

كاديلاك هي أمريكا: تخريب أخلاقيات العمل في مسرحية غلينغاري غلين روس لديفيد ماميت

## The Cadillac is America: Subversion of Work Ethics in David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*

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### الملخص:

تعتمد مواقع العمل، ابتغاء أداء أعمالها بكفاية واقتدار، على مجموعة من القيم الأخلاقية تُعرف مجتمعةً بـ "أخلاقيات العمل". الأسباب المؤدية إلى الاخفاق في الالتزام بهذه القيم كثيرةٌ منها الشعور بالخوف ومخاطر فقد العمل وعدم الشعور بالقناعة. ويؤدي هذا الاخفاق إلى شيوع جملة من الأفعال التي تنتهك أخلاقيات العمل مثل الخيانة والغدر والكذب والخداع.

في "غلنغاري غلن روس"، يُبين الكاتب المسرحي ديفيد ماميت نتائج العيش في مجتمع تسوده المادية وحمى التنافس. يشترك العمال الاربعة في مكتب لبيع العقارات في شيكاغو في معركةٍ شرسةٍ للبقاء في وظائفهم ويلجؤون لأجل ذلك إلى الانغماس في عددٍ من الأفعال اللأخلاقية وغير القانونية. تجادل الورقة البحثية أن حمى التنافس والاستماتة في الحصول على سيارة الكاديلاك التي تُعد الرمز النهائي للثراء والسلطة تُسهم في حيونة العمال وتجريدتهم من إنسانيتهم وتكشف عن ضعفهم وهشاشاتهم. يُستهل البحث بشرح للظروف التي تؤدي إلى انتهاك أخلاق العمل ثم ينتقل إلى التعريف بالآلية التي تحول بها مكتب العقار إلى موقع للتغول البشري والاخفاق في أداء العمل بالصورة المطلوبة. والرسالة

التي تحملها المسرحية هي ضرورة أن تتبنى مواقع العمل مقارنة أكثر إنسانية في التعامل مع العاملين، أو ما يعرف بمقاربة نوعية حياة العمل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مواقع العمل، أخلاق العمل، الحيونة، ديفيد مامت، غلنغري غلن روس. مسرحية

## Abstract:

To function efficiently, work places rely on a set of moral values known collectively as work ethics. Failing to maintain these values often results from feelings of fear, threat of job loss, occupational insecurity, and dissatisfaction; and leads to various acts that violate these ethics such as betrayal, backbiting, lying, deception, and violence. In Glengarry Glen Ross, David Mamet shows the consequences of living in a highly competitive and materialistically demanding society. Resorting to various forms of immoral and illegal acts, the four Chicago-based real estate agents engage in a fierce battle of survival in the world of business. The paper argues that overcompetitiveness and the burning desire to get the Cadillac car, the ultimate symbol of wealth and power contribute to dehumanizing the workers and exposing their vulnerability. The paper begins with an exposition of the circumstances that lead to the violation of work ethics. It then explains how the real estate office is turned into site of dehumanization and malfunction. The message the play conveys is that workplaces should adopt a more humanistic approach in their dealings with employees, i.e., the Quality of Work life approach.

**Key Words:** *workplaces, work ethics, dehumanization, Mamet, Glengarry Glen Ross.*

"Your extremity is my opportunity."

(Mamet in Conversation, 2001, p.46)

## I. "Oh, God, I hate this job": Job Insecurity and Dehumanization

Work or employment is certainly an indispensable element for any person who wants to live a decent and meaningful life. This centrality of work is succinctly summarized by the expert in employee productivity, Jerome M. Rosow who opines that work lies at the "core of life," for it means "good

provider, autonomy...and it establishes self-respect and self-worth"(Bora, 2015, p.184).

Employment, in fact, is a very valuable resource. In her 'Latent Deprivation Theory,' Marie Jahoda explicates the reasons behind the significance of employment on the personal and social levels. Employment, she emphasizes, does provide people with "unique benefits that are crucial for human well-being, and that cannot be fulfilled elsewhere" (as cited in Selenko & Batinic, 2012, p.730).

