friendly American culture of excess- has become a way of life. Early in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, Mamet satirizes the kind of encounter that can take place in such establishments. Bernie tries to pick up Joan as she sits alone in the bar, and he becomes very hostile when she makes it clear to him that she is not interested:

Bernie: How would you like some company. (Pause.) What if I was to sit down here? What would that do for you, huh?

Joan: No, I don't think so, no. . .

Bernie: . . . so here I am. I'm just in town for a one-day layover, and I happen to find myself in this bar. So, so far so good. What am I going to do? I could lounge alone and lonely and stare into my drink, or I could take the bull by the horn and make an effort or enjoy myself. . .

Joan: Are you making this up?

Bernie: So hold on. So I see you seated at this table and I say to myself, "Doing McKenzie, there is a young woman," I say to myself, "What is she doing here?" and I think she is here for the same reason as I. To enjoy herself, and, perhaps to meet provocative people. (pause.) I'm a meteorologist for T. W.A. . . .(14-15)

Bernie carries on in this vein for some time, lying about his name and his job, trying to make his life sound romantic and thrilling until, finally, Joan has heard enough:

Joan: Can I tell you something?

Bernie: You bet.

Joan: Forgive me if I'm being too personal . . . but I do not find you sexually attractive. (pause.)

Bernie: What is that, some new kind of line? Huh, I mean, not that I mind what you think, if that's what you think . . . but . . . that's fucking rotten thing to say.

Joan: I'll live.

Bernie: all kidding aside. . . look it, I'm a fucking professional, huh? My life is a bunch of having to make split-second decisions. . . you think I don't have better things to do. . . . nowhere cunt. . . You're a grown women, behave like it for chrissakes. . . . I mean what the fuck do you think society is, just a bunch of rules strung together for your personal pleasure? Cockteaser. . . . You got a lot of fuckin' nerve. (16-17)

Bernie completely ignores Joan's assertion that she would not be interested in his company, preferring to launch into his elaborate, supposedly sexy routine. His line is an extraordinary amalgam of lies patronage, and soap-opera bravado. Bernie emphasizes the temporariness of his fling by stating that he is just in town for a one-day layover. Mamet's use of the term layover rather than stopover adds suggestive subtext to Bernie's opening gambit, as does his statement that he acted on impulse when he saw her taking the bull by the horn. The use of the word horn in singular rather than in the more familiar plural is surely intended as a phallic quip.

While dramatizing such an environment in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, David Mamet especially focuses on sex regarded as commodity. The singles bar, symbol of urban alienation, is the place where these people most frequently go, then meet someone, and have sex without feeling. In their zeal to consume, people become objects of pursuit and sexual consumers, sex happens to be a power game establishing the other, that is to say women, as the sexual object of a one-sided fantasy that yields men a subject position. The male characters' language is mostly to do with possessing and consuming, and their conversations are dominated by sex talk. The lives of Mamet's characters are as shallow as the fictional lives of soap opera heroes and resemble many aspects of an obscene joke, and the form of *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* is reminiscent of such dirty jokes, especially with the dirty stories told by Bernie to Dan as if they were his real sexual adventures. To make his fantasy sound as realistic as possible, Bernie takes pains to establish the correct location and timing. Danny enjoys the detail, no matter how irrelevant, and incites his friend's erotic imagination still further by uttering neat, monosyllabic asides that will not interrupt the flow of things too much as:

Danny: So tell me.

Bernie: So okay, so where am I?

Danny: When?

Bernie: Last night, two-thirty .

Danny: So two-thirty, you're probably over at Yak-Zies.

Bernie: Left Yak-Zies at one.

Danny: So you're probably over at Grunts.

Bernie: They only got a two o'clock license.

Danny: So you're probably over at the commonwealth.

Bernie: So, okay, so I'm over at the commonwealth in the pancake house off the lobby, and I'm working on a stack of those raisin and nut jobs. . .

