



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: BALANCING ACTS

Theatre depicts self as an executing force in an interpersonal realm. The execution can involve both expressive (through language and gestures) and impressive (or physical) actions. In theatre as in real life, selves are made to function as, in the words of Baumeister, “tools that help people interact with each other” (7). But often, selves fail in this function. This failure may result in an experience of loneliness. The self which experiences loneliness functions as a lonely self in interpersonal situations.

Contemporary self-definition, again to quote Baumeister, has “come to depend on a changing, uncertain mixture of choices and accomplishments” (4). These choices and accomplishments are influenced by the “ideal” and ought-to-self-concepts of each self. These self-concepts are to a great extent formed by inter-relational experiences of the self. They are also influenced by the cultural contexts within which selves function. The self-schema of a self is formed based on all these factors.

Generally, a self does not expose itself completely in the realm of interpersonal relationships. Instead, as Goffman avers, it makes a presentation of itself, usually mobilizing its activities in such a way as to “express during the interaction what he wishes to convey” (*Presentation* 30). Thus, self presentation generally involves a projection of certain aspects of the self which it considers as desirable and a suppression of certain other aspects as undesirable. Thus, a self will present its loneliness only if it considers it as a desirable trait for its audience and its cultural context. The cultural context not only determines the presentation of lonely selves but also, the experiencing of the feelings of loneliness. The role played by culture in the shaping of individual emotional experience has been emphasized by anthropologists like Rosaldo, Lutz, and Solomon (Baumeister 352).

Riesman, Glazer, and Denney's categorizing of societies into tradition-directed, inner-directed and other-directed can be seen as a general criterion to base a study on how culture influences the experience and presentation of loneliness.

The present thesis has attempted to analyze the presentation of lonely self in select plays of Mamet and Stoppard. Six plays each of both Stoppard and Mamet which are seen to be representative of their views on the presentation of lonely selves are selected. Still, since both are prolific writers, each with more than twenty five plays to his credit, such a representation can never be comprehensive or without differences of opinion. So, the choice of plays of this study is confined and directed by the convenience of comparative classification under each of the three aspects of the lonely self's presentation of itself as dealt with here. Thus, Stoppard's early successes like *Jumpers* and *Travesties* and his recent grand political trilogy, *The Coast of Utopia* are left out. Similarly, Mamet's popular plays like *American Buffalo*, *Cryptogram* and *Edmond* too are not discussed.

The presentation of the lonely self in this thesis has been analyzed through three primary aspects. Firstly, a self has been seen along with the persons geographically and emotionally close to it. The major characters from two plays each of Mamet and Stoppard were examined under this to see whether they suffered from emotional isolation due to lack of attachment figures. Whether the selves presented themselves as lonely before their intimate companions has also been verified.

Secondly, the self has been examined in its interactions with its community. The community, in this case, refers to those selves who represent the larger society in which the self functions. It can also be a small personal community of friends, colleagues, or acquaintances with whom a self enjoys companionship but not intimacy. The characters of two plays each of Mamet and Stoppard have been explored to see whether they present their

lonely selves before their communities and if they do how it has been brought about. Whether or not they suffer from social isolation too has been examined here.

Thirdly, the self has been seen according to its view of itself. The self-schema of the self concerning its trait on loneliness has been explored along with the self's idealistic and ethical criteria regarding its lonely self. The emphasis here has been to enquire whether the self presented a lonely self to itself, and whether it considered its lonely self as a desirable ingredient of its ideal self. Also, whether the self considers its presentation of itself as a lonely self to be acceptable by others has been enquired. It has been also examined whether the self feels obliged to be lonely.

Towards this endeavor, the whole thesis has been divided into five chapters. The introductory first chapter has introduced the two dramatists, Stoppard and Mamet in the context of Western mainstream theatre. It has also outlined the major sociological theories on loneliness which have been used in this analysis. The observations made by Weiss have been taken as the basis to understand loneliness as an emotional condition here. The analyses in the first two chapters were directly influenced by his classification of loneliness into emotional isolation and social isolation. Since the topic of enquiry is the presentation of the lonely self, Goffman's observations on the presentation of a self before others have been found to be quite useful in this study. His findings on self presentation as well as his remarks on the front-stage and back-stage variations in self presentation have been useful in analyzing the behavior of lonely selves. His theory on stigma too has helped to understand the reservations lonely selves experience when they present themselves as lonely. A self's presentation of itself as lonely before others is also guided by the attitudes towards loneliness held by its society. The observations made by Riesman, Glazer, and Denney in their work *Lonely Crowd* have been used to understand the attitudes concerning a lonely self

in different types of societies. The lonely self's concept of itself in Stoppard and Mamet have been studied based on Markus' sociological conjectures on self-schema and E. T. Higgins' speculated distinctions of an ideal self and an ought-to-self.