In addition to securing fixed financial returns, Jahoda's theory states that employment grants five significant latent privileges. They are: time structure, strong social contact, higher collective purpose (being useful to others), status and prestige, and activity (as cited in Paul et al., 2023, p.1). As a result, the theory proposes that "unemployed people have a worse mental health compared to employed people...because they suffer not only from a lack of the manifest function of employment (earning money), but also from a lack of [the] five so-called latent functions of employment" mentioned above (Ibid.).

Losing these benefits as a result of losing job, or the threat of losing it usually leads to what is known in economy and management studies as 'job insecurity.' The mere threat of loss, Stevan E. Hobfoll et al affirm, can potentially cause other losses, leading to what is called "loss-spirals" (2018, p.107).

Generally speaking, job insecurity denotes the feeling of anticipated unemployment. It is specifically, "the potential loss of financial and social resources," and is commonly understood as "a work related-stressor" (Selenko & Batinic, 2012, pp.730, 729). Because employment is a valued resource which people "strive to retain, protect and build," the potential or actual loss of it causes temporary or chronic psychological distress (Ibid., p.730). The reasons that give rise to this feeling of job insecurity are countless: inflation, labor markets recession, mechanization, the upswing in unemployment rates, and temporary employment contracts, to mention but a few (Ibid., p.729).

Job insecurity often leads to violation of 'Corporate Ethics' and conflicts in work places. Corporate Ethics integrates six essential elements. They are: honesty, trust worthiness, fairness, integrity, responsibility and civic virtue (Mintz, 2011, para.3). In his article, Mintz accurately identifies the possible ethical issues the Corporate Ethics usually deal with and attempt to handle in

the work environment from the viewpoint of managers and employees. They include, but not limited to:

misreporting the number of hours worked, taking credit for the work of another person, stealing resources, treating others unfairly, accepting gifts or other forms of payment..., violating one's confidentiality obligation to the organization by divulging sensitive information, misrepresentation of data, failing to disclose all the information the public has a right to know (2011, para.2).

Besides violation of Corporate Ethics, the other factor that makes work places stressful and unhealthy is conflict which is, according to Gregory (2007, p.4) "a painful reality and a key reason for poor productivity and frustrations"(As cited in Hussein, 2020, p.8). Conflict indicates malfunctioning within the group, and weakens employee's time and morale. It also leads to misunderstandings that make clashes seem personal (Ibid.). Conflict often refers to a situation in which "persons or group disagree over means or ends and try to establish their views in preference over others." It is "opposition arising from disagreement about goals, thoughts, or emotions within or among individuals, team, department or organization" (Ayalew, 2000; Helleiegele and Slocum, 1996, as cited in Ibid., p. 9). Similarly, Stoner (1998) views conflict as a "disagreement about the allocation of scarce resources or clashes regarding goals, values, and so on" (As cited in Ibid.; see also Aleya, 2017 for further discussion).

In their study of the impact of conflict on employees' performance, Ojo Olu and Abolade Dupe Adesubomi, A. (2014) focus on the dysfunctional and damaging conflict that destructively influences performance in work places. Furthermore, In her study, "Impact and effect of conflict in the workplace," Juste Kulbaciauskaite (2021) clearly states that uncontrolled workplaces conflict does result in dysfunctional outcomes and leads to isolation and avoidance. An employee may feel frustrated and discouraged. Tension, distrust and negative expectations reign supreme. Motivation and enthusiasm for work weaken; greed and selfishness get the upper hand. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2015, 2020) is more specific in delineating the destructive impact of workplace conflicts. The Institute points out that these disagreements are "mostly related to employee well-being. Stress, a drop in motivation or commitment, anxiety, a loss of self-confidence, a drop in

productivity, and unworkable relationships are some of the most common consequences of conflicts" (as cited in Mihaylova, 2021, p.23). As result, high levels of conflict among work personnel, Oluremi B. Ayoko (2003) remarks usually lead to low levels of mutual understanding, hostility and satisfaction combined with resentment, suspicion and unwillingness to positively contribute to the ultimate outcome of work. To further point out the pernicious impact of dysfunctional conflict, Karen A. Jehn (1997) and Rahim M. Afzalur (2002) arrive at the same results in their studies. They state that workplaces conflicts damage personal and professional social ties. Commitment, devotion and quality of job performance are, more often than not, sacrificed because of these conflicts. Drawing on empirical studies, Sabine Sonnentag and Dana Unger also list strain symptoms, burnout and somatic complaints as among the outcomes of workplaces conflicts that "constitute a serious threat to employees' well-being" (2014, p.166).

