



CHAPTER II

INTIMATE BONDS: MAKING OF LONELY SELVES

In *Lonely Crowd* Riesman, Glazer, and Denney classify societies in terms of their social character as “tradition-directed,” “inner-directed” and “other-directed” (8). Typical members of tradition-directed society conform “by their tendency to follow tradition.” In contrast, members of an inner-directed society conform through “an internalized set of goals,” and those of the other-directed society conform “by their tendency to be sensitized to the expectations and preferences of others” (8). *Lonely Crowd* argues that the middle class American social character at the time of its publication is other-directed and the typical American is one who cares more to be popular and accepted by his peer group than anything else. The ideal society put forth by Riesman, Glazer, and Denney was none of these but an autonomous one where individuals have a fine balance of inner and other directions.

In an other-directed society, the yearning for approval by others can result in the acute experience of loneliness as a stigma, should this approval be denied. There is loneliness in inner-directed societies too. As *Lonely Crowd* states, “the fate of many inner-directed children is loneliness in and outside the home. Home, school and the way-stations between may be places for hazing, persecution, misunderstanding” (69). But the inner-directed child is supposed to take all that as his due. There is no shame in the suffering of loneliness. An inner-directed person might present himself as a lonely self with lesser inhibitions than an other-directed person. Sometimes, he/she might even consider presenting himself as lonely as a complementary aspect of his/her personality. The lone romantic poet, or discoverer who laments at not being understood by the mundane mass around him is a product of this temperament. In such cases, the lonely self seeks not companionship, but adulation from those around him. But for the other-directed child loneliness is a shame. It

becomes a “stigma”, something which people will attempt to avoid or at least hide from others. It might be dubbed a social problem for which society is to be blamed. It will also be seen as something that could be prevented, avoided, or, cured. Psychological approaches to a lonely self generally tend to this mode of thinking.

Robert Weiss, who pioneered loneliness studies in psychology/sociology in the 1970s, defined loneliness as a “separation distress without an object” (4). He distinguished two distinct emotional states in loneliness, namely, “the loneliness of emotional isolation and the loneliness of social isolation” (5). According to him, the loneliness of emotional isolation results from “the absence of an attachment figure” (6). This attachment figure, Weiss posits, “is not necessarily an intimate or confidant, but rather a figure that is security providing because of a perceptual and emotional sense of linkage to that figure” (11). The loneliness of social isolation, on the other hand, “stems from the absence of community” (6). Psychologists have noted that “depression tends to be associated with the loneliness of emotional isolation and anxiety with the loneliness of social isolation” (Weiss 13). This chapter attempts to analyze the presentation of selves as lonely by Mametian and Stoppardian characters in relation to their immediate social circle.

Enter a Free Man (1968), in its original form and title, *A Walk on Water* (1960) was Stoppard’s first play written when he was twenty three. Stoppard himself was dissatisfied with it and even called it “a play written about other people’s characters” (Hudson 56), referring to his varied sources of inspiration for it ranging from Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* (1949) to Robert Bolt’s *Flowering Cherry* (1957). A much revised play, *Enter a Free Man* is a play well worth consideration as many of Stoppard’s key themes and techniques in their germinal form can be seen here. May be Stoppard too realised this, for though terribly disillusioned with its Berlin production, he wrote to his friend Antony C. H.

Smith that it should only be “performed after my death as a historical curiosity” (Fleming 69).

Scholars on Stoppard have, however, found this play pivotal as it denotes the starting point of his career. Richard Corballis in his analysis of Stoppard’s imagery remarks that the two versions of “clockwork” in *Free Man*, that is, the romantic and the philosophical, “come up for explosion again and again in the later plays” (29). Ronald Hayman comments that Stoppard’s talent for developing extravagant ideas into lively action” can be seen in this play (18). Anthony Jenkins remarks that “revised over years,” *Enter a Free Man* “shows a talent for verbal fireworks and a sensitivity to the possibilities of stage space, even if dialogue, action, and content are not yet interlocked or distinctly Stoppardian” (6). Stoppard’s attitude towards the lonely self too gets pronounced quite firmly in this first play.

The titular “freeman” in *Free Man*, is George Riley, an “inventor.” The play shows him in his intimate circle – his family and his immediate social circle, the pub. The problem with Riley is that none of his inventions are of any use to anyone and are never commercially viable. Riley blames his failure in becoming a successful inventor on his family. His wife, Persephone, is for him “a terrible liability” in “many ways” though she is “a good woman” and “in many ways a fine woman” (10-11; 54). His daughter Linda is the sole supporter of the family. She works in a shop and gives Riley his pocket money which he spends in the pub. Riley is presented as a loner, an inventor who might be, according to his daughter Linda, “just another lonely feller having a quiet drink” (10; 53).

The loneliness of Riley presupposes a distinct variety of loneliness which will be developed in the later works of Stoppard. The “lonely feller” is lonely half out of his own choice and half out of his predicament. And many a time, the “lonely feller” is an idealized mask as well as a pathetic predicament. Thus, *Enter a Free Man* may be seen as a play that

lays the foundation of Stoppard's political stance on loneliness – as an inevitable mark of greatness though not something desirable. The equation seems to be somewhat like this – all great people are lonely, though not all lonely people are great. Ronald Hayman, in his work, *Tom Stoppard*, remarks that after the several revisions that it underwent, *Free man*, in its West End version, “fails to achieve the conviction it needs.” This is because “the serious conversation between the wife, Persephone, and the daughter, Linda at the beginning of Act two” do not appear plausible or necessary in the play's context (15). The lines Hayman quotes end with Persephone's assertion on Riley's worth as someone “different” and Linda's countering of it:

PERSEPHONE. There's lots of people like your father – different. Some make more money, because they're different. And some make none, because they're different. The difference is the thing, not the money.

LINDA. Well, that's nice, isn't it? What am I doing in a rotten shop? I could stay at home and be different – starving but different. Terrific. (*Enter a Free Man 57; qtd. in Hayman 15*)

But then, theatrically convincing or not, this is the pivotal thematic stance of the play and consequently defy any editing thereof. Stoppard has remarked that his characters “are only brought into existence because of [his] desire to express certain ideas” (O'Connor 229), and that he was a playwright “interested in ideas and forced to invent characters who express those ideas. All my people speak the same way, with the same cadences and sentence structures. They speak as I do” (Gussov 35). Further he states that he is “fairly brutal about making these characters say what I want to be said” (Gussov 56). At the same time he is not, according to him, a propagandist of any single idea. “I don't write plays with heroes who express my point of view. I write argument plays. I tend to write for two people rather than

for one voice” (Gussov 35). And, the “two people” (or, more) in *Free Man*, seem to convey that the “difference is the thing” (*Enter a Free Man* 57). Being lonely then, need not be a stigma, but a prerequisite to greatness and success. Viewed in this light, the conversation between Persephone and Linda becomes a statement of the central idea of the play.

Whether the characters condemn it by words, or not, the idea of being different holds a charm which in turn results in isolation and loneliness. Linda’s quest throughout the play seems to be the conversion of George Riley – from being “different” to being “like other people,” and she confidently asserts that she is not different, she “just want[s] to get married and get on with [her] own life” (64). We may expect to find Riesman, Glazer, and Denney’s prototype of inner-directed parent and other-directed child of American society here, but Stoppard’s characters elude such mould fixations. Linda, too, is craving after difference in her own way. In the previous Act she describes her present lover as someone not common, “he’s unique. He’s me unique sheek!” (42). She is thus her father’s daughter in seeking out difference. Her mother, Persephone is no different as she had declared her preference for the “different” George Riley rather than any other person who is “safe,” like “most people,” for “safety isn’t everything” (57). We have here an ordinary family whose preference is for difference than for commonness or safety.

