“Oh, to be in Oleanna,
That’s where I would rather be.
Than be bound in Norway
And drag the chains of slavery.”

folk song

In 1492, whilst landing on the shores of Bahamas, Christophus Columbus was thinking of India in the east, where he had intended to reach while voyaging towards the west. The discovery of America, therefore, is grounded on a popular fallacy and misunderstanding; on a voyage whose destination was somewhere else, the voyagers were, in fact, lost when they got to a place which was, later, named America. Since then, millions of people have been heading to the New Land to find and discover their utopia, result of which was an inferno for the Native Americans who were almost exterminated rapidly either by genocide or by the diseases brought by the immigrants as souvenir from Europe (see Baym). The duality in the consequences of the journey to America is implied in the above-mentioned folk song. They wished to be in Oleanna to ‘drag the chains of slavery,’ but the land was destined to be a failure. Their wishful-thinking journey was doomed to end in ‘Erehwon,’ in ‘The Wasteland.’

The second chapter of the research deals with the other three plays of David Mamet. Considering that the thematic centrality of the myth of journey in American history and society is reflected in the texts, it is criticised and overturned by the playwright in his plays such as Lakeboat, Edmond and Prairie du Chien.

All the three plays, unlike the plays in chapter one, have plenty of characters with specific communal features, among whom one character may be considered as an outsider. The crew of a ship whom Dale joins temporarily in Lakeboat; the gangs and street people among whom Edmond goes in Edmond; and in Prairie du Chien the passengers of a train cabin. The character that is assumed to be the main character is not accepted by the members of the community permanently. He is decentralised and marginalised by the marginal characters among whom he is positioned.
The plays discussed in this chapter are all one-act plays, two of which have plenty of scenes. In all the plays, the stage is like a plateau, which is itself on the move and the characters, being in a journey on the plateau, throughout, are shown in the scenes as if a cinematographer is moving from this character to the other and from this scene to the next, using the cinematic techniques of fading in and out, shading foreground and background, and jump cuts. Such directions also impose the unity of time on the play, as there is almost no long and considerable time elapse between the scenes in two of the plays and of course, Prairie du chien is a one-scene play. Like the plays of the first chapter, the features of a classic plot such as suspense, action, violence, climax, and dénouement have been well employed. The plot in both Lakeboat and Prairie du chien takes places mainly in the stories told by the characters – by the crew in the boat and by the storyteller in the train – and the plays, in effect, do not have any considerable plots. Edmond, however, has a Hollywoodian plot with its story lines. If the crisis in the western society, particularly in metropolises like New York, is demonstrated by the naked violence in Edmond, which becomes itself a fable, “a dark fable of urban decay” (Brantley 85), fables are employed in the other two plays in order to hide and/or to explain the crisis. That is why Mamet is fond of fables in his plays. The fable, as Jean-François Lyotard reckons in his Postmodern Fables, is not a remedy for but an explanation of the crisis in the western society. He acclaims that as the fable “proposes an explanation for the state”, it is, thus, “neither a legitimation nor condemnation” (Lyotard 100). It becomes, in Wittgenstein words, a ‘micro narrative,’ which has no traits of an authoritative grand narrative and connects with many other micronarratives. Therefore, the fable helps the writer to subvert the modernist ‘meta narration,’ using parodies and pastiches. As Umberto Eco reminds us, all the stories are ‘already-told’ concerning the postmodernist notion of Intertextuality (Eco 60- 80). Therefore, there is nothing new to be told. Whatever we try to say is old and has been already narrated; hence, the writer uses the fables, often quoted in the texts, to show his awareness of the ‘already-told.’ The intertextual feature of the fables and their disruption of the grand–narrative also carry the other notion of Postmodernism: Deleuzian rhizome. In the introduction of their book called A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia under the title of ‘Introduction: Rhizome’, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari reject the tree-like notion of
grand narratives and believe in the rhizomatic decentralisation. They argue that in literature, and in the world in general, “the tree and root inspire a sad image of thought that is forever imitating the multiple on the basis of a centred or segmented higher unity.”

In a hierarchical system and in a traditional binary logic of the one-zero, we fall in the circular repetitions of “fake multiplicities, [. . .] reproductions and returns”, which “do not get us any further” (Deleuze 106). A rhizome, by contrast, demolishes the hierarchical centralisation of the grand narrative and connects any point to any other point and operates by variation and expansion, and pertains to a map, a map of journey. It outlines a map of journey from one knot to another knot.