Danny: They're good.

Bernie: . . . and I'm reading the paper, and I'm reading, and I'm casing the pancake house, and the usual shot, am I right?

Danny: Right,

Bernie: So who walks over to the cash register but this chick.

Danny: Right.

Bernie: Nineteen, twenty year old chick. . . .

Danny: Who we're talking about.

Bernie: . . . and she wants a pack of Viceroy's.

Danny: I can believe that . . . was she a pro? (8-9)

Bernie wants to paint a picture of the event that will accurately reflect his experience in all its glory and he makes Danny work for the trifles he offers. Bernie creates an atmosphere where neon lights and potted palms endeavor to give some class to what are essentially late-night pickup joints. The sleazy sounding bar and restaurant names add to the aura of Bernie's sexual adventure: 'Yak-Zies' and especially the 'Grunts'. Danny's responses to the more prosaic aspects of Bernie's tale add immeasurably both to the humor of sense and to our understanding of him. Despite, Bernie's linguistic game of suspense and titillation, which both men clearly relish, Danny unfathomably wishes to hear even mundane details. Danny is also obsessed with establishing if the girl was 'a pro' that is prostitute. At regular intervals, he repeats the question: 'was she a pro?' as if this fact would somehow add to the spiciness of Bernie's tale.

Although they speak comfortably of most intimate subjects, these characters are terrified of disclosing their inner self and fears to each other. They are totally isolated, and behind this urban pace rhythm there lies a huge void. As Anne Dean remarks:

The frenetic verbal affrays that the characters indulge in are their way of concealing the vacuum that exists at the root of their lives; the abandon with which they bounce wisecracks and platitudes of one another only partially conceals their desperation. So long as they can continue to joke, criticize, and fantasize, they can delude themselves that they are happy. (52)

The fear of the female, and of female sexuality is dominant in the play. Especially Bernard uses language to conceal his insecurity. He sees women as sexual objects and uses them as the subject matter of his absurd fantasies in order to establish a certain power over his friend Dan. He tries very hard to impress Dan with the stories he tells, but if the fact that we never see him in a real relationship with women is considered, it seems that he is highly terrified of women. To hide his insecurity and fears he assures a masculine posture, and objectifies women through words:

Tits and Ass. Tits and Ass. Tits and Ass. Tit and Ass. Blah de Bloo. Blah de Bloo. Blah de Bloo. (Pause). Huh? (58).

Here and through the whole play women are described in sexual terms with the male definition they become broad, cockteaser, prostitute, cunt, bitch, chick, pussy, and pig and they are reduce to a purely physical level. Bernard's views of women is pornographic and metonymic, his non-sense words also express his contempt for women, in that way he praises himself and hides his fears. But the fact that he asks for his friend's affirmation in the end actually reveals his insecurities.

Mamet has often mentioned that his views of the social contract have been greatly influenced by Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), and such indebtedness in part accounts for Mamet's preoccupation with business as a sacramental world. Veblen's work, like Mamet's, underscores human action and response in terms of "pecuniary emulation," imperialist ownership, primitive sexual roles as first seen in ancient tribal communities, questions of honor, invidious comparisons, and the relationship between self-worth and wealth. Mamet is a theatrician of the ethical precisely because his characters, plots, and themes map out a predatory world in which only the fittest, and surely the greediest, might survive. Hence, Mamet's plays all are concerned with charting the moral relationship between the public issues of the nation and the private anxieties of its citizens.

Mamet seems at his best when dramatizing the way in which public issues, usually in the form of business transactions, permeate the individual's private sensibilities. "Business," for Mamet, becomes an expansive concept, including not only one's public, professional vocation but also one's private, personal existence--the problematic "business" of living itself. Under the guise of healthy competition and the right to pursue a contemporary version of the myth of the American Dream, Mamet's heroes too often conveniently twist such business savvy to suit their own selfish needs. Further, this examination of "business" suggests, for Mamet, that people live in a Macbethian world, where "fair is foul and foul is fair," where sharp business practice too often leads to corruption, where deception and stealing are simply regarded as being competitive within the American business world.