The play opens with Riley’s home on the left of the stage and a pub on the right. Riley is introduced, like many Shakespearean heroes, through the conversation of others. Persephone, his wife, and Linda, his daughter, discuss him and we get an outline of what is to come in Linda’s words – “George Riley, the man who’s on his way...to the pub on the corner” (10). While Persephone justifies his going to the pub by saying that “at least he meets people,” Linda brings forth the subject of his self presentation. She casts her doubts on even Riley’s meeting people at the pub and presumes that he might be “just another

lonely feller having a quiet drink...the point is, what's he like? I mean when we can't see him. He's got to be different – I mean you wouldn't even know me if you could see me –” (10). What she implies is that Riley has only a singular technique for presenting himself and that technique is a failure in gaining him an audience, either home, or outside. Further more, the home is also, not his place of preparation, or in Goffman's term, his “backstage.” He has to put up his act of an inventor even there without any scope for relaxation. The only “back stage” allowed for him is his room upstairs, but it, as well as his secret enjoyment of fairy tales, are turned public by Linda.

Riley's tragedy is that he does not have a “back stage” and “front stage” personality. He has only one mask and it fails miserably to attract for him the required audience. At home, his intimate relations, though giving him a personal and psychological space to return to, do not serve as attachment figures capable of warding off his sense of emotional isolation. An attachment figure, according to Weiss, is, “a figure that is security providing because of a perceptual and emotional sense of linkage to that figure” (11). According to Riley's perception, neither Persephone nor Linda is capable of giving him that sort of an emotional linkage as they do not inspire him. As he tells Florence, “it's not a question of liking or disliking, it's what it does to you...it's nothing ...my wife and I and Linda, we get up in the morning and the water is cold ...” (34). Water being one of the central images of the play, with its original title as *A Walk on Water*, the coldness of water implies a relationship which is getting cold. The habitual and ritualistic relationship he has with his family has made a warm receptive empathy impossible for him.

At the pub, his public space, too, he finds no audience receptive of his presentation with one exception, a “gormless” sailor (9), Able. But Riley's perception of the situation is otherwise. It is only his family who cannot understand him, as the creative mind. What a

“creative mind needs is respect for its independence” and his gullible mind will take that respect from any passing stranger it fancies upon (16). The “cheaply rakish” Harry is thus given the ready victim in Riley to apply his momentary fancy. If Riley perceives his intimate relations as persons incapable of giving him any inspiration, his perception of his limited social sphere is just the opposite. The neighborhood pub is the place where he expects miracles to materialize. He does not grasp the fact that his performance, so ineffective at home, may attract some gullible audience temporarily, but mostly, is viable to be manipulated by the likes of Harry.

Harry plays on Riley’s assumption of genius and Riley finds in him the partner he had long been waiting for. “A partnership – my goodness – did you hear that? I’m walking now, I’m on my way, committed – I’m walking and I’m not going to stop...” (23). A partnership, thus, gives him a pathway for prosperity, and he can “walk” through the pavement of riches only with a companion who inspires him. His illusion of economic partnership (and social success) culminates in his equally illusory romantic partnership with Florence, Harry’s girl friend. He boasts to her about his imaginary comradeship with other inventors, “we’re a small band of brothers, you know, each working to our separate goal” (32), and visualizes himself as “a man standing on the brink of great things. Below me, a vast flat plain stretches like an ocean, waiting to receive my footprints” (32). Riley’s idea of social success is closely linked with his idea of gaining companionship. According to him, it is because he was alone that he did not attain success. In his illusions, he even finds a companion-sufferer of loneliness in a complete stranger, Florence. “Florence, you and I – we’ve been wasted. It has taken me years to make a break because I have been alone...” (32).

Riley thus associates being “alone” to being “wasted.” Success, for him, needs a

companion. At the same time, being a lonely self is seen through two different criteria – one for the self and one for the other. Consequently, loneliness when suffered by himself and loneliness when suffered by others have variable significance. Riley explains away his own loneliness as a result of his not being properly understood by the ordinary people around him. It is the loneliness of a member of an elite tribe, the romantic hero, the singular genius who stands high above the mass. It is seen as the loneliness of someone who will one day be accepted by the “small band of brothers” (32), who are, in his case, the other lonely inventors. On the other hand, a lonely self in another is a sign of weakness and wickedness. Before such a person Riley presents himself, not as lonely, but as connected and consequently powerful. In his interrogation of Brown, whom his illusory imagination attributes as an industrial spy, Riley’s assumption of having connections, and as a result, having power, is seen. He repeatedly uses the first person plural “we” to denote the power structure he is (supposedly) associated with. Later, in Act II Riley reiterates this connecting of success with having companions. “No-o-o! You’ll see – I’m not alone this time – Oh, Lindy, I’ll come back in a Rolls Royce and then you’ll believe me again and it’ll be happy again” (63).

Linda’s story provides a sub plot to the play by reiterating the same themes of emotional isolation, the waiting for an ideal attachment figure, and, the final disillusionment. According to Linda, she was “in the desert one day, you see, and all of a sudden, before I knew where I was, I heard the thunder of horsepower and a strong brown arm scooped me up and as we roared into the sunset he covered me with burning kisses and put me on his pillion!” (42). But then, like Riley, she too is disillusioned and the “strong brown arm” turns out to be that of a married man who did not even give her his real name.

The play with names is yet another aspect which connects the main plot with the

subplot. If Linda did not know her lover's real name, Riley too, did not know his (imagined) partner Harry's second name. He can be any Tom, Dick or Harry; in fact, he can be anyone in the abstract. The loss of touch with reality makes everyone actors, whose real identity is never known. Even the names of the characters change within the course of the play. Only Riley and Linda remain with the same name throughout. This constancy of identity is suggestive of the essential drawback in their characters – their inability to act various roles according to situations and keep “audiences” who “believe that the characters they see” actually possess the attributes they appear to possess (*PS* 17). Linda's boast that “you wouldn't even know me if you could see me” (10, 54), that is, “see” her outside her home, seems as hollow a boast as Riley's inflated self-eulogies which he tries to present before his family. Both Riley, and Linda, then, come back home never gaining the community they yearned for.

John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) inspired Stoppard's generation of playwrights to be ambitious to “do a lot more in the theatre than had been previously demonstrated” (Stoppard. “Something to Declare” 47). Stoppard's imagery of Great Britain within the play can be seen in the light of this ambition. Katherine Kelly remarks that Riley “represents Stoppard's vision of the best of the British heritage to survive postwar decline – the individual stubbornly resisting conformity, bureaucracy, and humiliation” (*Craft of Comedy* 67). Yet, the play itself is not a paean to the individual as a free man, but rather a eulogy to a nation capable of allowing such freedom. It is Persephone, (or Constance, which is her real name), who is more symbolic of Britain than the “unsinkable” Riley with his “slow leak” (*Enter a Free Man* 9). Riley, like a dutiful and well meaning son, pays tribute to his country by making a clock which sings “rule Britannia” at twelve, twice a day. The fact that it becomes a nuisance does not undermine its intended spirit of patriotism. The

picture of the queen on the wall of Riley's home and Constance's setting it straight too adds to this sense of a nation constant in supporting her children, even those who pay only lip service to her (46).

The figure of the lonely self which emerges in the play is that of one who experiences the loneliness of social isolation. Riley is a social failure, an inventor whose inventions are not socially wanted or accepted, a man without a job who does not even want to belong to the community of the unemployed and get money from the labor exchange, a citizen who even failed to give the compulsory military service required of his country during war, a man without friends, an actor without audience. Even in the neighborhood pub, his entrance "makes no impact" for all his entry "with a flourish" and self-announcement of "enter a free man!" (10). Weiss states that people experiencing social isolation "found themselves angry at the person they were with. The person they were with, they felt, even as they knew better, had trapped them into this isolation" (13). Riley's anger with Constance could easily be accounted for in this light. But at the same time he calls her Persephone, the name of the goddess of fertility and rebirth and wife of Hades, the lord of the underworld. Riley and Linda have a haven, a home to come back to, and their emotional isolation is only imaginary as the attachment figure they yearn to have is always ever readily available and security providing, though not perfect or even adequate for all their needs. She is also, their country, the Britain which encourages free speech and individual liberty and tolerates differences. *Free Man*, thus, in its final revised form (it was revised a number of times) is, more than being a *Flowering Death of a Salesman*, (as Stoppard jokingly nicknamed it pointing to the influence of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Robert Bolt's *Flowering Cherry*), a reply to these two plays as well as to John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and the other plays of the contemporary playwrights with leftist orientation. *Enter a Free Man* is a play

that eulogizes its back ground – a home and a pub; a private space and a public space which accommodate and tolerate a lonely self, a “different” person, knowing fully well that he “wasn’t...safe, like most people are safe” (57). And that because of this difference some may succeed while others might not. “the difference is the thing, not the money” (57). Because of this underlying theme, *Free Man*, though a play that falls short of Stoppard’s genius for comic perfection, remains an important play in analyzing Stoppard’s basic assumptions concerning the lonely self.