All the plays deal with the trope of journey, a significant American myth, as the creation of America is a result of a series of journeys. The characters “set out on a journey” in each work, which “takes the form of a journey through a blighted landscape and has strong allegorical overtones” (Carroll 92). Dale, in Lakeboat, accompanies crew of a merchant ship on board to go on a voyage from this side of the lake to the other. Edmond, in Edmond, leaves home and his wife for an odyssey in New York City that ends in Jail; and the characters in Prairie du Chien are the passengers of a train that is heading towards the west and the storyteller is a man who is always travelling. The notion of the journey, as used in the plays, is multilayered. It is mental, physical, geographical, and ‘rhizomatic’. In effect, the journey itself, being a part of the human existence and life, of a great antiquity, in nature is rhizomatic and anti-centred. The communities are formed both as a result of and the need for the journey. The oldest civilisations in the world are the outcome of the expeditions of the tribes for their betterment, to escape from a grand narrative. Arians moved from the Ural Mountains to the plateau of Persia and, after subduing the regional tribes, established the grand civilisations there in 18th century BC (Hamed 2004). We may not exactly point out the reasons of their mass immigration, but we can do so for the exodus of Europeans to the Continent of America since 15th century AD. According to The Columbia Literary History of the United States, The Cambridge History of American Literature and Norton Anthology of American Literature, Sixth Edition, there were different reasons for the Europeans to depart from their home country for the unknown New Land. Finding gold and wealth, creating the religious puritan or non religious communities, escaping from...
the tyrannical rulers of Europe, and the criminals and gangs escaping the rules of European judicial systems are some of the well-known reasons for mass immigration to America. In brief, each individual was seeking to create his own version of the utopia and so undertook a journey to achieve his/her aim.

In *Gilgamesh*, a folklore epic belonging to Assyrian civilisation of the first centuries of the second millennium BC, the hero, Gilgamesh of Uruk, is in search of immortality, and after his best friend's death, goes on a journey to find it. He cannot, however, find it and naturally dies at the end. The hero's concern is with a kind of utopia which is not aimed at the end of his journey, that which becomes the main course of the epic. Both Enkidu, his friend, as a marginal character and his destiny equals the notion of dystopia and that of being civilised. He was an animal-like human, "innocent of mankind" (Sandars 61), who was living in the forest with wild animals but seduced by a harlot to go to the city, he becomes civilised and in fact loses his innocence. On his deathbed in the city, he regrets the primitive life he had at the beginning and curses all the people who educated him to be civilised (Sandars 88). In the epic, the journey from the nature to the culture is considered as a downfall for the human being. It was written more than a thousand years before the time Homer started to narrate *Odyssey*, which is an epic with a happy ending when, after a long-suffering journey, the hero returns home and is welcomed by his family and friends. Unlike Odysseus, Aeneas, the hero of *The Aeneid* by Virgil, forced to depart from his homeland, was, however, looking for a new home to create a new community and territory. He had to leave his home of his childhood, Troy, as a fugitive – *fato profugos* (Haecker 68) and undertake a long and troublesome journey and in fact, his new home is built after a taxing expedition and bloodshed. The voyage is the means for the end of Aeneas, who is looking for his own utopia. However, the means, which is considered as supplementary to the end, is the crucial part of the epic for the objective – finding a new home – cannot be achieved if the journey does not take place. The objective is de-naturalised. It will be elaborately discussed in relation to *Edmond*.

Thomas More also undertook a journey to realise his *Utopia* (1516). More, who has written his social satire to criticise the social, political, and economic conditions of the 16th century England, disbelieves in the very utopia he himself has created. Having in his mind Plato's *Republic*, which can be considered as the first explicit attempt to create a
utopia where everybody and everything are, according to the totalitarian rules, regularised, Thomas More recognises that creating utopia is impractical and self-contradictory. More creates a society in which there is no private property, but he believes that the abolition of private property will lead to bloodshed and plunder. There is a controversy about the capital punishment, and slavery is an essential feature of *Utopia*. The contradiction is implied by the word itself – utopia, which was coined by More. It consists of Greek *ou*, meaning ‘not’ and *topos*, meaning ‘place’ and is a pun on *eutopia* – a place (where all is) well (Cuddon 957). It is a community you can find ‘nowhere.’ The Utopians are ideal beings, but not inhabitants of our workday world (see Utopia by Thomas More).