The second chapter has attempted to observe a self in the presence of its attachment figures through textual analysis. Stoppard's *Enter a Free Man* and *Real Thing* and Mamet's *DV* and *SP* which relate personal interactions among those who live in close proximity with each other have been discussed here. The proximity referred to here has been seen to be either the proximity within a relationship like that of a marriage or within a habitually frequented geographic location of the self, like a park, pub, or a singles bar.

DV has been seen to delineate a poetic version of ideal companionship. The two selves in the play appear lonely and marginalized from their community. But a personal community of each other gives them a sense of security and comfort. Both George and Emil relish the company of each other and at the same time, their companionship is notable in that in the play's world neither of them is seen to intrude into another's private space or demand for any deeper intimacy than what has been voluntarily offered. From the subsequent analyses of Mamet's plays, it has been seen that *DV* offers Mamet's conception of a lonely self and its presentation in its germinal state. Mamet has written both comedies and tragedies. In his comedies, the play ends happily whenever the protagonists return to their personal community, the limited group of people with whom the self has been seen to associate at the beginning of the play. Richard Christiansen remarked in his discussion on Mamet in the late 1980s, "the bonds of friendship, family, and love are crucial in Mamet's world, and when they are broken, the world collapses for the characters" (340). But the reality experienced in the world of his plays almost always prioritizes friendship, in the sense of companionship, more than family or love. Family or love is generally shown as

demanding a greater intimacy than called for and Mametian characters falter under the heavy burden of such emotional responsibility. The camaraderie of the two old men in *DV* remains the prototype and ideal for all the manipulating con men, lumpen proletariat, real estate brokers and even the lesbians who were to follow from Mamet's pen.

SP tells the same story from the other side in such a way that though tagged together in their earlier performances as companion pieces, both plays appear to be so diverse in their themes. Yet, Mamet is someone who has "a tendency to tell the same story over and over, but it is a good story, and he tells it with style, insight and theatrical virality" (Berkowitz 194). Danny and Bernie are shown as companions in such a way that, like George and Emil in *DV*, they appear to function as a personal community to each other. But here, unlike the smooth flowing poetic camaraderie of George and Emil, external elements intrude. Danny attempts to take a step towards intimacy with another, a woman, Deborah. The attempt fails due to two reasons which, in general, are seen to be repeated in the other Mamet plays analyzed in this thesis. First, intimacy involves a heavy burden of emotional obligations which is quite cumbersome to Mamet's characters. Secondly, a family unit functions as the basis of mainstream society. Inhabiting the margins of mainstream social order, Mametian characters generally find it difficult to be part of a larger social unit. The best that they can achieve is a narrow personal community for themselves than participation in the larger societies. Thus in the end of the play Danny is back with Bernie enjoying their earlier past-time of watching women – of finding solace in each other's company and objectifying the other, in this case, women.

Stoppard's play, *Free Man*, presents a lonely self from an entirely different angle. George Riley, the eccentric loner considers himself as a to-be-recognized inventor. He belittles his devoted family which actually shields him from emotional isolation. He seeks

companionship with strangers in search of social recognition and to escape from his social isolation. Typical of Stoppardian failures, Riley seems to be craving for an attachment with those in the crux of societal power. He fails miserably, but the play establishes an unlikely truth, that “difference is the thing” (*Enter a Free Man* 57), and being lonely is the first step towards being successful. But Riley’s tragedy results from his inability to acknowledge the importance of those who are intimately connected with him. His craving for social acceptance makes him a nonentity in spite of all his attempts to make a mark.

In *Real Thing*, Stoppard presents selves who are capable of being in control of their lives. Every one can have occasions in life when they feel lonely, but, the play appears to convey that the presentation and concealment of one’s lonely self is a criterion of one’s mental strength. Henry, the playwright in *Real Thing*, is bound to be lonely from the very beginning, though it might be dubbed as the “loneliness at the top”, for he is a successful playwright. As such, his success gives him a chance to mould everyone as dictated by his script, in his plays as well as in his life. Stoppard’s plays seem to show loneliness as part of a self’s being. *Enter a Free Man* and *Real Thing* present selves who keep their lonely selves hidden even from those who are intimately connected to them. Riley is shown as suffering from social isolation and craving for it. He hides his feelings over social isolation even from his family, rendering his life a failure. Henry does not appear to suffer from social isolation, yet he is shown to cling onto his social image, that of a successful creator of scripts who is invulnerable to any emotional upsurges caused by the indifference of those close to him. But as the play progresses this image is revealed to be a mask which covers a passionate and vulnerable self. The structuring of the play as an emotional bildungsroman of Henry suggests that, by the end of the play he has turned more mature. This maturity consists in his daring to reveal his so far concealed self as vulnerable and sensitive to emotional isolation.