One of Mamet’s early plays, *Duck Variations* (1972) encapsulates many thematic and technical aspects of Mamet’s writings. A play completely devoid of action other than through virile linguistic cadences verging on to a musical performance, *DV* invoked mixed responses from audiences and reviewers. While some considered it “a gentle, charming play” (Lewis, Patricia, and Browne 65), others denigrated it as a play which, “once over... leaves you with virtually no memory of it” (Welling Hoff). Yet, its survival through numerous productions and re-productions, favorable theatre reviews, and academic and scholarly analyses, places it among those select plays, which, according to Mamet, comes “from the heart” (*Three Uses 21*).

As an early play, many influences have been attributed to *DV*. Relics from the Absurdist theatrical strain were quickly spotted here. Like *Waiting for Godot* it too has only two characters, and no commendable action. Interestingly, in one of the very few comparisons made between Mamet’s and Stoppard’s plays by critics, Deborah R. Geiss compared it as evoking “Tom Stoppard’s re-interpretation of Hamlet’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, in an attempt to fill an increasingly threatening silence with words and more words” (52). *DV* was Mamet’s “first successful play” (Berkowitz 191), while *R&G* was Stoppard’s stepping stone to fame and a solid standing in a playwright’s career.

DV contains characteristics that are to be identified with most of Mamet's later works as acknowledged by many critics. It has been pointed out that *DV* "displays features common to much of his work: a fixed setting, few characters, a sparse plot, and dialogue that captures the rhythms and syntax of everyday speech" (Marowski and Matuz 245). C. W. E. Bigsby, writing on Emil's description of the ancient Greeks in *DV* remarks that "the influence may be Beckett; the idiom is pure Mamet" (*David Mamet* 30). William W. Demastes identifies "several later minor works by Mamet" like *Reunion* and *The Woods* as "additional variations on *The DV* theme" (77).

The fear of solitude and the need for companionship are pervading themes of all Mamet's work as critically acknowledged. Steven H. Gale, in his 1981 valuation comments that Mamet's "plays are about relationships" (46). The need for companionship has been seen by most scholars and reviewers as a major theme in *DV* as well. *Time* theatre review observes that "what emerges" from the play "is a vivid sense of their friendship, the fear of solitude, the inexorable toll of expiring lives" (T.E.K.). According to Demastes, *DV*, *The Woods* and *Reunion* "depict relationships where the parties need someone and somehow find a glue that binds" (77). Loneliness and its problems being Mamet's major concern is thus accepted and established but we have to see how these lonely selves present themselves as lonely or not so lonely.

For Mamet, character is action (*On Directing Film* 13), and in *DV*, action consists solely in conversation. Commenting on Deborah's speech in *SP*, "it's only words. I don't think you should be frightened of words" (74), Esther Harriott remarks, "Mamet's words do frighten" (xiii). They are the stuff with which the world in Mamet's theatre is made of and marred with. They are the primary presentational devices through which the characters reveal or conceal their lonely selves. As Dan Zeff noted, neither Emil Varec nor George S.

Aronovitz is “called by name on stage” though the playbill and published scripts give the characters these elaborate names. Moreover, “we don’t know anything about them aside from the fact that their lives are winding down in loneliness” (Zeff). The selves of George and Emil are, thus, presented through the seemingly impersonal conversations which are held between them.

Mamet himself justifies the lack of personal details of his protagonists by referring to the concept of “hero” as propounded by Bruno Bettelheim and Alfred Hitchcock – “that the less the hero of a play is inflated, identified, and characterized, the more we will endow him with our own internal meaning.... You say “a hero,” and the audience subconsciously realize they are that hero” (*On Directing Film* 38-39). Consequently, the audiences are supposed to identify with George and Emil and their sense of loneliness. The purpose of a play, according to Mamet, is “that which the hero requires” (*Three Uses* 22), and in this play what the hero/heroes require is companionship, and, as Bigsby pointed out, a necessity to keep “at arm’s length [the] inevitability and immediate possibility” of death (*David Mamet* 27). The self-presentation of each character is thus, oriented towards this aim. No wonder, then, the play begins with a positive note with George and Emil both agreeing “it’s nice, the park is nice” (5).

All through the fourteen variations of this funny and poetic piece there exists a harmony implied by the musical cadences of the title, “variations” being “a new but still recognizable version of a theme” in music (“Variations” def.3). Throughout their conversation we find this yearning for harmony by easing out singularities; always adding one to one, changing the singular “he”/”she”/”it” into the plural “they”. When George spots a boat in the lake, Emil asks whether “there’s more than one in the boat?” (5). And the boat itself is not alone, there is another vessel in the waters, though it is only a water pump.

When conversation drifts to ducks Emil introduces a harmony even there by bringing in a comparison with humans, “like humans, they don’t like cold” (9). During the conversation, George points out that “they got a leader. A lead duck.” He immediately adds, “but he stays with the pack” (9).

The role of the leader too is not made unique. When one leader dies, another takes his place and it is a continuing process – “someone will take his place,” so much so that “it’s boring just to think about it” (10). But as the play progresses, we realize that it is this “boredom,” this annihilation of uniqueness, which the old men want to prevail. They are “two old men,” having each other for company. Anything singular is portrayed as evil like the “blue heron,” or the “hunter.” At the same time, everything has got a purpose, “a purpose and a reason. Even those we, at this time, do not clearly understand” (13). Through this unseen, unknown, “not clearly understood” purpose, everyone gets connected with each other, with nature, with the universe itself. There is a comfort to know that “the law of the universe is a law unto itself” (14).

At times, the old men are brought to the realization of differences in nature and themselves and it is interesting to note how quickly they smooth out those differences. Riesman, Glazer, and Denney’s other-directed American middle class seems to exemplify itself through these old and lonely souls. In the fourth variation, Emil notices that the “duck is not like us” and in the series of hilarious exchanges that follow the differences are so minimized in relevance to deserve further discussion (15).

Another aspect in the “other-directedness” of George and Emil is their implicit trust in what they read, whether it be on pollution, environment or nature. In spite of, or because of, their condition of social isolation, their need to authenticate their words with external authority becomes all the more acute. As Riesman, Glazer, and Denney noted, “the other-

directed person must be able to receive signals from far and near; the sources are many, the changes rapid" (25). George is forever quoting things he remembered "reading somewhere" (*DV* 15, 16, 30, 31). They avoid any suggestions concerning their personal life by clinging on to such objective references, yet it is the understated revelation of their lonely selves which emerges out of their supposedly impersonal generalizations. Here, unlike in *Enter a Free Man* there is no idealizing of the lonely innovator from the inner-directed ages. The play attempts an assimilation that acknowledges a resigned sense of their innate loneliness. They are "getting old" in a "dirty," "cruel" and "self-destructive" world (19). The talk jumbles to the duck as something that can lead a much "simpler" life (19). Yet what constitute the duck's life are what their lives consist too – "flying," "eating," "sleeping," "washing himself" (19), and such a life is "lonely" (22). With that painful word "lonely" they momentarily forget their objective meanderings and utter what is of great concern to them – "it's good to have a friend" and they conclude the variation with "...nothing that lives can live alone" (22).

