

I. General Introduction

David Mamet as a Writer

Mamet is an American playwright, screenwriter, director, whose dramatic style reflects the inarticulateness and violence in alienated members of lower- middle class. Poetic, comically fragmented and often shocking, Mamet's use of language has often been compared to the Greek dramatist Aristophanes, American author Earnest Hemingway, Irish author Samuel Beckett and English playwright Harold Pinter.

David Alan Mamet was born to a Jewish family in Flossmor, Illinois, suburb of Chicago in 1947. He was educated at Francis W. Parker School, attended Goddard College in Vermont and there he discovered the passion for theater. He was trained as an actor under the famed acting teacher Sanford Meisner, whose emphasis on practical, outward techniques - rather than method-internalization - influenced Mamet's philosophy of acting as well as his writing. After college Mamet held a number of unglamorous jobs: he drove taxi, cleaned offices, and worked at a truck factory and a canning plant. In 1967, he got a job as an office manager at a real estate sales office. His position in the job was the inspiration for the character William's job in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and the other salesmen Mamet observed in the office would later serve as basis for the play's other characters.

Mamet is the most versatile American dramatist working today. This is not because he writes for theater and the screen and television but, more relevantly, he ranges widely in style. Mamet's characteristics can be seen in all those styles, but they are used to strike different codes. David Mamet is the voice of common man or even criminal in the theater. He has been acclaimed for his gritty depiction of con man, thieves and other

morally bereft characters whose language is rife with the kind of shuttering, pausing and obscenities that occur in real life conversation. Despite the spartan phrasing and lack of eloquence in the dialogue, the staccato rhythm ends up flowing naturally, making Mamet's dialogue unique, though he is sometimes roughly compared to fellow author Harold Pinter.

Mamet's plays deal with declining morality, reflecting his view of society as a spiritual wasteland. His best known plays explore these themes through tough male macho characters, for example, the Pulitzer Prize winning *Glengarry Glen Ross* was set in a real estate office; *Speed the Plow*, written four years later in 1988 focused on the underbelly of show business. Con artists and their games in life predominates both plays and movies. His interest in this, as Mamet has said, dates back to when he was growing up on the north side of Chicago and was himself "a bit of a gambler." His work epitomizes controversy. His plays are sparse with action, with notoriously realistic dialogue, which is often colloquial, are just important to Mamet's point as its actual content, which is frequently and famously profane. His stories reflect the grittiness of urban life and are particularly male-dominated.

Mamet started his writing at Goddard collage in Vermont and attended The Neighborhood Play House School in New York. Although he was frequently associated with the regional theater movement that developed in Chicago in the 1970s, many of Mamet's strongest influences came from his training on the East Coast, especially his work with American acting teacher Sanford Meisner at Meisner's Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City. Borrowing from an acting exercise that schooled performers in developing character repetition, Mamet created for his scripts a syntax of

half-spoken thoughts and rapidly shifting moods.

When Mamet's first plays, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* and *Duck Variations* (1972), were both produced off-off-Broadway in 1975, they quickly established him as a writer of the “new realism,” a style marked by naturalistic language and a small number of characters in a contained environment. *American Buffalo* (1975), set in a Chicago junk store (used as a metaphor for American capitalism), startled audiences and critics with its bleak outlook and antisocial underpinnings. Mamet received a Pulitzer Prize in 1984 for his play *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983), about a group of troubled Chicago real estate agents. His other successful plays include *A Life in the Theater* (1977), *Speed-the-Plow* (1988), *Oleanna* (1993), *The Cryptogram* (1995), and *Dangerous Corner* (1995), which he adapted from the 1932 play by English writer J. B. Priestley. *The Old Neighborhood* (1997)—composed of three one-act plays—was thought by critics to be Mamet’s most autobiographical work. In the second of the three, *Jolly*, a brother and sister reminisce about their childhood and the emotional abuse they endured.

Mamet's first screenplay was the 1981 production of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* based upon James M. Cain's novel. He won an Academy Award nomination for his next script, *The Verdict*. In 1987 Mamet made his film directing debut with *House of Games*, starring his then-wife Lindsay Crouse and a host of longtime stage associates. He remains a prolific writer and director, and has assembled an informal repertory company for his films, including William H. Macy, Joe Mantegna, Rebecca Pidgeon (his wife since 1991), and Ricky Jay.

Like independent director John Sayles, Mamet funds his own films with the pay he gets from credited and non-credited rewrites of typically big-budget films. For

instance, Mamet has done rewrites of the scripts for *Hannibal* and *Hoffa*, and turned in an early version of a script for *Malcolm X* that director Spike Lee rejected.

Three of Mamet's own films, *House of Games*, *The Spanish Prisoner*, and *Heist* have involved the world of con artists. Mamet has published three novels, *The Village* in 1994, *The Old Religion* in 1997, and *Wilson: a Consideration of the Sources* in 2000. He has also written several non-fiction texts as well as a number of poems and children's stories. He was credited under the name "Richard Weisz" for *Ronin*.

In July 2004, Cambridge University Press published *The Cambridge Companion to David Mamet*, edited by Christopher Bigsby. The book includes essays analyzing Mamet's biography, his impact during various decades, and pieces on most of his work. Since May 2005 he's been contributing as a blogger at *The Huffington Post*. He has also published a lauded version of the classical Faust story, *Faustus*, in 2004. He is also the creator, producer and frequent writer of the television series *The Unit*, co-produced with friend Shawn Ryan of *The Shield*.

Mamet also achieved acclaim as a motion-picture screenwriter and director, with productions of *The Untouchables* (1987), *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *House of Games* (1987), *The Cryptogram* (1992), *Oleanna* (1994), and, and *American Buffalo* (1996), all of which he wrote; and *The Winslow Boy* (1999), which he both wrote and directed. Mamet's nonfiction writings on theater include *Writing in Restaurants* (1987), *Freaks* (1989), *True and False: Heresy and Common Sense for the Actor* (1997). *Cabin* (1992), *Make Believe Town* (1996), *Jafsie and John Henry* (1999) and collected essays on Mamet's life and varied interests. Other prose works include *The Village: A Novel* (1994) and *Passover* (1995).

A Critical Summary of *Glengarry Glen Ross*

Glengarry Glen Ross is a scathing attack on American business practices. All the characters in the play attempt to steal from, cheat, or trick one another. The sales office of the play serves as a microcosm of capitalist culture - as the top man gets a Cadillac and the bottom man gets fired, they are in a challenge to survive in the society by becoming successful at any cost as being fired from the company will certainly be harmful for their proper living in the society. The play shows that in such a system every man must not only work for his own success but also hope for or actively engineer his coworkers' failure. Success then is rewarded with further opportunity for success, while failure is punished with the guarantee of further failure. The system is brutal and compassionless. Though the salesmen in the play are not, technically, criminals as convincing people to buy overpriced land may be immoral, but not illegal. They all have the mindset of con men. As the capitalist system demands that they compete against each other, they are always on the look out for any shortcut or trick to go ahead.

The true villain in the play is the system, not the hustlers who implement it by cheating others out of their hard earned money. Managers act according to their selfish economic interest because the market mechanism distills such actions into benefits for share holders, employees and society. The characters are neither likeable nor magnanimous, as they function within a predatory organization. This is so because the characters who are real estate salesmen often find themselves in a situation that require decisive but unpopular behavior. A capitalist system that thrives on competition ultimately demands that colleagues mistreat and exploit each other.

The salesman Levene tries to persuade the company man Williamson using all

manners of ploy to give him Glengarry leads, Moss tries to persuade the simple minded Aaronow to break into the office for robbing the leads, Roma tries to trick Lingk to sell him the real estate in Florida. All three of them are trying to cheat people as they are forced to take part in the contest of 'success or failure' and if they do not become able to craft their own success, they themselves might perish. All these three salesmen take different approach to this challenge. Levene, the sales man who finds himself losing is stammering, nervous and desperate and tries multiple modes of persuasion, and with each new strategy his argument actually becomes less convincing. Moss who is very cunning tries to browbeat Aaronow into submission with sheer aggressive energy. Moss picks out Aaronow, and then Levene, to be his partner in crime because he knows that both men are desperate and thus easy targets for him. He fails to consider, however, that their desperation also makes both men unreliable partners in a very delicate scheme. Moss assumes not inaccurately that each man is out for himself at all times. He therefore seeks, by whatever means necessary, to exploit others before they exploit him.

Although the salesmen are not necessarily criminals as technically there is nothing illegal about convincing people to buy worthless property at inflated prices, but they do rely on dishonest manipulation as a corner stone of their work. Levene may very well have been a fine salesman in his youth - though surely not so great as he claims - but now he has grown older and the company no longer has any use for him. Mamet suggests that such a brutal system that teaches people to chase success and detest failure has also paved the way for the destruction of salesmen like Levene who are no more performing up to their standards in the sales. As Levene exudes failure, Roma exudes success. But the apparent ease with which Roma conducts his business is deceptive - in fact, he is as

tightly wound as any of the other salesmen, and we see at the end that he is planning to exploit Levene in order to advance his success even further. Though Roma has earned a status in the office that should afford him some security in his job, he is every bit as nervous and helpless before the ways of the harsh system as the others. The only difference between Roma's scamming and, for example, Moss's is that Roma's is smarter, more methodical, and therefore more likely to work.