Mamet believes in the powers of the imagination and art to liberate, to create a liberal humanism. This is exactly what John in *A Life in the Theatre* and Karen in *Speed-the-Plow* believe. Such an attitude, however, clearly does not make sense, Mamet also implies throughout

his theater, because there is little or no place for such romantic impulses in a hurly-burly business world. What makes Mamet's heroes so theatrically engaging to watch concerns an invisible inner drama, a subtextual crisis that haunts them: Underneath the character's hard-boiled, enameled public bravado lies a figure plagued with self-doubt and insecurities.

If Mamet's heroes try to come to some higher consciousness, as do Don in *American Buffalo*, Aaronow in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and Karen in *Speed-the-Plow*, such valiant impulses to come to awareness are not ultimately to be realized. Many of Mamet's best characters--Bernie in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* or Teach in *American Buffalo*--simply seem unwilling or unable to understand what Mamet believes are the regenerative powers implicit in self-awareness and self-responsibility. Some of his characters--most of the men in *Lakeboat*, for example--do not seem to understand that any form of transcendent consciousness even exists as a possibility. Perhaps this explains why many Mamet heroes lack the capacity to celebrate any experience external to the self. Instead, typical Mamet heroes seem motivated only in sexual and financial terms, blinding themselves to the larger personal or societal implications of their exploits. To be sure, some Mamet characters exude a deeper awareness, as do the Father and Daughter in *Dark Pony*, Aaronow in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, or Karen in *Speed-the-Plow*. Others, moreover, come tantalizingly close to understanding their own essential self and the reason for their existence in a world of diminished possibilities; Lang in *The Water Engine* and Edmond in *Edmond* possess some degree of self-awareness, ineffectual as such awareness turns out to be for them.

Mamet's works, however, show a grimly deterministic theater in which his heroes are victims. Their victimization stems from outer forces--a ruthless business associate, an opportunistic executive, a petty thief--as well as from inner forces: the failure of self-reliance, the exaggerated claim that proves false, and characters' obsession with money that they will never

see and with relationships that will never be fulfilling. Thus, throughout his career, Mamet investigates the relatedness of one's job, sense of fulfillment, and morality. The problem facing his characters, however, is that they struggle (and usually fail) to take responsibility, choosing instead to avoid honest communication or anything that might lead to an authentic encounter. Instead, Mamet's heroes often commit ethically perverse deeds that only further contribute to their own marginalization. In their efforts not to confuse public and private issues, Mamet's characters ironically distort the social contract to such an extent that humane values, communication, and love are reduced to barely felt force s.

Mamet's theater, in sum, repeatedly returns to broader social questions about communication and community. To be sure, not every Mamet drama includes verbal tirades and physical if not psychological violence. *Duck Variations*, *A Life in the Theatre*, *Reunion*, *The Woods*, and *The Shawl*--to cite plays spanning much of Mamet's career--appear as relatively quiet, meditative works whose plots and themes seem more interiorized. On the other hand, the playwright seems most comfortable, and at the height of his aesthetic power, when he replicates anger and betrayal, mystery and assault, and when he deepens social satire into private loss. From *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* through at least *Speed-the-Plow*, relationships are as ephemeral as they are unsatisfying, and a brutalizing language seems to be an attempt by his heroes to mask, unsuccessfully, their primal insecurities. There are no villains in his theater--only individuals whose world of diminished possibilities and banalities defines and confines them. The detectable optimism found throughout much of *Writing in Restaurants*, a collection of essays that Mamet published in 1986 concerning his theory of art, seldom manifests itself in his theater. In a Mamet play, "things change" (to use the title of a Mamet screenplay), or perhaps

things do not change, his characters remaining ossified spirits, divided against the self and the other, against home and their outer world.