Here, unlike in Mamet, one's lonely self is not something that is to be suppressed and concealed under the cover of one's personal community. Unlike the futile and foiled attempts at intimacy in *SP*, *Real Thing* presents a courageous opening up of selves to each other. Instead of invoking a personal community and clinging to its juvenile security, *Real Thing* presents characters standing alone and engaging in relationships of intimacy as separate and distinct selves. Henry and Annie, at the end of the play, embark on an intimate attachment with each other. Unlike the male –female relationship in *SP*, in *Real Thing* the living together succeeds.

The third chapter has dealt with characters acting and reacting within their respective communities. Here too, Mamet's plays, *Speed the Plow* and *Glengarry* show the need to keep on with one's companions as an ideal requisite for selves. In *Speed the Plow* which is a comedy, Bobby Gould is happy in the end as he is with Fox, his friend of a long time. Karen had urged him to join a new band of reformers, by reminding him of his lonely self. But Fox alone can succeed as he stands for the community to which Gould belongs, even before Karen attempts to tempt him out. On the other hand, *Glengarry* shows the tragic consequences of selves residing in an environment, which forces them to compete against each other within their community.

Stoppard on the other hand, has been seen to caution against the tragic consequences resulting from anxious pursuits for social connection in *R&G*. Ros and Guil are brought to their comic-tragic fates because they did not show the courage to stand on their own, to assert their names and identities, and to make their individual choices to oppose power and social consensus. *Rock n' Roll* has a happy ending because its significant characters, Max and Jan, dare to do just that, and they stand on their own against social pressure and their community's urge to conform.

The fourth chapter has ventured to see how selves view themselves as lonely. Whether they acknowledge the trait of loneliness as part of their self-schema, and whether they consider being lonely as part of their ideal self or whether they accept loneliness as a to-be-aspired moral value, as part of their ought-to-be self, are looked at here.

The characters in Mamet's plays, *Boston Marriage* and *Oleanna* appear to conform to the pattern seen in the earlier chapters. Anna and Claire, the lesbian couple in *Boston Marriage*, acknowledge loneliness as their self-schema, both confessing openly to being lonely. Loneliness is seen as a painful situation by both and a resolution is brought about by continuing their long-lasting relationship, termed as "Boston marriage." But this long-lasting relationship has been understood by both as one which will not give scope for too much space for emotional intimacy. Their affiliation has been more for the sake of companionship and its convenience, the semblance of which alone will allow them a continuance within their community. Anna's maid Catherine is apparently, an object of derision for both Anna and Claire. But it has been seen that the reason behind the vituperative taunting of these women is not hatred, nor a vanity in the position of power which they wield relative to the parlor maid. The primary feeling which emanates from the curious volley of misdirected jeering is that of jealousy. She possesses something which they lack – a community.

Oleanna too, projects the same philosophy of idealizing the principle of loyalty to one's community. John's self-schema demarcates him as a loner in the conventional academic community. He tries to discard it by attempting to befriend someone regarded as belonging to the opposing community, a student, with dire consequences. Carol, on the other hand, feels lonely in a college class, a social unit which is new to her. But, contrary to John, she attempts to resolve her difficulties by retreating to her community. She joins a

revolutionary student group which appears to talk for the members of her community in the college. But her initial success is marred in the end because she fails to obey her community's injunction directing her not to meet John.

Stoppard's plays, discussed in the fourth chapter, follow the same thematic stance regarding lonely selves, as in the second and third chapters. In *Invention* Housman is shown to accept and acknowledge his lonely self. He keeps his social image of a successful academic and a popular poet intact by keeping his emotional isolation to himself. Thus, his life is rendered somewhat incomplete. He is made to tarry at the mythical Styx which his soul has to cross after death and he wanders through the memories of his past life. He even meets his young self in person. As he did not crave after social acceptance like Ros and Guil, his life cannot be a tragedy. Yet his true self, in its emotional veracity, could never be revealed as itself to his contemporary society. Nor could he gain a release from his emotional isolation as in the case of his "flamboyant" contemporary (Williams), Oscar Wilde. His love for Moses has been doomed from the very beginning and has to remain unrequited till the end. The tension created by Houseman's balancing between his emotional isolation and the impending peril of social isolation renders the play interesting.