The top salesman Roma, on the board at this point, is also entitled to the best leads. This shows that success is rewarded with further opportunity for success, while failure is punished with the guarantee of further failure as the system is brutal and compassionless. Levene grasps at anything that might help him appear successful, but his guise is unfortunately transparent, which only makes him appear like a greater failure. Like a man fallen in quicksand, Levene's struggle to evade failure at all costs ends up hastening his professional demise. At the play's climax, Levene asks Williamson why he is going to report him to the police, and Williamson responds, "Because I don't like you(104)." This response is borne partly of Levene's having recently insulted Williamson, but it is also because Levene has been emitting an air of failure from the start of the play, and Williamson, being the company man, has been trained to fear and hate failure.

In *Glengarry Glen Ross*, we can identify Mamet's grim perspective on the American capitalist system which promotes economic disparity between different classes of society which results in social injustice that the lower class has to endure. The concern of this research is investigate how the ways of such system can lead the people towards immorality and how that becomes inimical to human welfare.

Critics on *Glengarry Glen Ross*

David Mamet's classic 1984 Pulitzer Prize winning play *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983) is one of his highly acclaimed plays. The play has elicited a host of criticism since its publication and production and has been interpreted and analyzed by various critics, scholars, and writers from different perspectives. They have focused on different issues like play of language, business ethics, American Dream, masculine communication, and about the ideology of capitalism.

In the terms of critic Eugene Garaventa:

Glengarry Glen Ross is about the American ethics of business, how we excuse all sorts of great and small betrayals and ethical compromises called business. This play is about a society with only one bottom line: How much money you make. The true villain of the play is the system, not the hustlers who implement it by cheating others out of their hard earned money. (540)

The analysis of Garaventa is central to the concept of business ethics which has continued to remain a major item on the agenda of corporate America.

Critic David Worster sees this play in terms of its ability to explore speech and action within the structure of US capitalism and finds the play using language as a force that defines the world around it. He says, "This play is about salesmen and selling, and since selling is almost entirely utterance, the play is about talk and sales talk" (2).

According to speech-act theory, discourse acquires meaning in the context within which it is uttered, so any play that is about language must be about speech context – the ideological, social, and cultural conventions and rituals which constitute and are in turn

constituted by language. He further says:

Glengarry Glen Ross reveals to its audience how the discourse of capitalism posits within its subjects what it means to be a success, to be a man, to be a salesman, as well as what it means to be anything else (like a failure, a woman, a customer these terms are all vaguely synonymous pejoratives to the salesmen). The play identifies the manipulation of language within the ritual of selling –the ability or inability to articulate effective, or “felicitous,” speech acts—as a primary constituents of identity.(2)

According to him the play identifies the manipulation of language within the ritual of selling - the ability or inability to articulate effective, or ‘felicitous’ speech acts -as primary constituent of identity.

Patrick J Sauer in his article entitled “Your Favorite Salesmen are back” says, “Glengarry has become a cultural touchstone because it depicts capitalism in its rawest dog-eat-dog form, while acknowledging that success in sales is often the key to securing a piece of the American Dream” (1). Though he relates success with the American Dream, he finds the means to it as unethical in the play.

In Andrea Greenbaum’s terms, “*Glengarry Glen Ross* vividly captures the sad ethos of American capitalism. Mamet’s play is not merely an indictment of a culture that equates happiness with material acquisition, but is also a reproach to a particular discourse of masculinity that capitalism fosters” (9). He believes that in Western, capitalist society the definitions of masculinity are tied to definitions of work.

Thus, it can be seen that critics have various different approaches and

perspectives in viewing this text. But, the significance of this study is that it will enable the readers to understand how capitalism in American society force the salesmen to struggle in which the lead characters - day-to-day salesmen at a real estate firm - take on the role of career-hungry hatchet men whose primary goal is to sell, sell, sell at whatever cost, for the word 'No' does not exist in the global lexicon. Mamet wrote this play to show the avariciousness, hypocrisy, indifference and duplicity that seemed to be an inherent characteristic of the corporate business person and booming generation of the eighties.

Among the four chapters, the first chapter is a general introduction to the area of the study and the whole direction this study is going to take. In order to provide the cause of the cut-throat competition between the real state salesmen to create capital, to prove their success, the ideology of capitalism the second chapter outlines in brief, the Marxist perspective of the society from past to present. This study is based on the assumption that American society in *Glengarry Glen Ross* depicts the capitalism in rawest dog -eat -dog form .At stake is their job, and since this men define themselves according to their place on sales board what transpires is a desperate struggle for these men to retain their sales positions. The third chapter is oriented towards close reading of the text from Marxist perspective. The final chapter illustrates the findings of this research in brief.

Many scholars have examined the different aspects of the drama .This study intends to understand *Glengarry Glen Ross* from Marxist perspective. Existence is marked by an on going struggle between the classes in every society. It is a struggle between haves and have-nots . In a precise term it is a struggle between capitalist and workers.

II. Marxism as Literary Theory

Introduction

Marxist philosophy refers to the social, political and economic theories of the German philosopher Karl Marx. Marx, the 19th century German Jewish-born atheist, socialist philosopher, economist, journalist, and revolutionary, often in collaboration with Friedrich Engels, developed a critique of society which he claimed was both scientific and revolutionary. Marx proposes a model of history in which economic and political conditions determine social conditions. They were responding to social hardships stemming from the rise of capitalism. Appropriately, these theories are formulated specifically to analyze how society functions in a state of upheaval and constant change. This critique achieved its most systematic expression in his most famous work, *Das Kapital* (1867). Marx is kept known for his theories of socialism best expressed in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). He is most famous for analysis of history in terms of class struggles, as summed up in the opening line of the introduction to *The Communist Manifesto*: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx 21).

Within Marx's dialectical account of history is the idea that a given individual's social being is determined by larger political and economic forces. Simply stated, the social class into which a person is born determines their outlook and viewpoints. For Marx, economic, political and social dimensions are the determinants of human consciousness. In *German Ideology*, he says, "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (625). The economic condition of people determines how they develop language, law, politics, morality, religion and art, too. Marx further says:

Men are the producers of their conceptions idea etc – real, active men as they are conditioned by development of their productive forces and of the intercourse to these, up to the furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than consciousness existence, and existence of men is their actual life process. (625)

Here Marx means that production of ideas, conceptions, consciousness, etc. are directly related to the material reality.

Marxism disproves the bourgeois economic, political and social mechanism. Marxism initiates a movement of proletarians. Marx addressed a wide range of issues, including [alienation](#) and exploitation of the worker, the capitalist mode of production, and [historical materialism](#).

Using Hegel's theory of dialectic, which suggests that history progresses through the resolution of contradictions within a particular aspect of reality, Marx and Engels posit a materialist account of history that focuses upon the struggles and tensions within society. As society forms more complex modes of production, it becomes increasingly stratified; and the resulting tensions necessitate changes in society. Marx then expands this concept of determination into one of the central concepts of Marxism – that of *base and superstructure*. The base is the economic system on which the superstructure rests; cultural activities such as philosophy or literature belong to the superstructure. To Marxist critics, a society's economic base determines the interests and styles of its literature; it is this relationship between determining base and determined superstructure.

Marx believes that because the superstructure is determined by the base, it inevitably supports the ideologies of the base. Ideologies are the changing ideas, values,

and feelings through which individuals experience their societies. Marx takes economic forces as the base and defines laws, literature and education system, etc. only as the superstructure because they are highly controlled by the economic forces. As Jostein Gaarder writes in *Sophie's World*: "The way a society thinks, what kind of political institutions there are, which laws it has and not least, what their is of religion, morals, art, philosophy, and science Marx called society's superstructure" (393). They present the dominant ideas and values as the beliefs of society as a whole, thus preventing individuals from seeing how society actually functions. Literature, as a cultural production, is a form of ideology, one that legitimizes the power of the ruling class. It is doubtful that Marx and Engels themselves took such a deterministic approach to literature. In their work, literature is not merely a passive reflection of the economic base. Although they conceded that literature cannot change society, or base, in itself, they suggested that literature can be an active element in such change.

Marxist critics have interpreted Marx's theories in several different ways. As Marxists they eventually return to a few central Marxist concepts: the dialectical model of history; the notion that social being determines consciousness; and the base/superstructure model. They are especially interested in issues of class and social exploitation and are specifically attentive to the culture mechanism – and their literary version – that keep people unaware of their exploited status.

Marxist literary critics tend to look for tensions and contradictions within literary works. This is appropriate because Marxism was originally formulated to analyze just such tensions and contradictions within society. Marxist literary critics also see literature as intimately linked to social power, and thus their analysis of literature is linked to larger

social questions. Since Marxism is a belief system which can be used to analyze society at the grandest or most detailed level, Marxist literary criticism is ultimately part of a much larger effort to uncover the inner workings of society. Marxist criticism is materialist, so it has more in common with theories that focus upon how literature functions within social, political, and economic structures than it does with theories that focus only upon the text.

The main ideas of Marx and Engels' collective works

The means of production is the combination of the [means of labor](#) and the [subject of labor](#) used by workers to make products. *Means of labor* include machines, tools, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and so on – all those things with the aid of which man acts upon the subject of labor, and transforms it. The *subject of labor* includes raw materials and materials directly taken from nature. Means of production by themselves produce nothing as [labor power](#) is needed for production to take place.