They find solace in the consolation that they have each other, and may be that is why William Demastes considered *DV* as a play which "offers an example of a stable and working relationship" and one through which Mamet "illustrates his argument that choice exists, that we aren't inevitably bound to a foundering system" (76). This was especially so as Mamet, according to Demastes, illustrates the opposite in the companion piece of *DV*, *SP*. And, this stable relationship does not take place at the level of language. Language is not used to mean its literal sense in their conversations. As Demastes says, "the two characters essentially break away from any strict dependence on language as the central means to communicate" (Demastes 76). Language serves only as a background which gives space for the smooth flow of empathetic communication.

Most critics and reviewers have, in their discussions on *DV*, remarked on the essential loneliness of the characters and their achievement of “a stable relationship, one that is vital to their mental well-being” (Demastes 9). Consequently, it can be noted that it is not what Weiss calls an “attachment figure” that they lack, but on the contrary, a community that accepts them and allows them active control than allowing them to drift along in a manner much like the ducks with their passive life cycle. This condition is an illustration of what Weiss termed as “social isolation,” a loneliness resulting from a feeling of social vulnerability, “being on your own, without allies in a dangerous world” (13). Mamet remarked that the conversations of George and Emil were both modeled on the conversations of elderly Jews which he had heard, especially those of his maternal grandfather. It may also be noted that though the text of the play does not mention anywhere that George and Emil are Jews, many producers of the play interpret them to be “Jewish gentlemen” (Kitts 14). The lonely selves as depicted by George and Emil are selves who suffer acute social isolation and marginalization, be it be that of race, of age or anything else. *DV* is thus the typical Mamet play dealing with feelings of isolation at the societal level. Most of Mamet’s lonely selves, as seen in the works dealt with henceforth, are selves who badly need a community. They are also, in many cases, lacking in the basic social unit, a family. No wonder language does not function for them as a medium of self expression or an entrée point to the social sphere. They use language as smokescreens to hide themselves and weapons to thrust at each other. *DV* is an exception to this usage of language. Here, as mentioned earlier, language is a soothing background to allow empathetic, though non-literal, communion.

According to Mamet, the purpose of a play is “that which the hero requires” (*Three Uses* 22). In *DV* what George and Emil want is the companionship of each other as they are

resigned to their plight of social isolation. This companionship will thwart the despondency brought in by the thoughts of marginalization, helplessness and impending mortality. Moreover, it will allow them an imaginative and emotional space to create their fictional worlds. These fictional worlds recreate and displace their helplessness and loneliness, thus serving a cathartic purpose. As C. W. E. Bigsby remarks, “Mamet seems to suggest that fiction making is a means of evading the real...” (*David Mamet* 33).

Reality, for George and Emil, is a reality where “some must die so others can live” (36). From identifying themselves with the ducks that are the helpless hunted, by the thirteenth variation, they move on to fancy themselves as hunters. Through a vibrant reality solely created by word-pictures, they vicariously experience control. The play reaches its climax at this juncture. It answers and realizes the question what the heroes want – why they come to the park at all. Emil had earlier complained that “the park is more trouble than it’s worth” (23), because when he sits “at home,” he could go to the park, but, “at the park the only place” he has “to go is home” (24). But he evades George’s question “better not to have a park” with an “I don’t know” (24). By the end of the play the answer is revealed. They come to the park carrying their lonely, helpless selves to “test their survival skills” – the reason why Mamet thinks audiences throng to the theatre. In *Three Uses* he writes, “the drama excites us as it recapitulates and calls into play the most essential element of our being, our prized adaptive mechanism...we can exercise our survival skills, racing ahead of the protagonist, feeling vicarious fear while knowing ourselves safe” (38).

Their homes are according to Emil “joyless cold concrete. Apartment. Stuff. Linoleum. Imitation” (24). It is where they have to present their selves as imitation – Mamet was later to write more openly in his article “The Decoration of Jewish Houses,” “we fit out our living places as if we were Yankees.” A Jewish home is “to this day,” the “home of an

outsider” (*Some Freaks* 13). George and Emil here, thus become prototypes of outsiders. The park is their entrance to the real world, their “backstage” where they can remove the trappings of “imitation.”

GEORGE. The park is more real?

EMIL. The park? Yes.

GEORGE. Sitting on the benches?

EMIL. Yes.

GEORGE. Visiting tame animals?

EMIL. Taken from the wildest captivity.

GEORGE. Watching a lake that’s a sewer?

EMIL. At least it’s water.

GEORGE. You wanna drink it?

EMIL. I drink it everyday.

GEORGE. Yeah. After it’s been purified and filtered.

EMIL. A lake just the same. My inland sea.

GEORGE. Fulla inland shit.

EMIL. It’s better than nothing. Well, it’s a close second. (24)

The park is a “close second” to reality for them. The reality in their apartments offers them hardly any control over their lives. Such a reality, therefore, is less real for them than the park. The park is where they can reverse their roles from those who are being lead to those who lead and thus vicariously experience control, a control over their lives which the reality of an apartment living denies them. Thus, the park is at the same time a “close second” and “more real.”

For George and Emil the park serves as Goffman’s “backstage” where each one of

them “can relax; ... can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character” (112). In each other’s company they find a “male bonding” as defined by Mamet, “the tentative and somewhat ludicrous reachings towards each other of individuals who are neither prepared to stand on their emotional feet, nor ready, for whatever reasons, to avow their homosexuality” (*Some Freaks* 87). For him, male society is where one finds “an environment where one is understood, where one is not judged, where one is not expected to perform” (*Some Freaks* 88). These two gentlemen seem to enjoy such a backstage bonding in the park, finding room and solace in each other. In the park, they are two selves with each other for company, and may be, even a community around them – as the park is a public space, though nobody else appears on stage throughout the play.

However, the isolation of their selves remains very much tangible. But, unlike Riley in *Enter a Free Man* they do not crave for an alleviation of their social isolation by clinging onto strangers or dreaming about imaginary “band of inventors.” Nor do they denigrate each other in frustration over their lack of social bonds. The irritation with those who are closest to one is one of the commonest responses to social isolation as illustrated by Weiss (13). Riley’s frustrations with his wife and daughter in *Enter a Free Man* could be explained on the basis of this human propensity. George and Emil, but, have a consolation which protects them from such an antipathy against each other. The park compensates for their lack of society, allowing them to recognize themselves as part of the larger community of nature. Moreover, through their fiction-making and their shared enacting of the vicarious hunting experience in the 13th Variation, they reach a purgatorial climax allowing them to shed their loneliness even on the temporal level (39-41). By the end of the play, they even become connected with eternity. They become one with the “Ancient Greeks,” “rich, sleek birds of prey” and “fat old men” who watch “each other” in a communion where each has

“something to contribute that the world might turn another day” (43).

Presented as a companion piece to *DV, Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (1974) shocked the sensibilities of even the sexually liberal 1970s with its hyper-charged language of voluptuousness. It won the prestigious Obie Award and opened for Mamet his debut Broadway presentation. It was seen, tutored by its morally condescending title, as a play criticizing the inadequacies of heterosexual relationships in urban American environment. As Julius Novick wrote in *Village Voice* it was received as “a compassionate, rueful comedy about how difficult it is ... for men to give themselves to women, and for women to give themselves to men” (95).

To analyze the play on the Mametian norm of a play’s purpose – “that which the hero requests” (*Three Uses* 22) – the basic question that arises concerns the identification of the hero. Unlike the romantic tradition of love stories, the title of the hero cannot be easily fixated on to Danny, the heterosexual (albeit failed) lover. The one who dominates the play is definitely, not Danny, but Bernie, who calls himself Danny’s “friend and associate.” To be more accurate, Bernie, with a language which permeates and pervades the minds and lives of all the characters in the play, appears to be the protagonist.