Kulbaciauskaite presents a list of the most recurrent causes of conflicts. They are: differences in the social and cultural background, personality orientations, and value system. Also, she cites lack of job description and clear work instructions, poor communication, distrust and dishonesty, stressful heavy workloads, work-reward imbalance, and biased treatment (2021, p.2). To these causes, Hussein adds 'grudges' among employees, 'malevolent attribution,' 'destructive criticism,' and 'competition over scarce resources' (Hussein, 2020, pp.16-17).

A conflict-ridden work environment often results in dehumanization which negatively affects both victims and perpetrators. To deny employees characteristics that differentiate them from animals is certainly to 'dehumanize' them, i.e., to deprive them respect, refinement, rationality and self-worth (Christoff, 2014, p.1).

Besides 'animalization', 'mechanisation' is another form of dehumanization. Rather than treating them as individuals who enjoy autonomy, self-sufficiency, and ability to contribute to the decision making and production process, employees are treated as objects or automata without the capacity to feel and sense (Haslam, 2006).

Mild dehumanizing in workplaces is usually reflected in behaviors that range from "disrespect, condescension, neglect," to "social ostracism and other relational slights (Bastian and Haslam, 2011 as cited in Christoff, 2014, p.2). As a result, dehumanized employees would be subject to increased anti-

sociality and aggressive behaviors such as bullying and harassment, and social rejection which are one type of 'hostile avoidance behaviors.' Naturally, victims of dehumanization are made to feel "degraded, invalidated, or demoralized...betrayed ...humiliated... socially excluded (for more information, see Ibid.).

Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci (2000) remark that these dehumanizing behaviors are most likely to damage psychological wellbeing. In their 'self-determination theory,' they expound that depriving persons of "the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness" might contribute to their suffering from melancholy, nervousness, and other stress-related disorders.

To redress these problems in the organization settings, Quality of Work Life (QWL) is suggested. The terms 'Humanization of Work', 'Industrial Democracy', and "participate work" are interchangeably used with QWL to denote the same sense. QWL demands that work places adopt more humanistic approach in dealing with employees and calls for more participatory work practices. Participation is defined as a "process which allows employees to exert some influence over their work and the conditions under which they work" (Strauss, 1998, p.15, as cited in Forde et al, 2006, p.370), with the result that workers are offered "an increased role in decision-making, resulting in increased worker commitment and higher levels of productivity" (Ibid.).

QWL refers to the favourableness or unfavourableness of a job environment for people (Bora, 2015, p.184). It is an integrative strategy that aims to sustain and improve performance through maintaining employee well-being (Cascio, 1998, in Riyono et al., 2022, p.87). Wellbeing here implies "job enrichment, democratic supervision, employee involvement and safe working conditions" (Bora, Ibid). QWL, furthermore, put special emphasis on the "level of satisfaction, motivation, involvement, and commitment of individuals experienced in their lives at work," and organizations that adopt QWL generally "seek to instill a sense of security, justice, pride, democracy, autonomy, responsibility, and independence" (Bernardin and Russell 1993, in Riyono et al., p.89).

Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., (2013) report nine essential components to measure QWL. They are: "Job satisfaction and security, Work environment, Rewards and Compensation, Organization climate and culture, Cooperation and relationship, Autonomy of work, Facilities, Adequacy of resources, Training and development" (As cited in Nanjundeswaraswamy and (Mahesh,

2020, p.2). Cascio (1998) illustrates the requirements necessary for a successful implantation of QWL in an organization. These include: 'mutual care and assistance' between the employees and managers who should be "good leaders and able to guide their employees, not as "bosses" and dictators;" 'mutual openness and trust', 'mutual contribution to decision making and problems solving;' and 'mutual responsibility and trust' (Riyono et al., 2022, p.90). The realization of these requirements surely results in creating positive attitude, increasing productivity, improving the living condition of the employee, and enhancing the effectiveness of work setting (Phadtare, 2010, in Soumi Majumder, Debasish Biswas, 2022, p.414).

In the claustrophobic fictitious real estate office of David Mamet's play whose events span two days only, four desperate salesmen are engaged in many unethical and illegal acts as a result of being reduced to mere tools in the service of a ruthless economic system that focuses on profits at the expense of their prosperity, happiness and well-being. The play is a scathing indictment of a system that crushes the very essence of humanity in these salesmen.

## II. Cadillac is America: "A man's his job":

David Mamet wrote *Glengarry Glen Ross* (hereafter GGR) in 1984. In general, the 1980s was a rather tough period for the Americans as a number of financial crises occurred successively and rapidly, and involved "an abrupt and widespread reversal of expectations of markets participants about the stability of particular institutions" (United States General Accounting Office, 1997, p.16). Silver crisis of March 1980; Drysdale government securities failure of May, 1983; Mexico debt crisis of August, 1982; and Continental Illinois bank crisis of May, 1984 are among the crises that plagued the American economy in this decade (Ibid.). The outcomes of these crises were: severe recessions, high rates of markets volatility, protracted inflation, and a rise in commodities and real estate prices (Ibid., p.7). The 1980s is also the decade of 'atomized individualism,' 'taking the money and running,' and the 'Me Decade,' as Tom Wolfe ([1974] 2005) explicates. The ethos of this decade is suggestively translated into ironical slogans like: 'Greed is Good,' 'You can have it all,' and 'Shop till you drop' (Cardullo, 2019, p.13).

The central issue in GGR is selling a piece of land. For the four salesmen engaged in this process, selling is not only a job that secures financial rewards, it is also means to secure and enjoy the five substantial benefits expounded in Jahoda's above-referred-to theory. Consequently, failing to sell this piece of land means not only losing the job as a valuable resource, but also losing these

benefits. 'Selling,' in this respect, is synonymous with self-worth and existence itself: "A man's his job," as the oldest salesman, Shelly Levene asserts (Mamet, 1984, p. 75).

It is too natural, therefore, that the salesmen engage in a fierce battle the result of which is either to be 'Yanked,' or 'Ranked.'\* This anticipated unemployment results in a deep sense of job insecurity that compels the salesmen to forsake the work ethics, and indulge in a series of immoral acts that include, but are not confined to, lying, stealing, cheating, exploiting and manipulating one another, sacrificing friendship, backbiting and betraying. This job insecurity, no doubt, results in a conflict of interests among the salesmen who are competing over a very scarce resource, i.e., the leads that contain the names and phone numbers of promising potential clients for expensive properties. Thus, the conflict in GGR is undeniably dysfunctional as it constitutes a threat to the salesmen's well-being, and viciously influences their job performance which becomes unfriendly, strained and self-interested. Thus, 'selling' here does not stand for a business transaction to sell a piece of land only; it extends to include selling everything: words, promises, morals, self-integrity, and friendship. The play title itself is a testimony to this: Glengarry Highlands is the most important real estate which the salesmen have to succeed in selling now; Glen Ross Farms is referred to as having been profitable for the salesmen who were able to 'close the deal' several years ago. Selling and the ability to persuade clients to buy unappealing pieces of lands, furthermore, signify virility, manhood and utility; and this adds to the value of selling act. Greenbaum staunchly hold the view that: "The world of business, therefore, is intrinsically connected to masculinity" (1999, p.35).