The mode of production is a specific combination of [productive forces](#) including the [means of production](#) and [labor power](#) and social and technical [relations of production](#) including the property, power and control relations governing society's productive assets, often codified in law; cooperative work relations and forms of association; relations between people and the objects of their work, and the relations between social classes.

The "base-structure" metaphor relates the idea that the economic relations between people with regard to the means of production forms the basis for a superstructure of ideas, social, religious and political institutions and legal frameworks that is ultimately determined by this basis. For Marx, the base determines the superstructure. Though this relationship is not a one way process, it is reflexive as the

base determines the superstructure in the first instance and remains the foundation of a form of social organization which then can act again upon both parts of the base-structure metaphor. The relationship between superstructure and base is considered to be a [dialectical](#) one, not a distinction between actual entities in the world.

Class consciousness refers to the self-awareness of a [social class](#) and its capacity to act in its own rational interests. Because the ruling class controls the society's means of production, the superstructure of society, including its ideology, will be determined according to what is in the ruling class's best interests. Therefore the ideology of a society is of enormous importance since it confuses the alienated groups and can create [false consciousness](#) such as commodity fetishism.

Historical materialism was first articulated by Marx, although he himself never used the term. It looks for the causes of developments and changes in human societies in the way in which humans collectively make the means to life, thus giving an emphasis, through economic analysis, to everything that co-exists with the economic base of society, e.g. social classes, political structures, ideologies, etc.

The term political economy originally means the study of the conditions under which production was organized in the nation-states of the new-born capitalist system. Political economy, then, studies the mechanism of human activity in organizing material, and the mechanism of distributing the surplus or deficit that is the result of that activity. Political economy studies the means of production, specifically capital, and how this manifests itself in economic activity.

Marx refers to the exploitation of an entire segment or class of society by another. He sees it as being an inherent feature and key element of capitalism and free markets.

The profit gained by the capitalist is the difference between the value of the product made by the worker and the actual wage that the worker receives. Capitalism functions on the basis of paying workers less than the full value of their labor in order to enable the capitalist class to turn a profit.

Marx refers to the alienation of people from aspects of their human nature. Alienation describes objective features of a person's situation in capitalism. It isn't necessary for them to believe or feel that they are alienated. He believes that alienation is a systematic result of capitalism. Marx believes that the identity of a social class is derived from its relationship to the means of production as opposed to the notion that class is determined by wealth alone, i.e., lower class, middle class, upper class. Marx describes several [social classes](#) in capitalist societies. [Proletariats](#) are those who sell their [labor power](#), and therefore add value to the products, and who, in the capitalist mode of production, do not own the means of production. According to Marx, the capitalist mode of production establishes the conditions that enable the [bourgeoisie](#) to [exploit](#) the proletariat due to the fact that the worker's labor power generates an [added value](#) greater than the worker's [salary](#). [Bourgeoisie](#) are those who own the means of production and buy labor power from the proletariat, who are recompensed by a salary, thus [exploiting](#) the proletariat.

Emergence and Development of Marxism

Twentieth century has been a revolutionary era from the point of view of development of new critical trends. These new critical trends include Marxism, feminism, existentialism, psychoanalytic, linguistic and stylistic, formalism, myth criticism, etc. As this research is concerned with Marxist approach, it will be relevant to examine its

emergence and its historical development. Marxism may be defined in terms of an essential core of social and economic theory.

There have been numerous debates among Marxists over how to interpret Marx's writings and how to apply his concepts to current events and conditions. The legacy of Marx's thought is bitterly contested between numerous tendencies who claim to be Marx's most accurate interpreters. There have been many academic theorists, social movements, political parties and governments who have claimed to be founded on Marxist principles. Indeed academic theorizing on Marxism is so widespread that there are a number of different schools of Marxism in addition to the classical Marxism of Marx and Engels. Similarly the use of Marxist theory in politics, including the social democratic movements in 20th century Europe, the Soviet Union, Mao and other revolutionaries in agrarian developing countries, have added new ideas to Marx and otherwise transmuted Marxism so much that it is difficult to specify its core.

Marxism is divided into different tendencies and groups. Some writers argue that there is no longer a single theory of Marxism. Others maintain that Marxism should be seen as a concrete and complex historical tradition which contains many different schools and theories. The term 'Marxism' was first employed by Marx's opponents in the socialist movement during the 1870s and 1880s. Neither Marx nor Engels used it. Towards the end of Engels's life, the term began to be used by the followers as well as opponents of Marx. The process of systematizing Marx's thought and extending it to new areas was continued by the first generation of Marx's followers: Kautsky, Labriola, George Plekhanov, and Frans Mehring. During this period serious doctrinal disputes arose, for the first time, within Marxism. The First World War marks a watershed in the

development of Marxism. Its onset brought about the collapse of the international socialist movement; its end saw the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia under V. I. Lenin's leadership and the creation of the first Marxist state, followed by the formation of communist parties in many other countries and their unification in the Third International.

Lenin was a leader of extraordinary determination and decisiveness, and a thinker of great tenacity, clarity and vision. He insisted upon the centrality of class struggle and the role of the proletariat, even in the relatively backward conditions that prevailed in Russia. He revitalized Marxism as a revolutionary philosophy, and formulated principles of political organization which have had an enduring influence. He extended Marx's analysis of capitalism to the conditions of imperialism. He emphasized the conflicts between the capitalist powers and the uneven character of capitalist development. Moreover, he realized the extended possibilities for revolutionary activity which were thus created. He clarified and extended Marx's account of the state; and, in his final works, he began to grapple with the problems of constructing a socialist society in the Soviet Union.

With the triumph of the revolution in Russia, there was a great flowering of Marxist thought in many different areas, with notable developments in such diverse areas as psychology, linguistics, and in the philosophy of science and art. Beyond the Soviet Union, there were major contributions from the Hungarian philosopher George Lukacs, and the Italian Antonio Gramsci.

Lenin's contribution to Marxism was first called 'Leninism' by his successor, Joseph Stalin. Stalin reduced Lenin's ideas to a simplified and lifeless doctrinal system.

The most significant movement of political opposition was led by Leon Trotsky after his expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1929. Trotsky's main theoretical divergences from Soviet Marxism concerned questions of the revolutionary process and the nature of Soviet society.

In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a variety of new ideas and tendencies began to appear. A number of writers stressed humanistic themes alienation, ethical as opposed to economic values, democracy, freedom, often on the basis of Marx's early writings. There were other important contributions in psychology, philosophy, economics and literature.

In Western Europe, Marxism has developed in a context of relatively stable, prosperous and non-revolutionary conditions. It has gained an increasingly central place in intellectual life. In France, controversies about Marxism have involved not only communist intellectuals, but also figures more ambivalently related to Marxism. In the German tradition, there have been notable contributions; moreover, the writings of the Frankfurt School have exercised a great influence. Its members included Max Horkheimer, T.W. Adorno, Jurgen Habermas etc. Regarding its significance, Walter Cohen in his essay *Marxist Criticism* writes:

Beginning in the 1930's, the Frankfurt school takes a very different path, modifying the original theory of reification in at least two ways, that fundamentally undermine its revolutionary implications. Firstly they reject the belief that working class will overcome reification. Second, they trace back the process of rationalization that shapes various contemporary societies to the ancient origins and very nature of reason. (323)

The members of this school took different path and approach in assimilating the traditional Marxist theory.

They instated that society is more complex than orthodox Marxist consider it to be. In Italy there have been important philosophical developments. There have been important contributions in economic theory, in history and in sociology. Marxism has infused the work of many modern writers and artists in both the capitalist and socialist worlds. There is a great difference in opinion among Marxist literary critics concerning the relationship between ideology and literature.

George Lukacs

George Lukacs is Hungarian Marxist philosopher, writer, and literary critic who influenced the mainstream of European Communist thought during the first half of the 20th century. His major contributions include the formulation of a Marxist system of aesthetics that opposed political control of artists and defended humanism and an elaboration of Marx's theory of alienation within industrial society. His main work *History and Class Consciousness*, initiated the current of thought that came to be known as Western Marxism. The book is notable for contributing to debates concerning Marxism and its relation to [sociology](#), [politics](#) and [philosophy](#), and for reconstructing [Marx's theory of alienation](#) before many of the works of the [Young Marx](#) had been published. Lukacs's work elaborates and expands upon Marxist theories such as [ideology](#), [false consciousness](#), [reification](#) and [class consciousness](#).

In his book *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), he developed these ideas and laid the basis for his critical literary tenets by linking the development of form in art with the history of the class struggle. He argued for a Hegelian Marxist approach to class

consciousness, alienation and reification. His work differentiates the form and content of realism and aesthetic objectivity.

Lukacs's major argument in his work is that literature reflects reality outside it. The idea of art and literature as a reflection was begun with Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece. Plato, in *The Republic Book X*, discusses about art in detail. Plato's theory of art has provided basis for all kinds of critical discussion about art and literature. The critics who followed have either supported and modified or negated the foundation. In *The Poetics* Plato's disciple Aristotle denied Plato's notion and argued that source of all art is imitation. Reflection theory of Lukacs remained dominant until the emergence of structuralism, the language theory of literature.