Like most of Mamet's plays it is possible to examine the role of language in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* from two different angles, since David Mamet uses language both thematically and poetically. There is a reciprocal relationship between language and society- the social determinism of language and the linguistic determinism of society. While each person's language is designated by society, the operations of society are also determined by the language people use. Thus, the language cannot be viewed simply as a vehicle of communication. Mamet's drama is mostly about power, and his characters use language to exert and sustain that power. Within the language and power paradigm, in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, David Mamet examines the production and reproduction of gender roles, and his characters employ a kind of subtle linguistic coercion as a means of influencing and persuading their companions to concur with their way of thinking. Language thus becomes a tool for the scattering of certain ideologies. For instance, although Bernard's language is a product of society, his sexist attitudes pass through to Dan, and at the end his language and behaviour become as crude and offensive as Bernard's. On the other hand, Bernard assumes subjectively through the use of a sexist language, but he also subjects himself to the language of a male dominated society. Bernie is really sexual problems. Bernie is clearly getting carried away with his fantasy. His story progresses to the ridiculous point as:

Bernie: . . . from under the bed she pulls this suitcase, and from out of the suitcase comes this World War Two Flak suit.

Danny: They're hard to find.

Bernie: Zip, Zip, Zip, and she gets into the Flak suit and we get down on the bed.

Danny: What are you doing?

Bernie: Fucking.

Danny: She's in the Flak suit?

Bernie: Right.

Danny: How do you get in?

Bernie: How do you think I get in? she leaves the zipper open. (11-12)

Bernie no longer wishes to hear Danny's questions and inane remarks but he wants to get on with the action. Bernie moves further and further into the ecstasies of libidinous fantasy, Danny remains down to earth questioning details that had at first acted as spurs to give the story depth and realism. Bernie establishes the avuncular tone that he will use to denigrate Danny's relationship with Deborah. He tells imaginary buddies at the gym all about Danny's relationship.

As:

Bernie: So the kid asks me 'Bernie, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah. Blah. The broad this, the broad that, Blah, Blah, Blah. Right? So I tell him, Dan, Dan, you think I don't know what you're feeling, I don't know what you're going through? You think about the broad, you this, you that, you think I love her. So tell me Bernie. He says, I think I love her. (pause.) twenty eight years old. So I tell him, Dan, Dan I can advice if you want my opinion, however, you are pussy-whipped. . . . sell his soul for a little eating pussy, and who can blame him but mark my words. One, two more weeks, he'll do the right thing by the broad (pause.) and drop her like a fucking hot photo. (37)

In the opening word of this speech Bernie calls Danny 'the kid' and suggest that Danny's reliance upon his advice is far from unusual, Bernie's dismissal of seriousness of Danny affair

moves from his claim that he, too, has felt exactly the same way to his contention that Danny is ‘pussy-whipped’. Bernie tries to make Danny sound like a lovelorn child ‘Bernie ... I think I love her’ and negates Danny’s sentimental outburst by once again reducing the relationship to the relationship to the crudest level. He implies that Danny is ready to ‘sell his soul for a little eating pussy’, rushing his words and abbreviating his sentence in an effort to emphasize the absurdity of Danny being in love. The underlining’ words emphasize those words that Bernie feels are most relevant and important to his argument. For him they are the essence of friendship but as he pointedly remarks in the final analysis – a shy dig by Mamet at a dreadful Yuppie-type cliché Danny must make his own decisions. The false effort Bernie makes to sound fair and reasonable and above all sympathetic to his friends plight, is both appalling and irresistibly funny.

Richard Harland explains the relationship between language and society as follows:

The individual absorbs language before he can think for himself: indeed the absorption of language is the very condition of being able to think for himself. The individual can reject particular knowledges that society explicitly teaches him, he can throw off particular beliefs that society forcibly imposes upon him- but he has always already accepted the words and meanings through which such knowledges and beliefs were communicated to him. Words and meanings have been deposited in the individual’s brain below the level of conscious ownership and mastery. They lie within him like an undigested piece of society. (9)

In tune with this view of language, David Mamet indicates the reciprocal relationship between society and language with a focus on the four characters’ relationship to each other in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*.