Bernie dominates the play from the first scene to the last. In the first scene, we find him constructing a virtual reality where his macho image of himself is given the stature of a hero. He has an audience in Danny whose presence brings an authenticity to Bernie’s identity. Goffman defines an “audience” as those who are “asked to believe that the characters they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be” (*PS* 17). Bernie’s performance as a story teller does not demand to be taken in its literal value. As C. W. E. Bigsby pointed out, Mamet’s “work is full of

inventors of alternate worlds” and, “for David Mamet, ...storytelling also becomes fundamental, not only as a central strategy of the writer, struggling to give coherence to a chaotic experience, but also a basic tactic of characters for whom it becomes a resource, a retreat and ultimately the only available redemption, if only because it implies the minimal community of the tale-teller and listener” (22). So, storytelling is a technique to win an audience who is otherwise absent in their lives. It gives them, again to quote Bigsby, “a sense of coherence, meaning and communication” (22-23), and more than everything else, a “self” and a milieu to present it in.

Bernie’s performance is thus designed to serve the purpose of presenting a vulnerable masculine identity glossily packed in brittle images of impossible macho fantasies. Danny serves as an audience to the presentation of such a self; a self which is essentially in the process of being “cleansed, clothed and made up” (Goffman, *PS* 123). In this sense Danny also functions as a backstage locale for Bernie’s inevitable “front stage” failures. Danny serves for Bernie as a “back stage” creating “an environment” where, in the words of Mamet, “one (man) is understood, where one (man) is not judged, where one (man) is not expected to perform” (*Some Freaks* 88). In the “back stage” with Danny, Bernie’s presentation of his self, then, does not amount to a “performance.” “Performance,” here, involves a greater thrust on deliberate unreality, while a “presentation” deals with a mere enactment of a selfhood. Bernie’s story-telling before Danny is a mere presentation of a vulnerable self, where the made-up stories sublimate their literal meanings to serve as catalysts, elevating the interlocutors to an atmosphere of sympathetic camaraderie. This atmosphere helps Bernie survive his sense of failure, his sense of feeling cast out from the mainstream society. Danny is for Bernie an alternative for actual society which does not accept him because of his not possessing its criteria for an astigmatic.

Bernie's failure in gaining an actual relationship with a woman could be viewed as a stigma. A "stigma" can be anything from "abominations of the body" to "blemishes of individual character" usually inferred from records of "mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts and radical political behavior" (Goffman, *Stigma* 130). Moreover, Goffman suggests that possibly the only non-stigmatized individual in US society was a young male "married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual..." (Goffman, *Stigma* 128). Bernie, in such a context, has enough reasons to feel stigmatized. He does not have children, is not married, and is even unable to gain an intimate relationship with a woman. Yet, Danny's existence as an "audience" raises him from a person with a stigma to a desirable norm, a machismo figure capable of attracting wild fantasies of female desires. It is in this back stage with Danny that Bernie is able to exercise his survival skills through story telling. The "relevant framework" for these stories is "not one of morality, but of survival" (Bigsby, "David Mamet" 37-38). For Mamet, theatre is a place where one could exercise one's "survival skills" (*Three Uses* 31). Consequently, the stories within his stories too could be assumed to serve the same purpose for the narrator.

Thus, at the opening of the play, Bernie tells a tale of his sexual conquest in a singles bar. It is a fantastical tale with himself cast as the hero. Bernie relates his encounter with a young woman whom he supposedly met the previous night. She takes him to her room, and after a shower, she dons on a World War II flak suit and they are on bed. Bernie is supposed to "go Boom" every "thirty seconds or so" during all this. The story gets on to still fantastic realms as she calls her friend by phone in between and asks for help. The help comes as airplane noises which the friend sends through phone. This serves as background music to the whole performance. The fantasy does not culminate there as she slips out to pour

gasoline all over the room and set it on fire. Bernie escapes, but only after throwing her some money as cab fare.

The story casts Bernie as the hero of this fantastic sexual encounter, yet, what is remarkable is the surfacing of Bernie's lonely self all through the narrative though cleverly veiled through the presentation of a typical machismo self. Bernie's inadvertent presentation of his lonely self is manifest from the very beginning of the narrative where he had placed himself in a singles bar – the refuge of the desperately lonely American of the 70s – at two-thirty at night. Even at the most intimate moment of physical communion he is isolated as the woman calls for her girl friend's help. In the end of the story, he returns to his lonely self, leaving the woman and “the whole fucking hall” “full of firemen” (54). The purpose of the story is to provide him with a mask of machismo which inoculates him against the pain of being lonely, idealize his loneliness as heroism and give the impression that his loneliness is voluntary and completely within his control. Thus, in the story, it is he who decides to “fuck this nonsense” and to leave (54). He even throws some money at the woman in an attempt to avenge his isolation by commodifying her.

The presentation of Bernie as lonely self takes on various levels in the play. With Danny, Bernie appears confident and secure – as someone who is confident of himself when with an attachment figure. Robert Weiss describes an “attachment figure” as someone who is “not necessarily an intimate or confidant, but rather a figure that is security providing because of a perceptual and emotional sense of linkage to that figure” (11). Danny's presence shields Bernie against emotional isolation. Social identity, its acceptance and social isolation, however, is related to “stigma.” Bernie manages his stigma of not having a marriage or even a heterosexual relationship by constructing before Danny a self, with supposedly macho sexual prowess, and, a world, where women are mere commodities.

Everywhere we encounter him in the play, except in Danny's admiring presence, we find Bernie a social failure. We find him inept in heterosexual seductions with Joan in the second scene, and when Danny introduces Deborah to him he is an absolute flop at making social chit-chat. Later in the play, in Danny's soliloquy involving an imaginary co-worker too, we get a picture of Bernie as not well liked by others. Danny is shown as defending Bernie to the imaginary co-worker. The co-worker is supposed to have made a complaint against Bernie forcing Danny to defend him. He does this vehemently, giving the other a story illustrating Bernie's worth, and asserting that he does not "want to hear ...[someone]... badmouthing Bernie Litko" (*SP* 85).

With Danny, but, Bernie fabricates an identity of a lone conqueror – the desirable alone. Here, being alone is a desirable quality as it projects the macho identity of a conqueror – alone, at the helm, and in control. Within the space of this constructed identity he can narrate any number of alternate worlds where he is in charge just as George and Emil project themselves as duck hunters in *DV*. Yet, contrastingly, in *DV*, the fantasy ends with George and Emil shifting their self identification from the hunter to the hunted – the duck – and learns with resignation that it is "the Law of Life" (*DV* 41), and are happy in each others company. In Bernie's story, however, there is never such empathetic identification with the victim. A conquest involves a relationship both for the conqueror as well as for the victim. Bernie can neither conquer nor live under conquest. His method of survival is by escaping from the whole situation and merely watching and weaving stories of alternate universes. The only condition for this comfortable existence is a listener, an audience, whose presence will authenticate the relevance of these alternate universes.

Bernie, it seems, at times, does make certain attempts to shed off his stigma, and build a heterosexual relationship. In the second scene of the play itself, we witness its

consequences. We find Bernie in a singles bar encountering reality. His macho bravado has slipped off and what remains is an aggressive self aggrandizement at making a relationship. His companionship with Danny seems to have given him a security in what John Stewart Kitts calls a “homosocial” relationship. Kitts uses the term to refer to “an emotional homosexuality void of a sexual component, ...[a]...need –based relationship” (16). In the singles bar, Bernie is not in his relaxed “homosocial” back stage but forced to perform in the front stage. The targeted audience happens to be Joan, the room-mate of Danny’s lover to be, Deborah. No more does he present himself as the strong macho figure, alone by choice. He wears his heart inside out as a mask here. In an apparent attempt at seduction he admits to his being lonely. The most vulnerable crevices of his identity are, at least momentarily, revealed to an utter stranger. He invents for himself a job and an environment where his loneliness is no stigma, but the consequence of circumstances. “I’m a meteorologist for TWA. It’s an incredibly interesting, but lonely job...” (55-56).

In “Self Disclosure as a Marketable Commodity,” Helen L. Wintrob says that in America of the 1970s people were so lonely that they thought that showing themselves vulnerable to strangers might win them a companion. “Having chosen self-disclosure as the manner for selling ourselves,” Wintrob observes, “we pour intimacies into a non-intimate context.” (85). In this sense, Bernie is trying to trade off his loneliness for companionship. Apparently, he does not succeed and Joan bluntly comments that she does not find him “sexually attractive” (56). Not deterred, Bernie goes on to project his image of the desirable 70s male – “I work hard, I play hard” (56). When even that fails at seducing Joan he turns violent and rude, abuses her and leaves. In the next scene we meet him again having returned to his narrative role projecting himself as an unauthorized authority in the art of seduction.