Lukacs strongly criticizes the naturalism and romanticism with equal vigor. The romanticist intention is only to express the creator's emotions and feelings. Romantic poetry is less about mankind and more about nature. Thus romanticism has entirely excluded the mimetic and pragmatic function of art. Therefore the romantics tend to be rather reactionary. The naturalists try to create the photographic representation of life:

Keeping strictly to an exact rendering of immediate reality... Their exclusion of historical determinants (meditations) which in the everyday of life of average person are not, as a rule, reality perceptible, but which interacting in their totality with everyday existence from the concrete, essential features of a historical situation, transformed naturalist authenticity into abstractions. (Lukacs 215)

Lukacs looks down on the naturalists because they ignore the historical determinants that effect the everyday life of an average person, in their creation of art.

An artist is he who successfully depicts social and historical reality objectively in his literary works as they are inseparable phenomenon, according to Lukacs, the most outstanding Marxist critic of 20th century. Therefore art is reflecting socio-historical realities. He rejects emotive theory that “the creation and appreciation of art is not unique and mysterious kind of knowledge” (Lukacs 232) as it is neither created in vacuum nor received so.

Lukacs likes the works of Balgas, Dickens, and Tolstoy because he believes that their work of art reflect the objective reality of the contemporary time. These writers widely expose the economic crisis, exploitation and gender violence through their works. According to Lukacs, the greatest artists are those who can recapture and recreate a harmonious totality of human life. Lukacs views that art should reflect society. He says:

In a society where the general and particular, the conceptual and the sensuous, the social and the individual are increasingly torn apart by the alienation of capitalism, the great writer draws these dialectically together into a complex totality. His fiction thus mirrors, in microcosmic form, the complex totality of society itself. In doing this, the great art combats the alienation and fragmentation of capitalist society, projecting a rich, many-sided image of human wholeness. (26)

It shows that according to Lukacs good art is that which projects many-sided image of human wholeness and depicts the complex totality of society.

Lukacs on the other hand does not like the works of modern writers because they only focus on the individual psyche. These writers show their principal characters in such a way that they cannot have relation with external world. According to Lukacs, “Man for

these writers is by nature solitary, asocial, and unable to enter into relationship with other human beings” (293). Lukacs says that such characterization of human beings by modernist writers is highly anti-realist. These writers ignore the ground reality of the contemporary time and confine themselves only in the subjective expression. The personalization of the standard of significance that is the private interpretation of value and loss of confidence is more objectionable because Marxist philosophy claims that the generation of ideas and feelings in our head is personal phenomenon as it directly corresponds to the objective reality and determined by it. As a true Marxist, he criticizes the modernist literary practice of separating individual from social process.

The art is related to the external reality; the socio-historical situation of a specific period and it is not complete reality but only the knowledge of reality. According to Lukacs, “The novel must be faithful to history despite its invented hero and imagined plot” (Lukacs152). He emphasized the thematic reality no matter what reality is. “The novel aims to represent a particular social reality at a particular time, with all the colour and specific atmosphere of that time” (150). Though Lukacs demands an artist to portray reality, he draws attention to the fact that it is not possible to portray reality as it exists. According to him, “Reality as a whole is always richer and more varied than even the richest work of art. No detail, episode, etc. however, exactly copied, biographically authentic, factual, can possibly complete with reality” (302).

The achievement of success or failure of an author depends on his greatness in capturing the objective reality through his work. In Lukacs’s view, reality reflected in literary work should be similar to the one reflected in human consciousness and it is the

duty of a critic to examine whether it is translated correctly or not in a literary work; and to judge whether a literary work is realistic or not.

From Marxist point of view, art is originated in the society and it must have some social significance. It states that literature belongs to the superstructure as politics, religion and philosophy which are based on socio-economics. Lukacs always emphasized that there must be some formal correspondence between the literary work and “dialectical totality.” Not only Lukacs, the Marxist philosophy itself insists that literature has close correspondence to reality.

Lukacs has tried to interpret art from Marxist realistic perspective. For him, all interesting writings can't be works of art. Whatever the language, style, uses of images, construction of plot, if it does not copy the life faithfully, Lukacs does not allow it to be entitled a work of art. To be literature it must be straightforward in its imitation of immediate truth with other literary characteristics. The only measurement of the successful artist is his touch to reality. Regarding the duty of Marxist aesthetics, he observes that its duty is “not only to explain this impoverishment and inadequacy in a social genetic way but also to measure them aesthetically against the highest demands of artistic reflection of reality and to find them lacking” (Lukacs 334). Thus, according to Lukacs it is the duty of the critic to evaluate whether the historical reality is properly reflected or not.

Theodor W. Adorno

Theodor Adorno is another prominent Marxist philosopher who belongs to the Frankfurt school. He rejects the realistic theoreticians like Lukacs and naturalistic trend as well. His early writings emphasize aesthetic development as important to historical

evolution which reflects the influence of Walter Benjamin's application of Marxism to cultural criticism.

Adorno and his colleague Max Horkheimer returned to the University of Frankfurt in 1949. There they rebuilt the Institute for Social Research and revived the Frankfurt school of critical theory. Frankfurt school of criticism criticizes the formal rules and laws because the reality in this objective world doesn't have systematic form. Lukacs criticizes the works of modern authors like James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, etc. and their technique of stream of consciousness and interior monologue but Adorno advocates that "the interior monologue, far from cutting the literary work off the reality, can expose the way reality actually is" (Forgacs188). This reality however, is not photographic but implied. According to Adorno "art is the negative knowledge of actual world" (189). However, according to David Forgacs, by negative knowledge Adorno "doesn't mean knowledge, it means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or reified condition" (189). Thus he supports the role played by the literary works of modernist writers like Beckett, Joyce, Proust, kafka, etc. As contextualized by Forgacs, Adorno "opens up modernist writing to Marxist theory by showing that a different kind of relationship between text and reality is possible" (190).

One of Adorno's themes was civilization's tendency to self-destruction. In their widely influential book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), Adorno and Horkheimer located this impulse in the concept of reason itself, which the Enlightenment and modern scientific thought had transformed into an irrational force that had come to dominate not only nature but humanity itself. Adorno concluded that rationalism offers little hope for human emancipation, which might come instead from art and the prospects it offers for

preserving individual autonomy and happiness. The Enlightenment use of reason is used by culture industry for their benefits. Their view about culture industry is:

The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plot and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacles consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the dinner must be satisfied with the menu. (213)

Here it becomes evident that they are very critical of the culture industry, which depicts capitalistic methods of working. Their view is that art, culture and beauty are commodity under capitalism. They defend art against mass culture.

Walter Benjamin

Walter Benjamin is a German Marxist literary critic. His essays containing his philosophical reflections on literature are written in a dense and concentrated style that contains a strong poetic strain. He mixes social criticism and linguistic analysis with historical nostalgia while communicating an underlying sense of pathos and pessimism. The metaphysical quality of his early critical thought gave way to a Marxist inclination in the 1930s.

The approach to art of the USSR under [Stalin](#) was typified, first, by the persecution of all those who expressed any independent thought, and, second, by the adoption of Socialist Realism – the view that art is dedicated to the "realistic" representation of simplistic, optimistic "proletarian values" and proletarian life.

Subsequent Marxist thinking about art has been largely influenced by Walter Benjamin

and [George Lukacs](#). Both were exponents of Marxist humanism who saw the important contribution of Marxist theory to aesthetics in the analysis of the condition of labor and in the critique of the alienated and "reified" consciousness of man under capitalism.

Benjamin's collection of essays [*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*](#) attempts to describe the changed experience of art in the modern world and sees the rise of Fascism and mass society as the culmination of a process of debasement, whereby art ceases to be a means of instruction and becomes instead a mere gratification, a matter of taste alone that is, by making art into the instrument by which the false consciousness of the mass man is to be overthrown. According to him:

Traditional works of art maintains, have an aura of uniqueness, privilege, distance and permanence about them; but the mechanical reproduction of, say, a painting, by replacing this uniqueness with a plurality of copies, destroys that alienating aura and allows the beholders to encounter the work in his own particular place and time. (58)

By this we can understand that Benjamin believes that mechanical production can make a work of art lose its aura but by that it can reach in the hands of the underclass people.

He argues that in order to resist the influence of bourgeois art such as cinema, telephone, radio, television, etc. revolutionaries have to become producers in their own artistic spheres. According to Raman Selden, he "rejects the idea that revolutionary art is achieved by attending to the correct subject matter" (Selden 37).

Benjamin views that art like any other form of production depends upon technique. Even for Marxism the stage of development of a mode of production involves certain social relations of production, and the stage is set for revolution when productive

forces and productive relations enter into contradiction with each other. For Benjamin the revolutionary artists should not uncritically accept the existing forces of artist's production but should develop and revolutionize those forces. In doing so, an artist creates new social relations between artists and audience.

Terry Eagleton

Terry Eagleton is a British [literary critic](#) and one of the most influential Marxist literary intellectuals. Eagleton was the student of the [Marxist](#) literary critic [Raymond Williams](#). He began his career studying the literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. Then he switched to Marxist [literary theory](#) in the vein of Williams. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, probably his best-known work, traces history of the contemporary study of text, from the [Romantics](#) of the 19th century to the [postmodernists](#) of the last few decades.