In fact, a Mamet Points out the play treats this relationship as its theme:

Voltaire said words were invented to hide feelings. That's what the play is about, how what we say influences what we think. The words that the older character Bernie Litko says to Danny influences his behavior: You know, that women are broads, that they're there to exploit. And the words that Joan says to her friend Deborah: man are problematical creatures which are necessary to have a relationship with because that's what society says, but it never really works out. It is nothing but a schlep, a misery constantly.

As well as using language as his main theme David Mamet presents the reader with the poetry of the rhythms of an obscene language. In this capitalistic urban society people use a denatured language shaped by the public myths of a culture and they constantly produce and reproduce the given gender role. David Mamet gives a poetic account of such a society by capturing the rhythms of colloquial American speech. It is by that distinguished ability of his that David Mamet have won his reputation as a language playwright. As Ernest Leogrande remarks; "It is the terse crosscut exchanges, however, a distinguishing factor in his writing, that have won him critical acclaim for his ability to capture rhythms, intonations, and idiomatic peculiarities of living speech" (28). A few of his plays have been likened to a musical score and *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* is one of them. Ross Wetzsteon has described the play as "a series of fugue-like vignettes and called it "a sleazy sonata of seduction"(39). Mamet's musical language is not there by chance, his plays do not mirror what is going on in the streets, Mamet chooses every word he uses with great precision and he works till making them rhythmically perfect. What he captures through his rhythms is not merely the streets but the individual's inner spirit. he never uses obscene and scatological language in order to score cheap laughs out of sexist jokes, as one of his players says: "he is anything but arbitrary . . . it would be interesting for

those who believe his work to be obscene to take out all those words and see just how much their absence would affect both the sense and rhythm of the piece” (63).

Beside Mamet’s obscene poetry, what makes *Perversity in Chicago* distinguished in its verbal style is that Mamet invents a linguistic personality for each character. Bernard uses an aggressive language which exposes his false shield of confidence, and Don’s ingeniousness and dependent position on his friend/mentor is revealed in his use of certain phrases favored by Bernard. There is vitality and innocence in Deborah’s speech but it is squashed as the play progresses; she finds only disappointment and frustration in her relationship. Joan longs for love but is afraid of it, her language is cynical and hard, but Mamet suggests a sense of vulnerability under her brittle, sassy linguistic bravado.

In the world Mamet portrays in *Perversity in Chicago*, it is quite unlikely for a relationship between a man and a woman to succeed, since the pressures of language and the cultural fiats are always upon their heels. Although his account is funny, Mamet’s view of such a world is bleak, relationship has become mere power games, and emotional commitments are regarded as a threat to their irresponsible lives. The men view women only as sex slaves and objects for their own pleasure, and women see men as enemies and creatures devoid of emotion. The media presents degrading and exploitative images of women through television programs and films. Public myths of sexuality are spread through the media, and a feminine stereotype is created consciously and systematically. As a result women either desperately try to fit in these roles cast for them by the media and craved by men, or they become men haters. And the result is not much different in the case of men, as they too, cannot escape the pressures of the media, and try to fit in a false image. Mamet, who complains about the influence of same pressures in his personal life, directly blames the media for the situation:

Well that's just, unfortunately, tales from my life . . . My sex life was ruined by the popular media. It took a lot of getting over. There are a lot of people in my situation. The myths around us, destroying our lives, such a great capacity to destroy our lives. . . You have to sleep with every woman that you see, have a new car every two years- sheer, utter nonsense. Men who never have to deal with it, are never really forced to deal with it, deal with it by getting colitis, anxiety attacks and by killing themselves. (7)