Arcadia repeats the stance on lonely selves that was expressed in *Real thing*. Here loneliness is not something that is to be hidden as done by many of Mamet's characters. Nor is intimacy an impossible "Oleanna"-like utopia. Selves are presented as strong and self-sufficient, but to complete their selfhood and life, they have to expose themselves as emotionally vulnerable before those with whom they are intimate. Such a relaxing of emotional rigidity results in an emotionally mature self. Hannah, the successful author in *Arcadia* undergoes this sort of a relaxing of rigidity and joins with Gus in the last scene where time condenses onto space bringing in people from different time periods to dance

together. Thomasina, the central character, intuitively senses this for she answers Septimus' question on her heat death theory with characteristic élan. To Septimus' anxious logical query on what to do when everything ends, she replies gleefully that they "will dance" (126). Thus dance, an emotively aesthetic presentation of complex logical data, transcends the frustrated and lonely attempts at finding the rational truth which was Septimus' destiny.

Thus, though the prominent characters in Mamet and Stoppard appear to acknowledge a self-schema on loneliness, a marked difference in their ought-to and ideal concepts of selfhood can be seen. For Stoppard's characters the ideal selfhood involves an open revelation of one's lonely self and the consequent gaining of intimacy without compromising on their distinct selfhoods. In his plays the ideal concept of the self does not deviate much from the ought-to concept of selfhood. But in Mamet, a glaring disparity between the ideal and ought-to selves is evident. The ideal self in Mamet is the projection of an aspiration to control. It emerges partly from what Gordon, in her discussion on singles in America, terms the American ideal, the "myth of the swinger" (218). According to Gordon, this myth, "began as a male image publicized by the *Playboy and TV*" (218). The swinger is "unattached, cool, handsome, well-to-do" and is "surrounded by dozens of women." "Equally comfortable in bed or at work, the swinger never, ever succumbed to feelings of loneliness" (218).

Yet, the ideal seems to be almost unattainable for the marginalized beings inhabiting Mamet's plays. Their solace rests on falling back onto their ought-to-selves. The ought-to-selves of Mametian characters are related to their need for community and emphasize loyalty and allegiance to old friends. It is also essential that this loyalty and allegiance be devoid of intimacy because intimacy is a utopia which is even beyond the purview of the "ideal" and ought-to self concepts in Mamet. Mamet's plays have constructed a medium to

counter both social and emotional isolation in their structuring of what can be called a “personal community.” Mamet’s personal community is different from an intimate union of two persons (like that in a marriage), in that it lacks the unconditional give and take required by such an intimacy. Nor is it the large society of a state or race which figures in most of Stoppard’s plays. A personal community for Mamet consists of the small group of people with whom one has associated for a long time. Success or happiness depends on the person’s sustained loyalty to this personal community, whether it be that of the movie moguls in *Speed the Plow* or the “Group” in *Oleanna* or the juvenile homosocial companionship in *SP*. As a result of this attitude, Mamet’s characters present their lonely selves cautiously.

A Mametian self expresses its loneliness mainly in two types of situations. One is a manipulative situation, like that in *SP*, where Bernie attempts to seduce Joan by enlisting her sympathy. He tells her that his job is a lonely one (55-56). When Anna accuses Claire for making her feel lonely in *Boston Marriage* (15), too, the same manipulation is at work. Alternatively, it can be a situation of momentary emotional vulnerability when a self, in its desperate emotional isolation, wishes to express itself. Gould’s revelation of his loneliness before Karen, which Fox presumes correctly, “You complain to her. ‘No one understands me...’ ‘I understand you’...she says” (*SP* 71), is an illustration of this self expression at a weak moment. Carol’s attempt to make an intimate revelation of her life to John in *Oleanna* too is an aborted attempt at presenting her lonely self before another in a vulnerable moment. Whether as a manipulative tool, or as a weak momentary self-revelation, the self that presents its loneliness fails miserably in achieving its purpose.