Eagleton's thought remains firmly rooted in the Marxist tradition, and he has written critically on more recent modes of thought such as [deconstruction](#). He is the author of several substantial works such as *Excises and Emigres: studies in modern literature* (1970), *Marxist and literary criticism* (1976), *Literary Theory: an introduction* (1983). He is anti-post modernist and anti-structuralist. He vigorously attacks his contemporary Marxists who appear to be liberal towards the detached new developments in the field of art and culture. He strongly opposes the view points of Macherey and Louis Althusser, the Marxist structuralist theoreticians.

Modern literary criticism refuses to recognize literature's relevance to socio-historical realities as an action to sociological humanistic criticism. Eagleton suggest that its extremism is not convincing. He says that a theory is recognized either by its method

and inquiries or by the object it inquires. He emphasizes the fact that the literary criticism may not exist in the absence of literature and it may not be successful relying on the method alone. There is a great diversity in theory and methods too. Some are on the author's biography whereas others are on language, phenomenology and ideology and so on.

Eagleton shows the whole discussion with the view that in the present world of nuclear power everything has been politicized and literature is not exception to it. He in his illuminating work *Literary Theory: an Introduction* (1983) examines and concludes the development of various critical approaches in 20th century. He further writes that it is part of political beliefs and ideological values. According to him "literary theory has a most particular relevance to the political system. It has helped wittingly or not to sustain and reinforce its assumption" (196).

Terry Eagleton views literature in terms of form, political ideology and consciousness. He says literature may be an artifact, a product of social consciousness, a world vision; but it is also an industry. Eagleton in *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, observes:

Books are not just structure of meaning. They are also commodities product by producers and sold on the market at a profit. Drama is not just a collection of literary tests; it is a capitalist business which employs certain men (author, directors, actors, stage-hands) to produce, a commodity to be consumed by an audience at a profit.(55)

Here it becomes clear that in Eagleton's view capitalists commodify art and literature.

Writers are hired by publishing house to produce commodities which will sell. So writers

are not just transposers of trans-individual mental structure.

Eagleton attacks post modernist art and culture as hollow, devoid of its political content. He observes that, the depthless, style less, dehistoricized, decathected, surfaces of post modernist culture are not meant to signify an alienation, for the very concept of alienation must secretly posit a dream of authenticity which post modernist find quite unintelligible” (Eagleton, “Capitalism”386). Art becomes nothing more than production of any other commodity.

In this way, Marxist literary theoreticians straightforwardly acknowledge the literature’s relevance to the socio-economic situation of a society despite lots of diversities among themselves.

Raymond Williams

Raymond Williams is dominant Marxist literary theoretician of late 20th century who positively responds the development in art and literature. He examines the various aspects of literature in his book *The Long Revolution*. He disproves the idea that any art activity is purely creative or an artist creates something entirely new.

To explore the question of authenticity of artist’s creativity, he discusses and examines how Plato and Aristotle had treated art as imitation. Different theories of imitation and creation are brought into effect in order to explore the relation between art and reality. The opinions on the relationship of art with reality have been different according to people and time. Some have denounced art as false, illusive, fictitious, irrational and expression of raw emotions whereas some claim art as super reality.

Williams insists that art like another communication is social activity and it can’t be set apart from reality. It is obviously a part of social organization. He further agrees

that it is fatally wrong to:

Assume that political institutions and conventions are of a different and separate order from realistic institutions and conventions. Politics and art together with science, religion, family life and other categories we speak of as absolute, belong in a whole world of active and interacting relationship, which is our common associative life. (Williams 39)

Each activity should be studied in relation to the whole, as abstraction results in suffering.

William demarcates the phases of whole literary tradition in his book *Long Revolution*. It is a live manifesto of the discussion on the contemporary novels. He says, in the first phase, literature with concentration on heroic, romantic and legendary subjects related to invisible supernatural power developed with upper class. In the second phase, it shifts to ordinary and everyday activities with the rise of middle class, and the attention shifts to the ugly and poor aspects of 'simple reality' which give birth to naturalism in the third phase.

Williams maintains that the traditional society compromising genuine relationship of people in communities has ceased to exist and contemporary society has turned into tiny units of individuals, the holy relations are often violated and discontinued. The twentieth century is marked by the characteristic of personal freedom and individualism. This change in socio-economic life has resulted change in content and literary technique.

He clearly justifies the inseparable relation between art and ordinary experience, explaining artistic creation from Marxist perspective. He says that art cannot be excluded from serious practical concern and the claim that art is special and extraordinary is in vain. Art can neither be dismissed as unpractical or secondary nor can it be distinguished

from ordinary living. The attempt to give superior position to art depicting snobbishness is misleading in itself.

Marxism today is capable of influencing whole world by furnishing strong ideological basis especially for political movements. Marx was the most advanced economist, sociologist and supreme ideologist who formulated the most revolutionary and scientific theories in the time of tremendous socio-economic changes resulting from the scientific discoveries and establishment of large scale production industries. Marxism treats literature as expression of socio-economic life and judges it on the basis of how far it has fulfilled this function.

Marx's theories explicitly disprove the bourgeois economic, social and political system establishing the philosophy of proletariat – the lowest stratum of the society. The Marxist theory depicts the interrelationship of art and world, of theory and practice exposing and challenging the inequalities of the capitalist system in its various forms. Marxist literary theories remain a very rational, pragmatic endeavor at its core. Marxist literary theories might be defined in terms of common goals and political commitments. The Marxist theorists are committed to interrelationship of word and world, of theory and practice, and exposing and challenging the inequalities of the capitalist system in its various forms. Marxist critics use this challenge to the notion of an innate, prefigured, individual human nature to reexamine the nature of creative or literary authority. Like other literary theories Marxist literary theories ask the most challenging questions within the discipline of literary study. What is the relation between society and literature?

The Marxist philosophy believes that it is man's social being that determines his consciousness and it is that consciousness which determine s the nature of his literary

work. Orthodox Marxist theory of art insists that the primary function of art is to serve the working class representing their feelings and heightening the class struggle. The common belief of all Marxist critics is that literature can be best understood within a large framework of social reality. A society comprises different kinds of classes from bourgeois to proletariat and the history of a society is a series of struggle between these classes, according to Marxism. Marxist philosophy reflects the true picture of the external social reality. Marxist literary approach justifies the inseparable relationship between art and reality.

Marxist theorist distinguished from other approaches in the way in which they prioritized the materiality of culture, the way in which it is produced, distributed and received as a concrete social practice. For Marxist the economic mode of society is crucial because it is economic system which frequently-though not always determines how art will be constructed. The relationship between economics and literature is both the central concern of Marxism and subject of most heated debates. Karl Marx is the first major critic of capitalism as a system. Undoubtedly, much of his works are focused on the hardships of the working classes. However, a wide gulf between the rich and poor is still in different societies of the world as the working class people's work is ceaselessly repetitive and unrewarding.

III. Marxist Analysis of *Glengarry Glen Ross*

While analyzing *Glengarry Glen Ross* from Marxist perspective, we might ask the following questions. In what ways does *Glengarry Glen Ross* represent the social and economical conditions of capitalism? How does the play treat all the characters in relation to society? Does the drama reflect or expose the dominant ideologies of its time? What are the material conditions under which the drama is produced and received?

Mamet presents a cruel but realistic business world of America in *Glengarry Glen Ross*. The scheme of sales contest leads to examine the relation between real-estate company and its employees. No matter how they dislike their jobs, the salesmen still have to keep on working in order to earn their bread. The sales contest that is held by the two bosses, triggers an unstable struggle in capital-oriented world. Since the outcome of the contest directly relates to chances of gaining the fee which enables one to survive in business world, all the characters have to struggle for securing their own positions, or they will lose their jobs and therefore be repelled by the winners. Most of Mamet's plays provide the readers with morally corrupted societies in which people lack capability of making good connection with others. They search for a stable relationship with each other; however in order to preserve their own benefits, they self contradictorily destroy the companionship they desire to build up. Gradually and naturally, Mamet's characters tend to be alienated from their true selves and others. Under the pressure from the materialist society, people have the problem of spiritual absence and this becomes the main concern of Mamet's play.

'Succeed or perish' as an inevitable challenge in capitalism

The play *Glengarry Glen Ross*, pictures the hardships of real estate salesmen

belonging to the working class in the American capitalist society. The challenge to succeed at any cost is hurled on them and obviously failure can be disastrous as one can easily imagine how hard it can be for the working class people in such a system. The characters in the play, who are real estate salesmen, are made to take part in the contest taking place in their office without their will. In the contest, the salesmen who reach a certain high sales mark win a Cadillac, those who reach a lower mark win a set of steak knives, and the two who fare the worst, get fired. The salesmen are by force put into such a condition that either they should become successful or they should become ready to be destroyed and except that they have none other chances. This proves the fact that in capitalism 'succeed or perish' is an inevitable challenge for the people belonging to the working class.

The company's plan of holding a contest makes it very difficult for the salesmen like Levene, Aaronow and Moss who are not doing good in their business and have every chance of turning out failure and thus might possibly be fired from their jobs. But on the other hand salesman Roma finds it very rewarding, as he is very smart, cunning and knows how to sale the leads by easily convincing people. The company, being one within the system, seems to be promoting the capitalistic ways by raising material by any means. It wants its salesmen to sell the leads in whatever ways they can and that too they should do by making maximum profit and reaching the mark that has been demarcated for them. This policy of the company rewarding the successful and firing the failed ones is typical of the ways of a capitalist society in which the working class people are exploited and made to work against their will. They are forced to work very hard for success as they find a very wide gulf between success and failure and failure may devastate their lives.

