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The Fragmentation of Modern Society in the Plays of David Storey

&

David Mamet

With Special Reference to
The Contractor, In Celebration, Home

&

American Buffalo, Glengarry Glen Ross , The Cryptogram

by

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Ph. D. Thesis

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Supervised by

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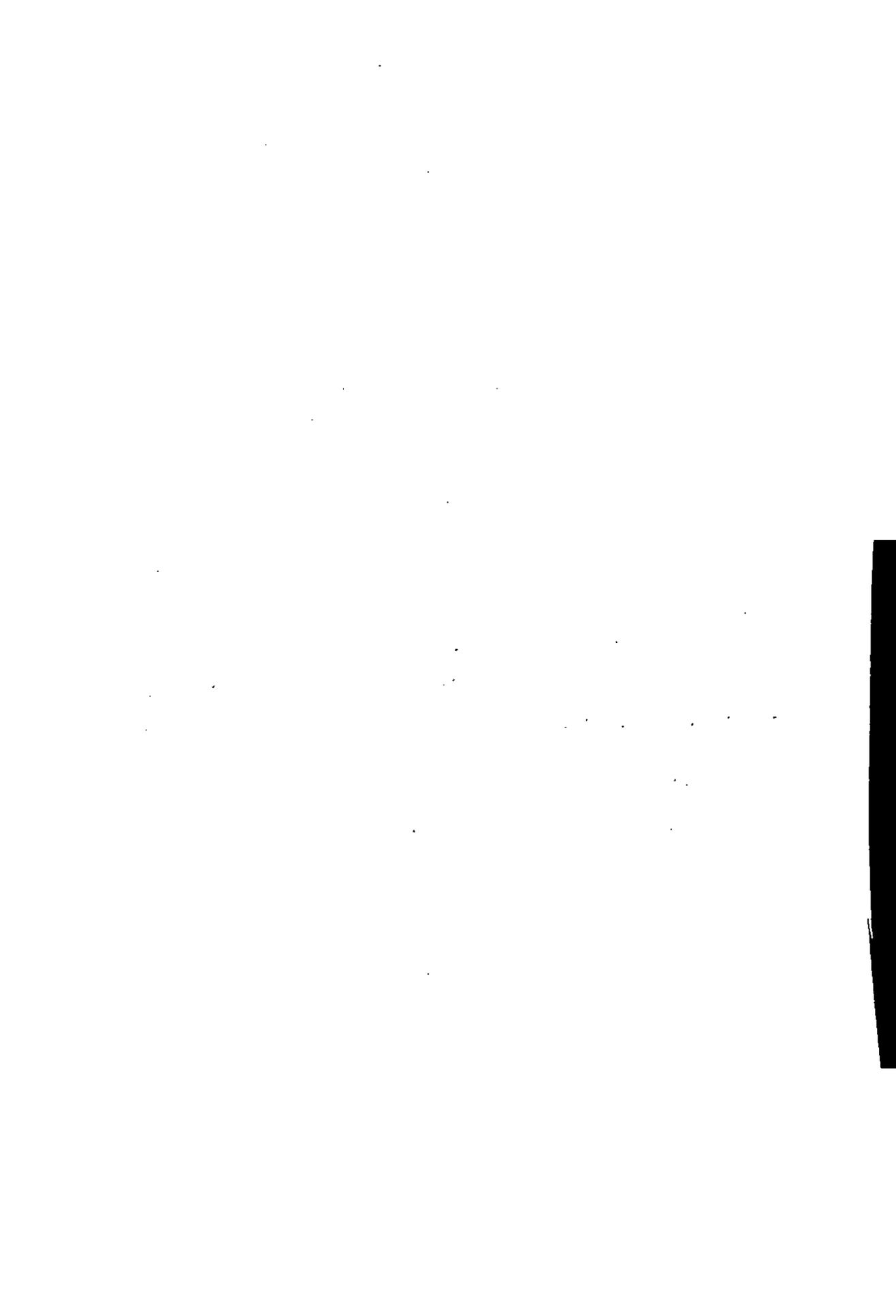
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**The Fragmentation of Modern Society in the Plays
of David Storey
&
David Mamet
by
Mona Kamal Hassan Mansour**

Abstract

The thesis attempts to examine the theme of fragmentation or decentralization that has become one of the major thematic concerns of postmodern literature. It is the purpose of this study to investigate three aspects of fragmentation that are dominant in the plays in question: the family as a social institution, the individual and language.

Fragmentation is revealed as inherent deep in the family structure, and as being there in the individual's inability to achieve a core self, in the language that is no longer a means for communicating genuinely and meaningfully, in the inefficacy of traditions values, marriage vows, etc.

Part One, Chapter I, attempts to investigate what is meant by fragmentation or decentralisation as main features of a postmodern culture. The chapter further attempts to survey postmodernism both as a cultural and as a literary movement.

In Chapter II, the candidate attempts to make a survey of both the social and historical background that have had an impact on both playwrights. The chapter attempts to discuss also the formative influences that have had a direct bearing upon their writings.

