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شبكة المعلومات الجامعية

# بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



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# شبكة المعلومات الجامعية التوثيق الالكتروني والميكروفيلم





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شبكة المعلومات الجامعية

# جامعة عين شمس

التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكروفيلم

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# بعض الوثائق الأصلية تالفة





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شبكة المعلومات الجامعية



بالرسالة صفحات  
لم ترد بالأصل





Assiut University  
Faculty of Arts  
English Department

*A Portrait of the American Businessman  
As Reflected in  
Selected Plays by David Mamet (1947- )*

An M. A. Thesis

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*To my parents,*

*with grateful affection*



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# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Chapter I : David Mamet (1947 - ):	
An Eminent American Playwright .....	4
Chapter II: <i>American Buffalo</i> (1975):	
The American Ethic of Business .....	31
Chapter III: <i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i> (1983):	
Hunger for Business Success .....	59
Chapter IV: <i>Speed-the-Plow</i> (1988):	
Lack of Trust.....	88
Conclusion .....	118
Chronology.....	123
Works Cited.....	134





## INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this research is to provide a portrait of the American businessman as reflected in David Mamet's (1947- ) *American Buffalo* (1975), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983), and *Speed-the-Plow* (1988). Cohn calls the three plays Business Trilogy, since all of them feature a business setting. They also trace the corruptive force of American business. Mamet presents a dark vision of the American businessman. His aim is to make the audience watch the businessman's unethical actions with resentment and, accordingly, to think of reformation as the way of salvation. Moreover, the structure of Mamet's three plays is circular. Each play circles back to its start. *American Buffalo* starts and ends with Bob's apology to Don for missing a customer. *Glengarry Glen Ross* starts and ends with Levene's humiliation and attempt to bribe Williamson to get a business deal. *Speed-the-Plow* starts and ends with the agreement of Gould and Fox to produce a film.

The research consists of four chapters and a conclusion. In Chapter One, the researcher traces the development of Mamet's literary contribution and career. The themes of Mamet's plays and the features of his characters are discussed. The writers, who affect Mamet's imagination, are referred to. The researcher tackles Mamet's style and language as well. Since the American businessman's dealings are highly influenced by the social and economic background of America, it is preferable to conclude the chapter by having an idea about the nature of capitalism and the myth of the American dream. This background helps to understand the American businessman's motives and behavior.

Chapter Two handles *American Buffalo*. The play consists of two acts. It takes place in Don's junk shop, which is used as a symbol. There are two other characters: Teach and Bob. The former is Don's associate and the latter is his protégé. The play is about a failed plan designed to rob a coin collector, whom Don sells a buffalo-headed nickel for ninety dollars. There are many ways of understanding the title of *American Buffalo*. The discussion shows how business has a different concept on the part of the play's characters. Therefore, the basic theme of the play is the American ethic of business. There is a description of the kind of relationship between Don and Bob. The play also depicts how the American businessman, represented by Teach, gets business through staining others' images. Hence, a clash between business and

friendship is created. And betrayal has a role to play in the play. The definition of free enterprise proves the American businessman's ethical perversity. Verbal and physical violence pervades Act Two. The failure of communication among the three characters becomes a must. Bob's confession and Don's apology in the end are a revival of friendship in this business world.

Chapter Three deals with *Glengarry Glen Ross*, which is a composite of two acts. Act One involves three scenes set in a Chicago Chinese restaurant. Act Two occurs in a real estate office. There are seven characters: Levene, Williamson, Ross, Aaronow, Roma, Lingk, and Baylen. The play concerns a group of salesmen, who deceive and exploit clients as well as each other. *Glengarry Glen Ross* is based on Mamet's own experience in a real estate office. The pressures that make the salesmen victims and lead them to victimize clients as well as each other are tackled. The real estate office is a microcopy of American capitalistic society. The play's dominant theme is the hunger of four salesmen; namely, Levene, Roma, Moss, and Aaronow, for business success. Their hunger makes them restless. The audience gets the impression that they resemble hungry birds of prey, which are relieved only at the moment they hunt their rare victims. Language in the play is no longer utilized to bind people together. Instead, it becomes a means of conning others. The researcher highlights the salesmen's amoral and inhuman behavior throughout the play. In *Glengarry Glen Ross*, crime is validated at the hands of the American businessman to find a position for himself. Thus, Mamet provides an evidence on the failure of the American dream. Furthermore, Frustration, violence, dishonesty, and cunning are obstacles that close the way in front of the salesmen's personal relationships. The play ends with two crucial remarks by Aaronow and Roma.

Chapter Four discusses *Speed-the-Plow*, which consists of three acts and includes three characters. Gould and Fox are producers. Karen is Gould's temporary secretary. Acts One and Three take place in Gould's office. Act Two occurs at his house. There are many interpretations of the title. The play revolves around an agreement between Gould and Fox to produce a film that makes money. This agreement is badly affected by Karen's sexual temptation of Gould. The play states the criteria of film production on the part of the American businessman. According to Gould and Fox, it is money that pushes Hollywood production. On the contrary, Karen pretends that principles should be the base of making movies. In this sense,



Mamet presents a conflict between materialism and idealism. The researcher shows how the assumed principle-oriented tendency of Karen is conquered by the business-dominated atmosphere. Lack of trust is the central theme of the play. Both Gould and Karen are trustless. In *Speed-the-Plow*, the relationship between Gould and Fox in Act One differs from theirs in Act Three. Violence is sought by Fox to liberate a friend and to save a business deal. In addition, the relationship between the two producers and Karen is crucial. Gould's bet with Fox to seduce Karen reinforces the moral deterioration of the American businessman as well as his attempt to brutalize a woman. In order to achieve their ends, Gould and Karen use language to entrap each other. Communication among the three characters is problematic. In the conclusion, the researcher comments on the businessmen's behavior in addition to the atmosphere of the Trilogy. He also sums up the common features of the three plays.