But this so-called success is itself an illusion, as the whole benefit from their work is taken by the upper class (here the company owners) and they again very possibly can find themselves in such trapping situation of either success or failure.

Shelly Levene, one of the salesmen in the Mitch and Murray Company, who was successful in the past and not doing well now, boasts about his past success with John Williamson, his boss in the office. He shows disgust towards the company's plan of holding the contest without considering the salesmen's past record of success though they might not be doing well at the present. He says:

Levene: That isn't how you build an org... talk, talk to Murray. Talk to Mitch. When we were on Peterson, who paid for his darned car? You talk to him. The Seville...? He came in, "You bought that for me Shelly." Out of what? Cold calling. Nothing. Sixty-five, when we were there, with Glen Ross Farms? You call them downtown. What was that? Luck? That was "luck"? Bullshit, John. You're burning my ass, I can't get a damned lead... you think that was luck. My stats for those years? Bullshit ... over that period of time ...? Bullshit. It wasn't luck. It was skill. (17, 18)

This becomes clear that the company's policy is so harsh that it gives no importance to the past records of success.

Levene's wailing against the company's ways of working is of no use as the company is completely indifferent to realize the salesmen's problems. Instead the company's policy makes the thing further difficult for the unsuccessful salesmen as Williamson says: "Shelly, the hot leads are assigned according to the board, during the contest period to anyone who beats fifty percent..." (21). Williamson offers second

grade leads to Levene to sell as per the office's policy, pointing out the fact that he is unsuccessful at the present. Levene knows that closing the sale of the second grade leads is next to impossible. He, anticipating the certainty of being fired from the office, desperately pleads with Williamson for the hotter leads:

Levene: I'm getting garbage. You're giving it to me. I can't close these leads, John. No one can. It's a joke. John, look, just give me a hot lead. Just give me two of the premium leads. John, do I want charity? Do I want pity? I want sits. Give me a lead hotter than that, I will go in and close it. Give me a chance. That's all I want. I'm going to get up on that damned board and all I want is a chance. It's a streak and I am going to turn it around. (Pause). I need your help. (Pause). (21)

Levene tries all the manners of ploys to get the hot leads so he desperately says just wants a chance to succeed.

When Williamson says he will get hot leads after the thirtieth, if he becomes able to put his name on the board, Levene further says: "Bullshit the thirtieth, I don't get on the board the thirtieth, they are going to can my ass. I need the leads. I need them now. Or I'm gone, and you're going to miss me, John, I swear to you" (22). Levene tries his best to but can't persuade Williamson. Though he frequently boasts about his past record, now having lost the sales abilities of his youth exudes desperation. Viewing the way Williamson treats and shows indifference to him, it seems his aura of failure makes Williamson treat him contemptuously. Williamson, the company man, appears to have emotionally internalized the company's business policy that is 'failure is to be feared, hated, punished and shut out.'

The other salesmen like Aaronow and Moss, who are unsuccessful in their business, fear of the same consequences as Levene does. Belonging to the working class, they are to bear all worries, anxieties and the pressure of the work to get better result which but turns out to be beneficial only for the company. This becomes clear when Moss says to Aaronow: “The pressure is just too great. You’re ab... you’re absolu... they’re too important. All of them. You go in the door. “I got to close this damned thing or I don’t win the Cadillac... We work too hard. We all” (30). Moss is talking about the ills of capitalist society and the immorality of the company owners which brings them in such a difficult situation. The following conversation between them further clarifies the situation:

Moss: And so they kill the goose. I, I, I’ll... and a damned man, worked all his life has got to...

Aaronow: ... that’s right...

Moss: ... cower in his boots...

Aaronow (simultaneously with “boots”): Shoes, boots, yes...

Moss: For some damned “Sell ten thousand and you win the steak knives...”

Aaronow: For some sales pro...

Moss: ... sales promotion, “ You lose, then we fire your...” No. It’s medieval... it’s wrong. “Or we’re going to fire your ass.” It’s wrong.

Aaronow: Yes.

Moss: Yes, it is. And you know who’s responsible?

Aaronow: Who?

Moss: You know who it is. It's Mitch. And Murray. Because it doesn't have to be this way. (32,33)

They are in such a critical condition in which at all cost they have to be successful or to be fired. They have to face the harsh policy of the company which is very brutal.

The salesmen view the company's rules critically but are in no position to do anything against that. This shows how the lower class people are made helpless and exploited by the system in capitalism. This system widens the gap between the upper class and the lower class by promoting materialism and equalizing the working class people with machines.

The salesmen realize that they have been enslaved by the system without their own knowledge. The way they are made to do the work and the challenges that are put in front of them depict a kind of slave-lord relation where the slave must follow and obey the boss's orders at any cost without even getting a chance to think his/her own good or bad. It is the tactics of the capital owners in capitalism to put the workers in illusion of success by offering them rewards and threatening them of punishment in case of failure, to get the most out of their work. The workers work very hard being caught in the trap of either 'success or failure,' 'reward or punishment' but at the end of the whole process find themselves in thrall to the system, the shackles of which they can't break. Aaronow and Moss's following conversation proves this fact:

Moss: To say "I'm going on my own." Cause what you do, George, let me tell you what you do: you find yourself in thrall to someone else. And we enslave ourselves. To please. To win some goddamn toaster... to... and the guy who got there first made up those...

Aaronow: That's right...

Moss: He made up those rules, and we're working for him.

Aaronow: That's the truth...

Moss: That's the God's truth. And it gets me depressed. I swear that it does. At MY AGE. To see a goddamn: "Somebody wins a Cadillac this month. Two guys get fired." (35,36)

They have to work hard to please others and get success. They are in such a trap in which they have to struggle to earn their living.

The way the company deals differently with the salesmen like Levene, Aaronow, Moss and Roma, it becomes clear that its policy, of course, rewards success with further opportunity for success, and punishes failure by minimizing the opportunity for success. Successful salesman Roma is provided with the hotter leads, whereas Levene and Aaronow are given second grade leads. So a good salesman, like Roma has an easy time continuing his streak, while an ineffective salesman, like Levene, is effectively shut out. The experiences of Levene and Roma serve as a microcosm of capitalist society as the surest route to success in American business is to be successful already. Competition is brutal and relentless, and any small failure greatly increases the chances of further failure. The rules are cruel, unforgiving, and, as exemplified by Williamson's indifference to Levene's struggles, compassionless.

The challenge of 'succeed or perish' that is brought to the working class people in a capitalist society is very cruel and unforgiving in case of failure and they have to succeed at any cost to survive. In this contest for survival they have to win at any cost which they should do in whatever way they can by using fair means or foul. This greatly

enhances the possibility of their becoming con men and cheats. Because of their survival being at stake, in this play too the salesmen start scamming, cheating and mistreating people only with the motive of success as they are not corrupt in their hearts. It becomes clear that it is the sheer responsibility of the system for the foul means that the salesmen apply as a strategy of survival.

Scamming for Success as a Strategy to Survive

In the play *Glengarry Glen Ross*, most of the salesmen start using dishonest means to sustain and secure their positions as they are compelled to face the unwanted challenge that is hurled on them. Getting the tag of ‘failure’ and being fired from the company make it very difficult for them to survive in the brutal capitalist world in which they are fated to live. Mamet in this play is very successful in truly picturing the contemporary American society which gives so much importance to ‘material’ and forces the people of lower strata to embrace dishonesty as the only possible means left for them to achieve success.

Being hopeless and finding his future looking bleak, the salesman Levene attempts to persuade Williamson unfairly and tries all manners of ploys to get the hot leads he wants. This can be seen in the very first act when he offers Williamson some percent of his commission: “I’ll give you ten percent... of my end what I close” (23). When Williamson makes a counteroffer that he will give Levene the Glengarry leads for a twenty percent kickback, plus fifty dollars cash per lead, he immediately agrees and says: “... Okay. Okay. We’ll... Okay. Fine. We’ll... All right, twenty percent and fifty bucks a lead. That’s fine. For now. That’s fine” (24). Significantly, however, even when Williamson and Levene have reached this kickback agreement, Williamson makes the

thing impossible for Levene by insisting on the cash up front which Levene cannot do at the moment. Here, it seems that Williamson is toying with Levene as by his manners we can see that he is a classic “company man” who has emotionally internalized the company’s business policy and is in no mood to break it. As the company hates failure and wants to punish it, the company man also, following the same way, wants to see Levene fired as he is unsuccessful in his work. It can be clearly seen that these two characters are in contrast to each other, as one has assimilated himself within the system of capitalism and the other contrary to that hopelessly resents the same system though he cannot resist it.

Glengarry Glen Ross pictures such an American society which believes in the rule of ‘survival of the fittest.’ Here being fit doesn’t mean being physically fit but one has to have cunning and treacherous mind. One has to be able to grab another’s share and opportunity either by hook or by crook if he/she wants to rise higher. This same kind of thinking permeates the mind of the salesman characters in the play which is depicted from their behaviours and their dealings with their co-workers. The salesman Moss dealing with his fellow worker Aaronow in Scene Two of the First Act gives reason to this idea.