Part two, Chapter I, "Family on the Margins", focuses on the family as social institution that has become vulnerable to fragmentation in a postmodern society. The plays in question feature how parents – once believed to be the core and crux of the family – have moved off from the center on to the margins, quitting their roles, much to the detriment of the whole structure that they are supposed to hold firmly at the center. The candidate attempts to show how both playwrights show two different attitudes towards the decentralisation of a social institution, and to investigate reasons from both playwrights point of view that have lead to the fragmentation of such an institution.

Chapter II, "Characters: Products of a Postmodern World", gives an inside look into the inner psyche of the postmodern individual, and reveals how fragmented such individuals have become. The candidate attempts to investigate reasons, both historical and social that have lead to man's deconstructed self, to his failure to become a functioning or a sovereign autonomous individual in a postmodern culture.

Chapter III, "Language in Vacuum" depicts how language in a postmodern world has lost its central role as a meaningful communicative instrument. The chapter attempts to deconstruct the given texts so as to find reasons that have lead to the fragmentation of language, and to reveal the characters' attitude to their surroundings.

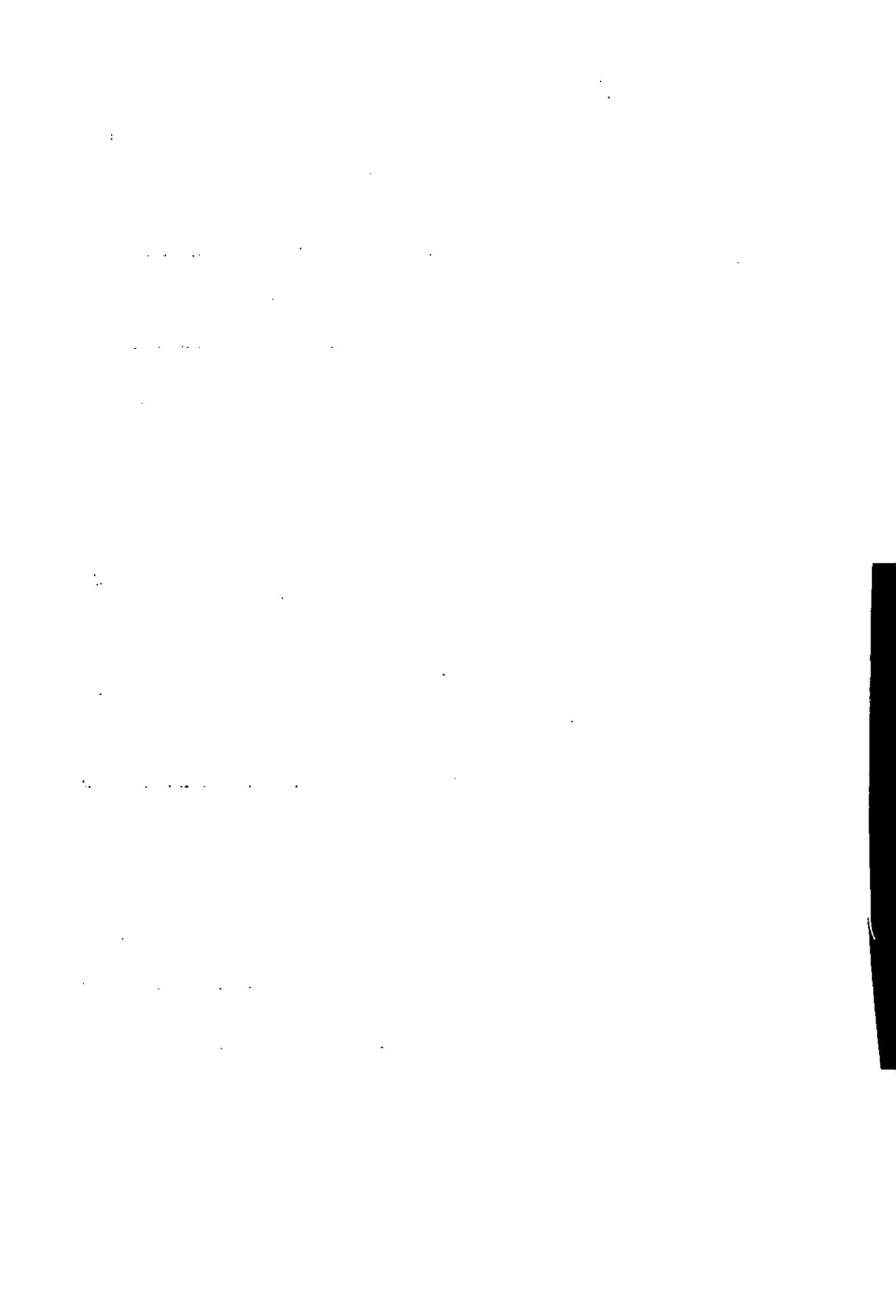
The conclusion attempts to sum up the ideas as well as to give salience to the points of similarities and differences between both playwrights.

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