Stoppard’s characters present themselves with quite contrary intentions and results. The selves in the beginning of his plays are shown to be in a developmental juncture. A

choice between social isolation and emotional isolation seems to be significant here. If Mamet's selves find their solace in their personal communities, Stoppard's selves gain strength in daring to face social isolation. Those who crave for social acceptance like Ros and Guil (*R&G*) and Riley (*Enter a Free Man*) inevitably fail while those who give less concern for social recognition like Wilde (*Invention*) and Max (*Rock n' Roll*) are made to win. Yet the ideal of Stoppardian selves is not a conscious becoming of an isolated ivory-tower-dweller. Normalcy is seen as their responsibility, as part of their ought-to-self.

Thus in *Rock n' Roll*, Jan asserts his need to keep away from public acts of resistance which might make the authorities send him to prison. According to him "normal people don't do things that might send them to prison" (38), and he, as a normal person is justified to keep away from such actions. Yet when the social order deviates from their inner strictures of what is normal, they become forced to do actions which are termed as not normal. So Jan is put into prison as he signed a charter and became different from the "normal people" who, according to Milan, the representative of the communist government in Czechoslovakia, "like a quiet life, nice flat, a car, a bigger TV..." (*Rock n' Roll* 56). Alexander in *Every Good Boy* asserts that he "was never mad" and his "madness consisted of writing to various people about a friend...who is in prison" (199). Yet, in the world of the respective plays, people like Jan and Alexander seem to emerge as winners while those without an inner value-system seem to fail because they crave after social recognition.

These findings may also correspond to the concept of individualized selves put forth recently by Stella Beatriz Kerl and Thelma Duffey. According to Kerl and Duffey, in Euro-American culture, the individuated self is more the characteristic of its dominant class. On the other hand, the subordinate groups like women, Blacks and Jews possess more relationship oriented selves:

If the larger societal system has any part in shaping one's sense of self, it follows that the people on top (dominant) in a hierarchical system would have a separate sense of self (the prevailing modal or "norm"), while the people on the bottom (subordinate) would have a relational sense of self. In other words, the sense of self might be consistent with one's position in the social hierarchy. (Kerl and Duffey)

And consequently, most of Stoppard's characters, who are depicted as individualized selves, belong to the upper dominant strata of social structure. On the contrary, Mamet's selves are almost always marginalized, ghettoized Jews, even when they have managed to get into the higher echelons of the academia (*Oleanna*) or movie business (*Speed the Plow*). Naturally, for them, relational selves have much greater influence over their personalities than individualized selves.

The sharing of intimacy is yet another realm where Stoppard and Mamet present absolutely variant views. For Mamet, as has been observed, intimacy is an unachievable utopia. A personal community serves as both attachment figure and community for the Mametian self. For Stoppard, on the other hand, an individual's social sphere is not confined to a personal community of close associates, but, is the larger human community itself. An individual's obligations to this community have been determined not by the value system of the external society but by the individual's own internalized code of morals. A self succeeds when it acts according to these internalized codes and fails when it shifts this code to pander to the tastes of the mass, or the power of the state. At the same time, a strict maintenance of these internalized values can render a self rigid.

Stoppard's ideal self is one who, in the course of its journey towards maturity learns to be less rigid and expose itself as emotionally vulnerable. Thus, Henry in *Real Thing* starts

out to present an imperturbable interior, only to get transformed into a vulnerable and more lovable self at the end of the play. Hannah in *Arcadia* starts out as one who has “always been given credit for” her “unconcern” (64). She proclaims that she does not “like sentimentality” (37), and she does not dance (45). Yet, by the end of the play, she is seen as starting “to dance, rather awkwardly” with Gus (130). And Thomasina, the child prodigy and the bearer of the feminine form of Stoppard’s first name, prescribes “dance” as remedy for the eventual exhaustion of our rationally known universe (126). The “dance” in *Arcadia* and the final rock music in *Rock n’ Roll* serve as symbols of sensitivity, sensuality and emotional intimacy, merging selves together and erasing the loneliness of individual selves.

Another terrain where Stoppard and Mamet contrast each other is that of politics. Though for a long time hailed by many as liberal indictments against the capitalistic mindset, Mametian plays seem to reveal, in the analyses of this thesis, a predilection towards what he himself has termed, a “conservative” world order. The liberal ideal prioritizing the individual is replaced in Mamet by comparatively community-oriented values. An acknowledgement of this predilection has come from Mamet himself in his 2008 election essay in *Village Voice*. In the essay titled, “David Mamet: Why I am no longer a “Brain-Dead Liberal,” he distinguishes between what he calls “the conservative view” and the “liberal view.” “I took the liberal view for decades, but I believe I have changed my mind.”