The play progresses to reveal a budding relationship between Danny and Deborah. In spite of Bernie's teachings, Danny succeeds in pursuing a heterosexual relationship to the point of his and Deborah's living together. The language of the play, but, asserts itself to mar any such companionship. The imminent doom is worked out through the stories and narratives of the couple's friends/mentors, Bernie and Joan. Bernie uses language in such a fashion as to construct sexual relationship into a feat, a power-play. The power of such language culminates in Danny and Deborah's bedroom scene. When Deborah asks Danny whether it frightens him to say "I love you" to her Danny replies in the affirmative and Deborah makes a final statement that "it's only words. I don't think you should be frightened by words." But actually, it is words which causes their undoing, for their relationship could not sustain in a world put together by the language which they use.

Danny's relationship with Deborah threatens Bernie's self construction as a non-stigmatic male as he is likely to lose his audience. He will be left with his lonely self without recourse to the fantastic alternate worlds of his fictional exploits where his loneliness and the stigma of not having a heterosexual relationship are sublimated to an aura of unique sexual prowess. Danny had provided him not just an identity, as he could introduce himself to Deborah, "friend and associate of your pal, Danny" (63), but, a recourse to alternate worlds where his lonely self could exult in its being alone.

Joan, Deborah's companion is modeled as an alter image and female counterpart of Bernie. If Bernie is fantastic, she is realistic, if Bernie tells "tall tales", Joan relates supposedly real-life incidents. Even the fairy tale she narrates to her imaginary kindergarten class has more of a pragmatic real life moral. Bernie tries to dismiss the past "a kid laughs these things off. You forget, you go on living...What the fuck, huh?" [Mamet's ellipses] (78). Joan gives childish pranks serious adult interventions prolonging their implications

and making them difficult to forget. When she catches some kids of her kindergarten class in a physically compromising position she tells them “we will call your parents” (75).

But for all this, Joan too is a failure in building relationships and clings on to Deborah for companionship. But she is less successful in gaining a loyal and admiring disciple as Bernie has in Danny. While Danny does not “want to hear” anyone “badmouthing Bernie Litko” (*SP* 85), Joan has to put up with a bitter Deborah after the latter’s failed affair with Danny. For Joan, Deborah’s hostility is beyond her comprehension. “I truly don’t see why you’re being so hostile” (91). In the next scene, she is presented in her kindergarten classroom reading a story to her imaginary toddlers. The story is a fairy tale which tells of a beautiful wife turned into an old hag at night. When the prince returns home and inquires for his beautiful wife the hag replies that she was his wife and puts forth a condition – she can either be “beautiful during daylight hours so that you and your friends can admire me” or she “can be beautiful at night so that you can enjoy me by fireside” (91). The complexity of a relationship where one has to accept the negative as well as positive sides of the companion is thus explicated through the story.

It is also significant that the story is read to “imaginary” toddlers (91) – there is no real audience for such an insight and what immediately follows in the play is a celebration of the “superficial vitality” of the “urban environment” where Danny and Bernie are back to their favorite camaraderie (Bigsby, *David Mamet* 51), now in a beach. The “mismatch,” which Johan Callens observes to exist “between the women of their fantasies and those they... encounter” (Callens 47), is nullified with a cancellation of any real life person-to-person encounter. In their safe niche as viewers women could be termed as commodities to be “enjoyed,” (as in Joan’s story of the old Hag, where the Hag could turn beautiful at night “that you can enjoy me by the fireside” [91]), providing them superfluous visual

gratification without interpersonal responsibilities.

SP may be an indictment against a self-centered and sexually licentious culture, at the same time it is also a eulogizing of such a culture in its vitality and vibrancy. It is in this that it is one step ahead of *DV* in the development of Mamet's views on the constitution of social systems. *DV* is a nostalgic leaning back from the isolated and isolating present to the connectivity of the past ("ancient Greeks") and the future ("cyclic repetition of nature") through the present companionship of George and Emil, the two marginalized old men. But in *SP* Bernie's and Danny's companionship results in, not such connectivity, but rather, in a fragmenting of all experiences to momentary sensual gratifications.

The lonely self here, is an exchangeable commodity in itself, to be used to barter these gratifications. Thus Bernie's presentation of his lonely self to Danny is to gain his companionship and admiration for the sole conqueror, while his presentation of his lonely self to Joan is in order to project himself as vulnerable and gain companionship through her sympathy. And, in the end, his self as an "actor without an audience," is plausibly explained away as the fault of the audience itself. In the last scene, Bernie and Danny are on a beach analyzing the physical configurations of the women there. Danny calls out to a woman, but she fails to respond. Bernie and Danny reason out her lack of response, saying that she might be deaf.

Bernie. She's probably deaf.

Danny. She did look deaf, didn't she?

Bernie. Yeah (Pause)

Danny. Deaf bitch." (98)

Mamet has been called a dramatist who is also a social critic critiquing the capitalistic materialism of contemporary America. He himself has, in one of his many enigmatic

utterances remarked that one of the main subjects of his plays is “human interactions” (Murphy, 124). Critics and reviewers have easily traced the difficulty to communicate and connect in Mamet’s characters and have judged him as a severe critic of the American way of life and its ideal of the American dream. But as seen in this play, what the play’s narrative suggests is that the tragedy of this loss of communion is an inevitable tragedy to be celebrated as life. Danny explicates this in his conversation with Deborah.

DEBORAH. No hard feelings.

Danny. Who said there were?

Deborah. You know there are.

Danny. Then why say there aren’t? (84)

Mamet himself has said, “Voltaire said words were invented to hide feelings. That’s what the play is about, how what we say influences what we think” (Biggsby, *Beyond Broadway* 261). Here the lonely self is shown as a self clinging to juvenile attachment figures and juvenile language, refusing to enter into the adulthood responsibility of social integration. The fear of social isolation is extremely enervating for these characters. Family, the first unit of social structure is frightening as well as inaccessible. Unlike the experimental (though failed) steps for building new relationships taken by George Riley in Tom Stoppard’s *Enter a Free Man* to alleviate his social isolation, Danny, Bernie, Deborah and Joan are unwilling to leave their adolescent attachment figures to build newer relationships. They, thus, willingly choose social isolation in order to keep the emotional intimacy of teenage camaraderie which remains their singular recluse.

The Real Thing (1982) is Stoppard’s first play involving love and personal relationships. It is also the first play in which he gives a considerably extensive treatment to female characters. The title suggests that the play is a search for the “real”, leading

spectators, scholars and critics to identify various thematic loggerheads in the play concerning the quest for the real. Lizzie Loveridge feels that through this play Stoppard “makes us ask whether the real thing is the experience of life in the raw or the skilled communication in writing but about other people’s experience.” Richard Andretta considers the play as “a spiritual odyssey towards understanding the true nature of love” for Henry, the protagonist. He also feels that the play “leans towards [Henry’s] views” (314). Paul Delaney comments that the play asserts the difference between “the real and the unreal...is knowable and that the real thing can be recognized.” According to him, the play affirms Henry’s “conceptions of love and art as the ‘real thing’” (“Cricket Bats” 149). The play along with these cited comments have provoked Susanne Arndt into asserting that the play “reinstates the patriarchal order as a harmonious world” where Henry is the representative of the privileged class of “white male middle class heterosexual” (489). Henry is thus seen as someone free from stigma and capable of presenting a self before an audience who are asked to accept it. His “self” in the play is thus, seen as a distinct entity capable of expressing itself, free to make mistakes and to correct it with immunity.