Aaronow, like salesman Levene, is not on the board, and is in danger of getting fired. Moss, who is a cunning salesman, garners confidence of Aaronow by complaining about the sales contest as he knows that Aaronow, not being able to close a sell, is feeling helpless by this plan of the office. Although Moss’s complaints against the system are reasonable, it becomes clear later in the scene that he is fostering this us-against-them mentality for purely selfish reasons. Moss’s railing against their measly earnings of a ten

percent commission on sales proves ironic, as Moss is about to propose that Aaronow commit a robbery in the office for leads, on his own, for less than fifty percent of the profits as his share. He threatens Aaronow to commit the robbery saying that if Aaronow doesn't agree to his plan, he will do it himself, and when he is caught, he will tell the police that Aaronow was his accomplice. This becomes clear with the following conversation that takes place between them:

Aaronow: You want me to break into the office tonight to steal the leads?

Moss: Yes, George.

Aaronow: What does that mean? I won't do it.

Moss: Listen to this. I have an alibi, I'm going to the Como Inn, why?

Why? The place gets robbed, they're going to come looking for me. Why?

Because I probably did it. Are you going to turn me in? George?

Aaronow: What if you don't get caught?

Moss: They come to you, you going to turn me in?

Aaronow: Why would I do it?

Moss: You wouldn't, George, that's why I'm talking to you. Answer me.

They'll come to you as they are coming to everyone. Are you sure you aren't going to turn me in.

Aaronow: Yes I'm sure.

Moss: Then listen to this. I have to get those leads tonight. That's something I have to do. If I'm not at the movies... if I'm not eating over the inn... If you don't do this, then I have to come in here...

Aaronow: ... I thought that we were only talking...

Moss: ... they take me, then. They're going to ask me who were my accomplices.

Aaronow: Me? (44)

Aaronow cannot understand how or why Moss has trapped him. When Aaronow asks, he responds that he has listened his plan. Moss absolves of all guilt for setting up his friend and suggest that Aaronow is responsible for paying attention. The following conversation between them further clarifies the situation:

Moss: Absolutely.

Aaronow: That's ridiculous.

Moss: Well, to the law, you're an accessory. Before the fact.

Aaronow: I didn't ask to be.

Moss: Then tough luck, George, because you are.

Aaronow: Why? Why, because you only told me about me about it?

Moss: That's Right.

Aaronow: Why are you doing this to me, Dave. Why are you talking this way to me? I don't understand. Why are you doing this at all...? (45)

Aaronow can hardly keep up with this line of reasoning. He can't understand why Moss is suddenly threatening and trapping him.

Here it becomes clear that there is not much difference existing between Williamson, the company man, sitting in the office telling them to sell and Moss sitting in the restaurant telling Aaronow to rob. Though Moss genuinely resents the system that traps them, he is nonetheless willing to replicate and perpetuate this system for his own benefit. Here it becomes obvious that Mamet through this play is illustrating that a

capitalist system that thrives on competition ultimately demands that colleagues mistreat and exploit each other. This cut-throat competition between them takes place to avoid failure and succeed at any cost and consequently destroys the morality of people by making them con men.

Another character Roma, the most talked salesman in the office for his success and selling skills, however, is a step ahead in cunningness and using dishonest means. This becomes evident in the third scene of the first act when he is dealing with a man named Link to close his sell. They both are sitting in different booths near to each other in a restaurant where Roma is in the middle of a long monologue that tends to shift topics very abruptly and confusingly. He pretends to become very philosophical spouting about the meaning of life and other grand vague topics which are quite compelling and to which Link is paying rapt attention:

Roma: ... I say this is how we must act. I do those things which seem correct to me today. I trust myself. And if security concerns me, I do that which today I think will make me secure. And everyday I do that, when that day arrives that I need a reserve, (a) odds are that I have it, and (b) the true reserve that I have is the strength that I have of acting each day real estate. Now: what are they? An opportunity to what? To make money? Perhaps. To “indulge” and to “learn” about ourselves?... Money? (Pause.) If that’s what it signifies to you. Security? (Pause.) Comfort? (Pause.) All it is is THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO YOU. (Pause.) That’s all it is. How are they different? Some poor newly married guy gets down by a cab. Some bus boy wins the lottery. All it is, it’s a carnival. What’s

special... what draws us? We are all different. We're not the same. (49,50)

Roma, a smart salesman become philosophical with the intention to persuade Lingk to buy lie leads. His goal is to anyhow sell the leads.

Roma is a "con artist" in the best sense as he elevates his scam to the level of poetry. His speech ping-pongs across several disparate topics, but he is always in control. He intentionally speaks of grand, wandering ideas. He has Lingk in his thrall even when Lingk presumably has no idea what he is talking about. The impenetrable oddness of much of Roma's monologue is part of its genius. Instead of barraging Lingk, Roma hangs back in a separate booth and puts on a show, drawing Lingk's attention. Roma is more like a hypnotist than a traditional salesman, as he convinces Lingk that he wants to listen. From there it is only a short step to convincing Lingk that he wants to buy property. Roma, rather than trying to convince Lingk that it is in his best interest to capitulate to a foolish scheme, uses subtlety, ambivalence, and the appearance of honesty to implant the idea of buying land in Lingk's head as if it were his own. This skill and cunningness of Roma eventually makes Lingk end up conned into buying a worthless piece of property.

The play shows the salesmen's frustration reaching to the extreme when we come to know in the second act that someone among them has committed a robbery in the office for the leads. Being hopeless and desperate by the threatening challenge of survival, they have reached to the extent of using illegal means. The late part of this act when Roma improvises an elaborate con to distract Lingk, and when he shows up at the office, is the most outrageous example of scam in the play. Roma knows that Lingk will try to cancel the sale from the moment he sees him approaching the building. Roma does everything he can to avoid talking to Lingk, because he has already gotten a signature on

a contract and now anything Lingk has to say can only be harmful. Roma is amazingly adept at improvising his story about 'D. Ray Morton' faking Levene to be the one and politely steamrolls over Lingk's attempt at getting his attention pretending to be engaged in very important business talk with him. Levene too provides a helping hand in Roma's scam as we see: "Lingk: I've got to talk to you. Roma (Looking up): Jim! What are you doing here? Jim Lingk, D. Ray Morton... Levene: Glad to meet you" (78,79). Roma having seen Lingk coming to the office starts making Levene pretend to be D. Ray Morton, as he senses that Lingk has come to the office to break the contract.

Lingk, who signed the contract on his own, now, following his wife's orders, has to cancel the sale. Roma understands Lingk's psychology and knows that this sale and therefore his own new Cadillac, that he thinks he will win, depend on Lingk choosing to listen to him rather than to Mrs. Lingk. When Lingk tells Roma that his wife has insisted he call the Attorney General if he cannot cancel the deal, Roma brushes it off: "No, no. That's just something she "said." We don't have to do that" (90). Roma tries to make Lingk think that his wife's words are unimportant. Roma's subsequent speech about certain things that married couples must do together and other things that one must divide individually, represent an attempt to empower Lingk (to take the decision himself) as he did the previous day. However, Roma's sale to Lingk gets ruined later on when Williamson, trying to help Roma, unknowingly tells Lingk that his contract went to the bank and the check became cashed just opposite to what Roma was telling Lingk all along.

The Lingk encounter is a microcosm of how the entire sales industry and arguably all American business works. It becomes quite obvious that although the salesmen are not

necessarily criminals as technically there is nothing illegal about convincing people to buy worthless property at the inflated prices, they do rely on dishonest manipulation as a cornerstone of their work. Roma's improvisation of the story of 'D. Ray Morton' to distract Lingk clearly exceeds the scope of fair salesmanship, and enters the realm of outright egregious lying.

We come to know that scamming has reached the extent of carrying out illegal ways when Levene, the worst performing salesman, accepts committing robbery in the office. When Williamson threatens him, he discloses the truth that he in suggestion of /and in partnership with his colleague Moss, has committed the crime:

Williamson: If you tell me where the leads are, I won't turn you in. If you don't, I'm going to the cop you stole them, Mitch and Murray will see that you go to jail. Believe me they will. Now, what did you do with the leads? I'm walking in that door – you have five seconds to tell me: or you are going to jail.

Levene: I...

Williamson: I don't care. You understand? Where are the leads? All right.
(Williamson goes to open the office door.)

Levene: I sold them to Jerry Graff.

Williamson: How much did you get for them? (Pause.) How much did you get for them?

Levene: Five thousand. I kept half.

Williamson: Who kept the other half?

Levene: Do I have to tell you? (Pause. Williamson starts to open the door.)

Moss. (100, 101)

Levene accepts that he has robbed the office along with Moss and gave fifty percent to him, according to their plan.

To keep Williamson from sending him to jail Levene makes many of the same arguments and offers that he did in the first scene of the first act. He offers him the dollar twenty five hundred cash that he made from the robbery. He further offers Williamson twenty percent of his commissions for as long as he remains with the company. After a moment's nervous hesitation, he ups the offer to fifty percent. This becomes evident when he says: "I'm going to give you twenty percent of my sales... (Pause.) Twenty percent. For as long as I am with the firm. (Pause.) Fifty percent. You are going to be my partner. Fifty percent of all my sales" (103). He again tries to bribe Williamson by offering fifty percent as he knows now he is going to jail.