But actually, what emerges through the essay is that he did not change his mind from a person taking a liberal view to a person accepting the conservative view, but rather, he changed his perception on his own perception. And his perception had always been “conservative” or “tragic” and it had “informed” his “writing for the last forty years.” According to Mamet, he had thought that “people were basically good at heart” and that “everything is always wrong” in the community. But of late, he has realized that nothing

was and is “always” wrong “in the community” he lives in or, in his “country.” But at the same time this vague idea of his own past conceptions regarding individual and society is hardly reflected in his plays as has been analyzed here. In the same article he implies this with the acknowledgement that “people, in circumstances can behave like swine, and that this, indeed, is not only fit subject but the only fit subject of drama.” Yet his plays from *SP* to *Oleanna*, as analyzed here, though asserting the need to be loyal to one’s community, have exhibited a vitality and vivaciousness in their individual selves, when they step out of the purview of their respective personal communities. This suggests that he never ever completely relegated the role of the individual even while he was advocating loyalty to one’s personal community.

Stoppard, on the other hand, in his early days, have been dubbed apolitical as he had not thronged his contemporary school of predominantly leftist playwrights. Gradually, he was seen amidst groups resisting totalitarian governments and writing plays like *Every Good Boy*, *Professional Foul* and *Rock n’ Roll*, all of which carry forth liberal views resisting the suppression of the individual by any form of dictatorial, totalitarian social order. Consequently, the critics and reviewers too have emphasized this. Thus, in his review of *The Coast of Utopia*, Paul Taylor states that the trilogy “gives voice to a philosophy of moderation dear to Stoppard's heart: respect for the individual over the collective.” Stoppard himself acknowledges this in his interviews and writings and reiterates the idea in his 2008 March article, “the idea of the autonomy of the individual is echoed... all over the place” in his writing (“1968: The Year of the Posturing Rebel”). He also describes himself as a “timid libertarian” (Zoglin). Yet in play after play, from *Real Thing* to *Arcadia*, while echoing this autonomy of the individual, he is also found to assert the need of individuals for social contact, co-operation and communion.

Both Stoppard and Mamet are found in this analysis to project contrasting attitudes towards the lonely self and its expression. Yet, interestingly, a still closer reading of their plays reveals more complex forces at work. If Stoppard bases his selves on the ideal of autonomy, at the same time he projects an ought-to-self which has to strive towards an effective communion with its fellow beings. Thus though Riley in *Enter a Free Man* aspires towards the selfhood of a lonely genius, within the structure of the play he stands as a failure not because he could not become a genius, but because he is insensitive to his loving family. Henry in *Real Thing* is finally made to learn the worth of true love by being vulnerable and open to another human being. Ros and Guil face their tragic fates not only because they crave association with those in power to escape social isolation, but also because they deny identification with those who, like the Player, would have helped them. Jan and Max on *Rock n' Roll* become full persons only when, apart from their isolating stances on ideological obstinacies, they exhibit human love and succumb to its vulnerabilities. Houseman's lonely dignity in *Invention* is counterpoised by the pathos involved in his companionless state. And in *Arcadia*, Hannah's attempt at the dance with Gus asserts the need for connection which alone can make a self truly autonomous.

Meanwhile, Mamet, while thematically establishing the need for loyalty to one's personal community, causes his separated and isolated individual selves to exude the essential vitality and vibrancy of his plays with only the possible exception of *DV*. Thus Bernie's speeches in *SP*, and Roma's magical, though failed, mesmerizing of Link in *Glengarry* are brilliant illustrations of individualized selves. The razor-sharp tongues of the contemporized Victorian dames in *Boston Marriage* are delicious to the extreme when they are the most insecurely isolated. And, *Oleanna* demonstrates the thrill gained by stepping out of the precincts stipulated by one's personal community.

Thus, it can be seen that, though Stoppard insists on the need to keep on the freedom of the individual, lamenting over the fast receding culture of personal liberty which gives way to one of acquiescence, still, he gives emphasis to opening one's heart. And Mamet, while proclaiming the need for companionship, still celebrates a culture which is hyper-individualistic. Both these popular playwrights of the contemporary age, taken together, thus, seem to preach a medium path from two divergent standpoints. Stoppard, basing himself from the side of individual freedom, and Mamet, from the side of human connectivity, appear to converge on to a point of celebration. The celebration of a culture which, in spite of its failings, has creatively enriched human lives through individual independence and organized progress. The theatrical success in terms of popularity and critical acclaim, of both these writers too, may be, to an extent, attributed to these thematic concerns of theirs.