The battleground, on which the salesmen fight their wars, is the real estate office which follows the old-fashioned management hierarchy that treats the salesmen as tools to maximize the profits. The two offstage managers, Mitch and Murry, are concerned neither with providing the salesmen with favorable and enriching job environment nor with humanizing work conditions. They watch what is going on in the office from a distance, and they maliciously gloats over the suffering of his subordinates. Accordingly, describing Murry and Mitch as Corporate Psychopaths is not without justification. Psychopaths, a number of studies testify are "extraordinarily cold, much more calculating and ruthless toward others than most people are and a menace to the companies they work for," their nature is "basically a selfish and predatory;" they have a habit of "pick[ing] on the weak in order to minimize any possible harm to themselves. They act ruthlessly and without any conscience;" in general, they



enjoy humiliating subordinates, hurting people. They tend also "pick on those workplace colleagues who are, because of their organizational position, most unable to defend themselves" (see Boody, 2011, pp.368-369 for further definitions and details). They also play employees against one another. Guttman (2004,p.49) states: "If the leader is confrontational, divisive, and plays individuals against one another . . . that modus operandi is going to permeate the organization"(as cited in Babalola, 2016,p.2).

These psychopathic tendencies are show in the monthly selling contest they seemingly devise to encourage the salesmen to exert more efforts in selling worthless lands. The most successful salesman who succeeds in 'closing' the deal is promised a new brand Cadillac. The runner up in this merciless monthly selling-contest is promised a set of steak knives. The losers would be 'punished' with the third prize: unemployment.

Cadillac is desirable; it exudes richness and status. It also means retaining and enhancing lucrative career prospects. It is of the American Dream, of everything that Americans want and cherish. It is, moreover, the place where "Americans get things done: they travel...they escape destitution...they preach...they have sex...and they especially earn money" (Shelby, 2007, p.31). However, Cadillac in GGR comes to symbolize the decadence and disintegration that wreaks havoc in the American society.

'Close,' 'reclose,' 'closing,' and 'closed,' appear more than fifty times in the play. Next to it is the verbs: 'sell,' 'sold,' and 'selling,' which are mentioned thirty eight times. 'Get out there and close,' and 'Always be closing...' (p.72) are the mottos of the salesmen because if they succeed in 'closing', they would get 'on the board,' of work; if they fail, it is the end for them. It is the beginning of loss-spirals on almost all levels of life: occupational, financial, social, and psychological. It is noteworthy that the epigraph of GGR does show: "Always be Closing: Practical Sales Maxim." Drawing on his personal experiences in sales business, James Muir (2016) delivers practical instructions on how to learn and implement the 'Perfect Close,' which is the final goal of any salesman. Though desirable, this perfect close is not achievable or attainable all the time. Sometimes a salesman has to pay a heavy price as the events of GGR illustrate. In a conversation with George Aaronow, Dave Moss, one of the salesmen, vividly depicts the great pressure he and his officemates are writhing under owing to the suffocating work environment:

The whole fuckin' thing...The pressure's just too great. You're ab...you're abolu...they're too important. All of them. You go in the door. I..."I got to close this fucker, or I don't eat lunch," "or I don't win the Cadillac..." We fuckin' work too hard. You work too hard. We all...(p.30).

The sense of insecurity, dissatisfaction, being burned out, and low self-worth, as his hard work is not fairly rewarded, is quite clear in these lines that abound in incomplete words and sentences, and ellipsis that reveal more than they conceal.

This sense of downheartedness and fear of future is reinforced in another speech by Richard 'Ricky' Roma, who although is considered the most successful land seller in the office, he still has fears typical of those who work in the real estate sector:

...what is our life? (pause) It's looking forward or it's looking back...And what is it that we're afraid of? Loss. What else? (pause) The bank closes...We get sick, my wife died on a plane, the stock market collapsed...the house burnet down...what of these happen...? None on 'em. We worry anyway. What does this mean? I'm not *secure*. How can I be *secure*? (pause) Through amassing wealth beyond all measure? No. And What's beyond all measure? That's a *sickness*. That's a *trap*. There is no measure. Only *greed*. How can we act? (p.48-49)