Roma, the master salesman, praises and shows kindness, support and sympathy to Levene, who is not performing well. This seems touching until Levene goes to the inner office to face the detective when Roma reveals his true motives to Williamson: " I GET HIS ACTION. My stuff is mine, whatever he gets for himself, I'm taking half. You put me in with him" (107). By this we discover that Roma has been conning Levene all along, hoping to form a partnership with him so that he can ultimately steal half of Levene's commission. Roma, as top salesman on the board, does not have any particular reason or need to steal from Levene's. But showing this the playwright Mamet is making a point that Roma's merciless greed is what makes him top salesman and he is also trying to show how capitalism can foster greed.

Though the characters in the play are depicted scamming, cheating and using

dishonest means, their situatedness in the contemporary American capitalistic milieu seems to be the main factor behind their activities. They are the product of the society and the system. As the American business culture demands that co-workers compete against each other, the only way left for them to stay afloat is to take everything they can possibly get and for this they follow the path of dishonesty and scamming. The wrong path that they are forced to choose eventually makes them suffer for which anyone can say without hesitation that the system is responsible.

Victimization of the Characters by the Capitalist System

Almost all the characters in *Glengarry Glen Ross* have been victimized and thus suffer from the capital-oriented system. Dishonesty, immorality and the loss of spirituality in their characters is the gift of the system to them. The play shows that the characters are not corrupt from their inner hearts but they are compelled to be engaged in scamming just because they find their jobs and thus their survival at stake. The cut-throat competition between them is not their own want but the demand of the brutal society that gives full importance to wealth and material. The society and the system is run by a handful of rich and it crushes the underclass people (like the characters in this play) while it moves ahead. The characters in the play realize this fact as they experience the social injustice towards them. Yet, they cannot resist the system. Instead, being helpless, they start using dishonest means to compete in the contest of 'success or failure' imposed upon them and eventually suffer from their own misdeeds.

The character who suffers the most in the play is Shelly Levene. The 'use and throw' theory of the system becomes clear with his experience all along in the company. When he was successful in his work in the past, he was a hot favourite in the company's

eyes as he was of benefit to them. But now as he is an under performer, they are totally indifferent to him and his hard luck. The company is so inconsiderate that it ignores all his past achievements, puts him in the sales contest and can even fire him if he fares the worst. Levene, feeling that the company is being unjust to him, speaks out to Williamson: “My stats for those years... ? Bullshit... over that period of time... ? Bullshit. You want to throw that away, John... ? They want to throw away?” (18). Levene is talking out his frustration.

To avoid being fired from the company Levene tries all his manners of ploy to make Williamson give him the hotter leads for sale. But Williamson refuses to do that as the better leads are for the better performing salesman. He becomes very desperate and later on we come to know that he has committed a robbery in the office for the leads in suggestion and partnership of another salesmen Moss. The crime that he commits following the illegal ways is just because he thinks that his future is bleak and hopeless and if he doesn't do something in time (legal or illegal) he will be thrown out from the company.

Before Levene accidentally discloses his committing robbery to Williamson, he boasts about the Nyborg sale saying that now he has become a successful salesman again. But Williamson brings him back to the harsh ground of reality saying:

Williamson: Where have you been, Shelly? Bruce and Harriett Nyborg. Do you want to see the memos... ? They are nuts... They used to call in every week. When I was with Webb. And we were selling Arizona... they are nuts... did you see how they were living? How can you delude yours... (103)

Levene's final degradation comes when Williamson explains that the Nyborgs are deadbeats. Not only has Levene's break-in backfired, but his sale turns out to have been the creation of his own dream and becomes totally failure.

When Williamson explains that Bruce and Harriett Nyborgs are deadbeats, we come to know that Levene's sale has turned out to be his own self-delusion. As Levene has been so desperate to believe that he is still competent, he has allowed his desire to cloud his vision of reality. The robbery too, which he commits for money and success, backfires. It becomes evident that his fear of failure, has led him, tragically, to fail totally.

Other characters are also the victims of the same system. The salesman Aaronow constantly lives in the fear of being fired from the company. Because of not being successful already, he doesn't get the good leads to make sales which makes it almost impossible for him to succeed in his work. Besides, being a simple fellow who doesn't know any tricks, he is targeted by the cunning salesman Moss who also, being frustrated from the system, wants to fool him by making him a scapegoat for gaining his own success. Though we see that he is not fooled by Moss to commit the robbery, he is still in the verge of being thrown out from the office, as he has not been able to make any sale. We see his despair coming out when at the end of the play he says: "Oh, God, how so much I hate this job" (108). Aaronow, the only to be the true broker who is honest and is expressing his true feelings though he knows that he is going to be fired.

Though characters like Moss and Roma are very cunning, they too fall prey to the same system. Moss, who first tries to convince Levene to commit a robbery in the office, later on becomes able to persuade Levene to do that. His wants to do this as he is guided by the hardships that he faces as an underclass person in the capitalist system and because

of this he eventually has to bear the grave consequences as his partner in crime Levene discloses the committing of the robbery together. Another salesman Roma, in the need and fear of maintaining and continuing his success, frequently cheats and mistreats people. His embracing immorality is not his own desire but a need to survive in the cut-throat competition promoted by the society. Because of this he suffers from earning a bad name when his customer Lingk comes to know about his scam, and he gets the sale cancelled that he thinks he has closed and which could win him the Cadillac.

The play depicts the fact that the challenges faced by the salesmen, who belong to the working class, force them to become immoral and engage in scam and dishonest means. Following the right path they cannot achieve success and following the wrong path, which makes them momentarily successful, ultimately brings them sufferings. In fact, it reveals the fact that the working class people are doomed to be defeated in the American capitalist system. The playwright Mamet's description of all the characters furnishes a reality of the working class people in the contemporary American society. These characters represent their class which has to frequently face the challenge of 'succeed or perish' and ultimately become victimized by the unjust, capital-oriented and materialistic system.

IV. Conclusion

David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* is the true portrayal of the contemporary American capitalist society which nurtures social injustice and thrives on cut-throat competition in the working class people. The play gives the true account of disparity and ever-widening gap between the upper and lower class people in such a system. The experiences and the behaviors of the characters, who are real estate agents, serve as the microcosm of the society to which they belong. When 'survival of the fittest' becomes the principle of a system, it is natural that the people start trying their best to keep up with it to keep any kind of debacle at an arm's length. And when people cannot do that using right means, they desperately start scamming, plotting and using dishonest means which is only to avoid being perished. Even though they get momentary success by this, they ultimately have to suffer from their misdeeds for which unarguably the system remains as the main culprit. Keeping these things in view, this thesis has strived to raise the topic-related question as required to prove the hypothesis through the illustrative introduction, theoretical modality and textual analysis. The subject of study has been the challenge for survival in such a society which demands the characters to act immorally by which eventually they themselves get victimized.

The challenge that the characters face in the form of sales contest, in which being successful they will be rewarded and faring the worst they will be fired from the company, turns into a struggle for survival. In the attempt of securing their jobs, they start acting immorally, as the right way just does not seem enough for them to perform better. In this process they cheat and trick their customers, mistreat their co-workers and constantly betray their faiths. We find lack of spirituality in them which is the

characteristic of a capitalistic society.

The ideology of capitalism posits that happiness is purchasable. The salesmen, though may be selling something consumers don't even want, misguide the customers saying whatever needs they do have can be met within the system. The belief of such a society is just - buy the right material possessions as quickly as possible and you will be happy. The salesmen exploit that belief to meet their own far more desperate needs as they are involved in a cut-throat sales competition and have an urgent need to sell at any cost.

Glengarry Glen Ross vividly captures the sad ethos of American capitalism, and depicts it in its rawest dog-eat-dog form. While the characters have to suffer in case of being failure, having illusion they think that success in sales will be a key for them to secure a piece of the American dream. But the truth is that failure can be disastrous, whereas success gives only a momentary relief and security in the harsh and brutal society. All the characters involved in the sales contest in the play are unsatisfied and have a very bad experience of the system in which they are working. The system does not give any importance to their past achievements and demands that they must have success at the present as which is all that matters for the company. Finding the company's system so inconsiderate to their situations, they start searching for success on their own, and observing that only through treachery they can achieve it quickly, they become involved in it. However, they get trapped by their own wrong deeds and turn out to be tragic characters at the end.

Mamet, through this play, has depicted the American capitalist ways and has projected the socio-economic reality. The loss of morality and values in the characters is

something the seeds of which the system has sown on them. The society's functioning ways promote economic disparity between its different classes. The salesmen find a wide gulf between the company owners and they themselves and their work has been exploited by the company which values them with the profit they make. Mamet's want is to make the claim that such economic disparity is inimical to human welfare as it dissatisfies the working class people because of which they are compelled to accept dishonesty as their working method but at the end is not spared from its destructive consequences.

To conclude the research, it can be said that David Mamet's play *Glengarry Glen Ross* is a practically successful play to give the true account of the unjust American Capitalist Society through the brilliant presentation of characters who suffer from its system, belonging to the lower strata of the society. They, facing the challenge to succeed at any cost, take on dishonesty as the ultimate alternative which finally condemns them. This play is able to picture the fact that the money and material oriented system is the main culprit behind the characters' victimization.

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