The very fact that he is a successful playwright in the play gives him the license to create selves and to consequently subjugate the selves other than his own to the level of his audience. More pertinently, he subordinates the other selves of the play to the level of being the actors of his script. This predominant position of Henry in the play gives the impression that the play is about Henry’s quest for what is real. Andretta details this quest as Henry’s “valley of humiliation...in order to learn his lesson in humility” (322). Loveridge identifies the themes in the play as infidelity and the personal journey of the intellectual Henry to a destination involving emotion and pain.” But then, the question is whether the play is such a bildungsroman, a learning narrative. This could be analyzed on the basis of how Henry

presents his [lonely] “self” throughout the play.

The play is structured as a “Chinese box” where one box reveals another within (Zinman 131). The opening scene is in a drawing room. A husband is seen (fallaciously) discovering evidence for his wife’s adultery and confronting it with cleverness in language. It is only in the next scene that we realize that the first scene was a scene from Henry’s play, *House of Cards*. As the play progresses, we find that in the “real life” of the play, it is Henry who commits adultery. It seems that through the play he is taking a precaution to protect his self from the supposed allegation of disloyalty. He might also be creating a milieu which demands only clever repartees at a partner’s betrayal.

Henry’s play, *House of Cards*, which is enacted within the play serves yet another significant function in its being situated at the very opening. By introducing an illusory protagonist from the imagination of the “real” protagonist at the opening itself, we are introduced to a projection of Henry’s own self. In *House of Cards* his alter image is an architect, a builder (inasmuch a builder of a house of cards). In the “real life” of the play he is a playwright writing out and dictating words and actions to others and creating the final meaning, the “real thing.” Thus, Henry, the successful playwright has succeeded in creating a fortress around his self – in his plays and in his life – a fortress of the “lone creator”.

Arndt reads the workings of gender and ideology in the structural construct of the play and suggests that Henry, with his privileged position is “ultimately represented as a self, that...possesses an impartial ‘universalizing vision’ that transcends all circumstance and context” (491). She points out the spatial organization of the stage too as illustrating this proposition. On the stage we find Harry occupying “the stage at the beginning of the scenes, whereas Charlotte and Annie either enter through the front door, from the kitchen, or from the bedroom” underscoring Henry’s dominant position (Arndt 491). This dominance is

accentuated as Henry “strives to insert the other characters into the dominant ‘scripts’ of cultural difference, which represent a powerful narrative of human ‘deviation’ from dominant cultural norms” (Arndt 492). But then, this sense of dominance also separates him as a distinct person who is alone in his own stature. What distinguishes Henry, the main protagonist, from others is the way in which he deals with his feelings of isolation and the way in which he presents his lonely self.

Other characters in the play too are isolated and do feel a sense of loneliness. Charlotte, his wronged wife, has every reason to feel alone and lonely. In stage performances she was judged variously, from being called a “sardonic and slightly sour character” (Loveridge), to being seen as someone capable of “depths of passion, sarcasm and loneliness” (Marchese). Charlotte is also an actress performing in Henry’s plays as is seen in the first scene. As Henry’s wife, she rebels against Henry’s story and script (in his plays as well as within their marriage) and has to pay “with the price of her marriage” (4). After her separation from Henry, she strives to make a strong effort to conceal her loneliness. As the scene opens, she is looking through a bunch of old clippings and programs. She is apparently searching for the name of the actor to whom she lost her virginity. He was her co-actor in a play, *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*. Thus, apparently, she tries to project an image of herself as an emotionally self-sufficient person even after Henry’s discarding her for a younger and vibrant version of her self, Annie.

In spite of the “sardonic and slightly sour character” seen in the play, Stoppard introduced her in the script as someone who is instantly wanted “for a friend” (9). The Charlotte seen in the play, then, is Henry’s creation. She has become what she is in the play because of Henry. Arndt has rightly pointed out that she has become “sarcastic and seemingly unfeeling under Henry’s tutelage” (494). Now, even after Henry’s leaving her,

she has to act out her part – that of a “sarcastic and seemingly unfeeling” person. Her lonely self is buried underneath this role which she is forced to enact. Naturally, she reenacts herself in lieu with the title of the play, *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*, in which she had once acted. She claims that she has taken nine lovers after Henry left, thus protecting her lonely self against being an object of any feeling of pity. Even if her claim is true, it only accentuates the revelation of her emotional isolation. The void of her broken marriage is not filled by any single and stable relationship, but a volley of transient affairs, “no commitments, only bargains” (64). Her taunts at Henry for having only one woman since he left her and for being one “who has yet to lose his virginity” barely hides her deep sense of isolation and bitterness which she dares not express (66).

Her lonely self is yet again revealed in her relationship with her daughter. We find her giving Debbie “stamped and addressed postcards which Debbie is to send her weekly in exchange for a forwarded allowance” (63). Thus, in the play, Charlotte's self presentation involves a masquerading of an essentially lonely self and its pathetic concerns by living on without seeking after for a companionship with Henry or even with her daughter. The emotional isolation and the lack of attachment figures are experiences to be taken in their stride and not pathetic exhibition pieces for seducing a relationship for her. The emotional isolation she feels, does not also force her to abandon all her relationships and to find consolation in any juvenile companionship as in *SP*.

Debbie, Charlotte and Henry's daughter, too, seems to have inherited her parents' fear of presenting a lonely self. She presents her self as a cool new generation teenager, who is not shackled by the moral norms of her parent's generation. Sexual fidelity, according to her, is not a virtue or a sin as she had found it to be “mere biology” in the locker room of her school. For her, “exclusive rights isn't love, it's colonization” (63). Yet for all her cool talk

with her parents, she is dating with an anonymous lover who does not show up before Henry as he is somewhat “frightened of him” (63). She also does not want her parents to see her off. Like Charlotte’s “nine” casual lovers Debbie’s lover too seems a chimera, an illusion to help in the preservation of her self presentation as a “not lonely” person.

A contrast to this sort of self presentation is that of Max, the discarded husband of Henry’s new wife Annie. Max does present his lonely self without any inhibitions. At first he reveals the righteous indignation of a wronged husband. Later, the anger turns to lamentations, emotional seductions intended in bringing Annie back to his nest. By the end of the play we find him calling Henry to announce his marriage through which he can find an attachment figure and erase his lonely self.

Another character who openly reveals his lonely self is Brodie. Unlike Max’s unsuccessful whining after his wife, in his case, his self-presentation gains him an audience, at least temporarily, in Annie. Brodie does not directly present his lonely self through literal expressions. He gets involved in revolutionary activities to facilitate his seduction of Annie. He sustains his audience till the very end of the play when Annie realizes that his presentation of himself to her was only one among his many self presentations. The lonely self which was presented to her on the train, “helpless, like a three-legged calf, nervous as anything” (79), tagging along with her, was not the real Brodie just as his play altered by Henry did not reveal his real identity. Brodie’s presentation of his lonely self was thus a marketable commodity, well packaged, but finally found to be lacking in quality.

Annie’s relationship with Brodie reveals the way she has learned to cover up her lonely self in her self presentations. Still, she is the only person in the play whose lonely self never gets revealed in its pathetic isolation. When we first see her, she has a devoted husband and an equally devoted lover. But her concerns seem to go beyond personal

intransigencies as she is politically active for a cause. As the play progresses, Annie as Henry's wife, is seen as having an affair with a younger actor while Brodie remains a continuing interest. She tells Henry bluntly that he had "to find a part" of himself where she was "not important" or he would not "be worth loving" (71). Henry, but, transforms himself to another level of self presentation. He realizes that he has to let go of his "clever" self projection as an architect of his fate (his self projection in the play-within-the-play of the first scene being that of an architect). He reshuffles his house of cards to incorporate a belief in "mess, tears, pain, self-abasement, loss of self-respect, nakedness" (71). He dares to reveal his lonely self but in a new variety of self presentation. He confesses to Annie that he "can't find a part" of himself where she was "not important" (71). However he consents to rewrite Brodie's play as he thinks whatever Annie does "is right" (75).