Ostensibly, these lines reveal a deep sense of loss and insecurity as vicissitudes of life are beyond control. It is true that Roma succeeds in staying 'on the board' because of his ability to figure out weaknesses of clients, and ultimately persuade them to 'close' the transaction. However, the view he presents of his life is bleak and fraught with images of anxiety, loss, and sickness. Nothing is certain in the lives of the salesmen, and nothing can be obtained without humiliating oneself with cajoling, sweet-talking, deceiving, intimidating, and stealing. In spite of this, the salesmen go on living in the same vicious cycle of tough life and lousy business practices if they are doomed to endlessly repeat the same action. "It's an imperative," Scott Tobias (2022) explains that "they live to see another miserable day at the office, so the

drama becomes a test of how far they're willing to go to get on the sales board and at what cost to their soul."

The three scenes of act one take place in a Chinese restaurant near the real estate office. The characters in these selling-centered scenes are seen engaged in endless acts of manipulation, persuasion, and competition that are linguistically performed and based. Implied in these acts are a power dynamics that divides the characters into essentially two categories: winners and losers; privileged and unprivileged, dominating and dominated

These power dynamics are strongly present in the first scene

in Levene's attempt to persuade John Williamson, the office manager, to give him some of "the Glengarry Leads" necessary to contact clients and close deals with them. Levene, who once was a successful salesman, is now a deteriorating figure in the world of business. He is no longer the powerful and productive 'Machine' which is his nickname. The entreating language he uses with the much younger manager is indicative of his weak position and fading fortunes. He says: ". . . Give me a chance. That's all I want... I need your help...listen to me. Please...A deal kicks out...I have to eat...That isn't how you build an org...[organization]"(pp.15-17). He also tries to elicit the young manager's sympathy by talking about his sick daughter. Levene here is dehumanized since he is a mere 'machine' to be disposed of when out of use; he is treated as a less than human being, and no longer enjoys respect; his basic physical and psychological needs are also denied. He is left to grapple in the sleazy world of business where "even morality is bartered as a commodity" (Cardulla. 2019, p.6). More important is his suffering from social exclusion and rejection. When he asks Williamson at the end of the play why he insists on turning him to the police, the manager rudely answers him: "Because I don't like you"(p.104). In this sense, "the real estate office is a system that does not value people as individuals, but only as resources for profit; likewise, competitors are viewed as obstacles to be exploited or eliminated"(Cullick, 1994, p.23).

Eliminating the competitors is what Moss intends to do. As desperate as the other salesmen to get "on the board," Moss plans to strike back by stealing the 'leads' from the office, to sell them to Jerry Graff, the owner of a rival real state office. He assertively reports: "I have to get those leads tonight. That's something I have to do"(p.27). He solicits the help of Aaronow who is to perform the act of stealing. When the latter hesitates, and refuses to have part in the plan, Moss intimidates him, saying that he is going to break into the

office, but he is to report Aaronow to the police as his accomplice. Similar to other characters, Moss, it seems, feels compelled to resort to dirty means to avoid the degradation of unemployment and status loss. When senses that his attempt to persuade Aaronow is fruitless, he turn to the more frustrated and much weaker Levene to help him in staging the burglary.

In this sense, Levene's desperate act of stealing the 'leads' is “representative of responses to a greed-driven world, which fails to provide affection for those who crave it or opportunities for principled behavior to those who aspire it”(King, 2004, p.149).

Act two reveals a number of dramatically unexpected twist in the play's dog-eat-dog of one-upmanship. Although he is the manager of the office as revealed in Act One, Williamson turns out to be as weak as the other salesmen. He is a performer to act a role assigned to him, and he tries to outperform others in obeying his masters: Murry and Mitch. In his attempt to deny responsibility for withholding the 'leads,' he tells Levene:

I do what I am hired to do... I'm wait a second. I'm hired to watch the leads. I'm given...hold on, I'm given a policy. My job is to do that. What I'm told. That's it. You, wait a second, anybody falls below a certain mark I'm not permitted to give them the premium leads.(p.19)

Like Levene over whom he tries to exercise his power, Williamson is dehumanized and mechanized. He lacks autonomy, and has no opinion. He is objectified and can do nothing except what he is told. Using passive voice in his speech is significant as it suggests that he is acted upon like other salesmen. He is also severely berated by both Roma and Levene, in Act Two, for lying about the cashing of the check of Roma's client, James Link.