In *Perversity in Chicago* Mamet's characters are indeed perverse, but in a different sense: "The perversity Mamet has in mind emanates from his characters' diminished perception of each other, their lack of understanding, and the cold, inhumane manner in which they conduct their lives" (3). Although they yearn for love and affection deep inside, they are unable to break loose from the public myths that surround them. they have substituted material values for moral ones. They use language not to communicate, but to influence the other. The more frustrated they are in reality, the more they retreat into fantasy. They are unable to see the other except as a sexual being, and sex is a vehicle for men by which they establish their subjectivities. In short they are the dead souls of a degenerate society.

III. Failure of capitalism in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*

Sexual Perversity in Chicago is no doubt a satire on sexually perverted American city, Chicago more than that it is a sharp satire up on the American materialistic capitalism which gave the society nothing more than the sex permissive culture, AIDS like dangerous disease, divorce culture, women as a sexual object and Hippocratic life created great misunderstanding and ultimately created empty life between the opposite sex. This sharp satire on contemporary sexual mores in the urban America of 1970s basically in Chicago. In which sexual relationship is portrayed in interaction with other people as representative of the whole society. The play, in which Mamet deals with the influence of sex role stereotyping in 1970s urban America on heterosexual relationships and the role of language in sexual objectification, illustrates how the capitalistic city milieu constricts its inhabitants and forces them to consistently reproduce their given gender roles.

The characters end the play as confused and vulnerable and perhaps more lonely. With an accurate ear for the cadences of supposedly sophisticated urban speech and with an acute observation of contemporary sexual mores, he has produced a work that dramatizes the emptiness of relationship in an empty materialistic society. In *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, Mamet looks at the ways in which language can contribute to the formation of sexist attitudes. His characters employ a kind of subtle linguistic coercion as a means of influencing and persuading their companions to concur with their way of thinking. Consequently, barriers are erected that are then exceedingly difficult to penetrate. Bernie's relentless chauvinism filters through Danny, who is influenced by and in awe of his ostensibly suave friend. As a result, he eventually becomes as course of offensive as his mentor.

The relationship between Mamet's male and female characters is doomed to failure because of the pressures of language exerted by their companions and partly through cultural fiat. The men are unwilling to view women as anything other than sex slaves and receptacles for enemies and emotional cripples. The perversity Mamet has in mind emanates from his characters' diminished perception of each other, their lack of understanding, and the cold inhumane manner in which they conduct their lives. What is crucially missing is any real sense of value beyond the material, or an awareness of any need unrelated to immediate sexual satisfaction.

Mamet has devised a play that is absolutely contemporary in its verbal style, the text is a bubbling amalgam of slang, clichés and what the characters take to be wit and he invents a linguistic personality for each character that is totally believable. Bernie's false shield of confidence is superbly exposed in the subtext to his aggressive linguistic forays, which have been described as 'a combination of whiplash and theatrical swoops' and Danny's ingeniousness and growing dependence on his friend reveals itself in his employment of certain phrases favored by his mentor. Deborah's speech has about it a vitality and innocence that is squashed as the play progresses. She finds only disappointment and frustration in a relationship as she believed to be true love. Joan is a woman who longs for love but is afraid of it, her language may be cynical and hard but Mamet is able to suggest that Joan's brittle exterior as a subtext of vulnerability and fear remains.

In the surface level of the play, sex permissive culture and the vulgar language seem to have played a vital role creating misunderstanding, emptiness and a gulf between the opposite sex, but in the underlying level, for such a scenario and defective culture modern American capitalistic society is totally responsible. Because that culture in the name of job opportunity, free business

,economic independency and competitive market brought the youth ,especially women from home to capitalistic commodifying market .But the vary society couldn't bring back the women safely to home as a result this society created sexually perverted and exploitative relation between the opposite sex. So ,here, failure of the Mamet's four character in modern capitalistic society is the failure of capitalism.

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