What we find here is a Henry who is ready to accept the scripts written by others while keeping his own scripts too. No more does he try to engulf everyone he encounters into his encompassing plots by clever language. Nor, like Brodie or Max does he exhibit his lonely self as a marketable commodity attempting to barter Annie's love in exchange. Even when he weeps, it is after Annie leaves. All this is in sharp contrast to the Henry encountered in the first scenes. In his play, *House of Cards* his prototype masquerades his lonely self in clever talk. On the other hand, by the end of the play, Henry's self sublimates itself from inner-direction and its suppression of emotions, to an autonomous selfhood capable of feeling and expressing powerful passions. He also has transformed himself into someone capable of understanding that the world runs by other people's scripts as well as his own.

Thus, the play presents Henry's emotional bildungsroman on stage. In the first Act, he was a successful playwright who wrote plays of linguistic cleverness and intellectual

approach. As a writer he encompassed every other life he encountered. Yet, as the sole creator of plots, his own self presentation essentially had to be that of a lonely one. This presented lonely self was also the idealized and idolized self, the clever controller of the script and the story. It is into that world that Annie enters. Her universe was different from his. Though an actress, the play does not show her as acting in Henry's plays. Stoppard describes her as being "very much like the woman whom Charlotte has ceased to be" (15). Thus she is also a remainder of Henry's youth when his world was not solely engulfed by his script. This lure of the external world must be what attracted Henry to her and sustained his passion for her.

Life, for Henry, did follow his own script till his marriage with Annie. With Annie, but, things do not always go on with a single script. Scripts keep getting continually revised for her. And, notably, she outgrows the previous scripts to correct those who cling on to the earlier versions. "No – that's wrong – that's the old script – ," she corrects Billy, a co-actor, in scene ten (73). Moreover, it seems that it is this lack of subordination to a singular script which sustains Annie's charm and provokes Henry to believe "in mess, tears, pain, self-abasement, ..." (16), and become more humane than the emotionally impervious husband of Henry's play, *House of Cards*, or the earlier version of he himself when he had asserted the "insularity of passion" for he loved "love" (43). He ends up by not just loving love, but by being a person who does not behave according to his imagined scripts.

It is not that he is cuckolded into a self-effacing entity, though. He keeps his love for pop music in spite of Annie's teachings but also learns that love is "wonderful" (81). He also acts in the traditional husband's role of being the protector as Annie entreats him to "look after" her (81). Yet this need not be seen, as Arndt criticized, as Annie's succumbing on to Henry's notion of "insularity of passion" (496). It is only an acceptance of the

existence of a passion between two distinct and separate adults. Annie's request to "look after her" need not be interpreted according to the traditional hegemonic masculine constructs of a marriage, but could be seen as a request to continue "looking after" her selfhood as distinct from his scripts. The bedroom light she keeps on at the end of the play is thus the expectant light of their union as fully aware and mature individuals.

Annie too has undergone her sublimation from an other-directed person to an autonomous one capable of accepting a singular and strong relationship other than craving for a multitude of lovers to quench her insecurities concerning loneliness.

Thus the play commences with the main characters attempting to conceal their lonely selves and bargaining for relationships with pretensions of power. The action of the play concerns with the developments in the self presentations of these characters. As the play progresses their self presentations become more "real," in the sense that they become representations of comparatively more autonomous selves. They learn to fearlessly reveal their lonely selves and live within even conventional relationships as autonomous and, at the same time, loving individuals who love each other and not just the condition of being in love.

The presentation of the lonely self, like any other presentation, can be true or false. Both the true and false presentations will employ direct (literal) and indirect (suggestive words or actions) means to expose lonely selves. Further, a person may express his lonely self either knowingly or unknowingly. Moreover, a singular self's revelation or concealment of its loneliness depends on the audience, circumstances, and his own transient temperament. The attitude of a person to his own lonely self too might vary in that it can be idealizing, denigrating or indifferent.

In the plays analyzed so far in this thesis many of these modes of self presentation

are found. David Mamets' works, *Duck Variations and Sexual Perversity in Chicago* portray characters who mainly employ indirect means to express their loneliness. Most of the time they do not even knowingly dare to allow a presentation of their lonely self. The atmosphere of their plays emphasizes an understanding of loneliness as a stigma. In *DV*, George and Emil find solace in each other's companionship in their march against old age and thrust their lonely selves into recesses of oblivion. "It's good to have a friend," they agree (22). Bernie's presentation of the lonely self in *SP* is more complex, in the sense that his performances vary to accommodate contexts and audiences, and present no consistent image of stable selfhood. Though his presentations of his lonely self are mostly indirect, we also find him, in one instance, directly confessing his loneliness to Joan. If ever he had to narrate this scene to Danny, it could be very well imagined that he will project this confession as a macho act of seduction. His presented selves, thus, project varying attitudes towards loneliness. With Danny in his swanking-sessions, Bernie presents his lonely self as an acceptable one, which even deserves adulation. But in living conditions, where he is confronted with the threat of being a lonely self by losing Danny, his only audience, he panics and consoles himself that Danny's relationship with Deborah is doomed from the beginning:

Bernie. So the kid asks me "Bernie blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The broad this, the broad that, blah, blah, blah."....
But mark my words: one, two more weeks, he'll do the right thing by the broad. (Pause.) And drop her like a fucking hot potato. (79)

In the end, after his prediction has come true, Bernie is happy with the knowledge that he has a companion yet, an attachment figure. The external world, the social world and the world of un-stigmatized belonging may be deaf to them, like the "deaf bitch" on the beach

(98), but having a companion compensates that loss to an extent and he can happily survive. Thus the lonely self is never presented as a desirable norm in these two plays of Mamet. Companionship at whatever cost is embraced and then, it is happy ever after.

On the contrary, the selves in Tom Stoppard's plays, *Enter a Free Man* and *Real Thing* are shown with quite a different criterion for happiness. George Riley, in *Free Man*, is a lonely self craving for social approval. Loneliness for him is not as much of an agony as it is for George and Emil of *DV* or a shame as it is for Bernie. He flaunts himself as a lonely figure in public. He considers his loneliness as the loneliness of the elite, of the romantically conceived genius. So, even when in great financial difficulties, it is painful for him to give his name for social security, for that would give him an identification, and thus, a companionship with the masses. His emotional isolation is more a choice than an inevitable predicament. A devoted wife and a dutiful daughter do not satisfy him. The chimera of social acceptance provokes his daily misadventures. He has, but, his imaginary community of admirers, which he hopes will turn real one day or the other as he boasts to Florence. "Below me, a vast flat plain stretch like an ocean, waiting to receive my footprints [...] and in years to come, people will see this once uncharted untrod path and say...George Riley walked this way" (32). Happiness, for him, is, to plod through his lonely path till he reaches the band of lonely, though successful selves.

In *Real Thing* Henry does gain companionship within his marriage in the end. Still, it is not at the cost of his selfhood. Rather, he has learned to accept the selfhood of others and learned to accept the ensuing loneliness and helplessness of being not always in control. Annie, his second wife, too had troubles with her feelings of loneliness. In order to thwart the ensuing sense of insecurity she had surrounded herself with a volley of lovers. By the end of the play, she too learns to survive with the insecurities of her lonely self rather than

try to assuage them with a number of potentially open-ended relationships. The play ends happily with Annie and Henry daring to present their lonely selves to each other. Henry tells Annie that there is “no part of his self” which does not care for her. Annie entreats Henry to “look after her” as she has freed her self from Brodie and his political paraphernalia and has dared to be alone and vulnerable.

As regards the four plays analyzed in this chapter, marked differences can be seen in the presentation of the lonely selves in the writings of Mamet and Stoppard. Mamet’s characters consider their lonely selves as a stigma, which they have to cover up, and from which they have to frantically escape. Stoppard’s character’s meanwhile, present their lonely selves as selves with which they have to live on. They too feel the need for companionship as badly as Mamet’s characters, but those companionships, if ever they gain them, will not satisfy them as their ultimate objective. Their lonely selves are presented as inevitably and courageously lonely rather than pathetically and frantically so. The end result, yet, seems the same, as both sets of characters are back with their attachment figures, and they have learned to present their lonely selves before at least these attachment figures and gained intimacy thereof. The next chapter will analyze how the characters of Mamet and Stoppard present their lonely selves in the social arena.