GGR ends with a sad note for almost all the salesmen. Except for the invisible but perceptibly omnipresent Murry and Mitch, Levene is arrested, Roma makes his way to the Chinese restaurant to find and decoy new clients after the cancellation of his selling contract with Link. Aaronow chooses to sit alone and gives vent to his frustration: “Oh, god I hate this job” (p.108).

Moss declares his intention to go to Wisconsin, and ends his journey in the office with a rant that expresses his indignation in a manner similar, stylistically speaking, to his office colleagues. He belittles and dehumanizes

Levene; he reveals his jealousy of Roma, and makes extensive use of long list of expletives, curses and obscene language. He rants and raves:

"Fuck the Machine"? "Fuck the Machine"?...You're fucked, Rick—are you fucking nuts? You're hot, so you think you're the ruler of this place...?!...Shut up...I come into this office today, I get humiliated by some jagoff cop...I get accused of...I get this shit thrown in my face by you, you genuine shit, because you're top name on the board...What are you?...What are you, friend to the workingman?...Fuck you, you got the memory a fucking fly. I never liked you. (pp.70-71)

Roma, in a later illuminating conversation with Levene, comments on the world of spiritual bankruptcy they are living in. The tarnished and deviant unethical practices of the declining business world seem to contaminate everything. He says:

**I swear...it's not a world of men...it's not a world of men...It's a world of clock watchers, bureaucratic, officeholders...what it is, it's a fucked up world....there's no adventure to it. (pause) Dying breed. Yes it is. (pause) We are members of the dying breed (p.105).**

It is the death-in-life image that prevails in these lines. Life is too dreary, banal, and sterile. Work is spiritless and degrading. It is a cursed world populated by hopeless cons, criminals, and exploiters who, trapped in an endless cycles of lousy deals and demeaning acts, are about to die.

III. Conclusion: "Your extremity is my opportunity."

Mamet dedicates GGR to the British dramatist, Harold Pinter (1930-2008) whom he considers his mentor. This dedication is quite meaningful as Mamet replicates some of the distinctive features of the Pinteresque dramas. Mamet is a fine chronicler of colorless and shapeless low life. The four desperate salesman are victimized and victimizers at the same time. The world of unfair competition and 'survival of the fittest' they inhabit requires violation of ethical practices and honest dealings. It is a stifling world because everything in it is tainted with betrayal, dishonesty, and swindling. To further aggravate their situation, the salesmen are alienated from one another, and socially isolated. All workplace relationships are not friendly: employee-employee relation is based on jealousy, greed, hate, and burning desire to

destroy others; employee-manager relationship is based on exploitation, intimidation, and disrespect; while employee-client relationship is based on lies and cheating.

Mamet has first-hand knowledge of the work conditions in real-estates agencies as he worked with some in his youth. There is an old precept in management that says: threatening the employees with job loss is a good means to discipline them and prevent them from shirking. This old view neglects the devastating effect of job loss threat and job insecurity on the morale and psychological wholesomeness of the employees. It disregards the fact that the more pressure an organization exerts on the employees, the more unethical their behaviors become. A better approach is Quality of Work Life which relies on more participatory work practices, job improvement, and increasing job satisfaction. The outcomes of the absence of QWL elements are the dehumanization of the salesmen, disintegration of their personal and social beings, and collapse of their worlds. This disintegration extends to the everyday down-to-earth language which works, with its endless vituperations, invectives, pauses, exclamations, to isolate and 'close' them off from one another.

In the ruthless business world of exploitation, profiteering, and 'the winner takes it all', some peoples' extremities are turned into profitable opportunities for others. The Cadillac, promised by the real estate office, encapsulates the dark and brutal side of life in America that ruthlessly crushes dreamers of a decent life.

\*'Rank or Yank' is a method of employees' job performance assessment according to which the employee is either 'ranked,' i.e., get promoted, or 'yanked,' i.e., their job contracts get terminated

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