In effect, the myth of America as a new Eden, in view of the Puritans, raised by God in the wilderness, was supported by the English utopian tradition – from More’s *Utopia* to Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1624) – reflected Englishmen’s “mythic frames through which people, explorers, and colonists viewed nature and life in the New World” (Lewalski 25) of America, where, Thomas Morton’s *New English Canaan* (1637) projected “an Arcadian antitype of the biblical promised land, replete with goodness, joy, and ease” (Lewalski 26). The pervasive point of the seventeenth-century literature is the presence of the contrary myth. John Donne’s “Anatomie of the World” (1611) and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* are some examples of the counter-utopian literature. Milton portrays the world throughout history:

> To good malignant, to bad men benign,
> Under her own weight groaning (PL 12, 537-39)

Utopian literature became widespread from the 1880s through the early decades of the twentieth century, when several hundred utopian novels appeared, from which Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backwards* (1888) or Ignatius Donnelly’s *Caesar’s Column* (1891) are more significant. These along with other novels of the period probe the concern about “the decay of moral values that seemed [. . .] to accompany the industrialisation of agrarian America” (Sundquist 507). Bellamy’s immensely popular novel contrasts “a collectivist paradise of 2000 with the urban misery of the 1880s” (Sundquist 520).
The decay associated with the shift from the agrarian society to the industrial one is literally reflected in Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd*, whose character, Billy, is destroyed when he is forced to shift from his commercial ship to the military one. The transition from innocence to maturity, which victimises and in fact deconstructs the truthfulness of the traditional priority of innocence, is presented by Melville as “the injustice of the human world and the silences of the divine” (Milder 447).

Being sure not to find utopia on the earth, H. G. Wells chooses another planet for his purpose, where he goes with a botanist—clearly Darwin—in his fiction called *A Modern Utopia* which he, nonetheless, finds out as a failure (Wells 135). At the end of his tour of modern utopia, he concludes that he has “no thought that my tenure of Utopia becomes every moment more precarious” (Wells 352).

O’Neill’s plays reflect his despair about any kind of utopia or bright prospect for his society. His plays like *Beyond the Horizon* and *Iceman Cometh* present a world whose players, being desperate for a different future, are all “caught in decline. This is a theatre of entropy” (Bigsby, MAD 17) – a closed system in physics which “will always lose energy because its heat will be dissipated. The apparent implication of this law is that everything is running down” (Ilyas 124). His characters, like Mamet’s, were seen “trapped in their own limitation, storytellers looking to find meaning in their own desperate inventions” (Callens 43), and remembering ambitions which have now foundered.

The connection “with O’Neill is perhaps strongest in *Lakeboat*, which in some senses is reminiscent of that writer’s early sea plays” (Bigsby 284). In fact, *Lakeboat* is one of the early plays of the dramatist, which was widely neglected at the time of first production by the Theatre Workshop at Marlboro College, in Marlboro, Vermont in 1970. Then it was rediscovered in 1979, revised by John Dillon, Artistic Director of the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and produced in Wisconsin in April 1980 when Mamet was relatively renowned. The play was a success and was done later at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven. It was again rewritten and staged at Chicago’s Goodman Theatre in 1982. This play is also the first play of the American writer, which had its European premiere in Lyric Studio, Hammersmith in 1998.
The critics have been divided over this play. The feminists have attacked its misogynistic content—the usual labelling for the most all-male plays of David Mamet, and some others like Frank P. Caltabiano have considered the play as “a work which at best could be made into a mildly entertaining evening by a group of interesting actors” (Caltabiano 518). However, whilst the most shocking point, for some critics, was the play’s language, which was, at least, at the time of the production in 80s, considered full of obscenities and profanity, Alain Piette, Belgian scholar of drama, on the contrary, believes that the very same language of the crew “is essentially meant to vent their frustrations” (Piette 75). Charles Spencer, an English critic, seeing the play in England 20 years after its premiere in USA, also judges the language as the focal point of the play. “[I]t is the vigour of the language”, says Spencer, “that comes over most strongly-brutal, demotic, yet somehow transforming inarticulate speech into something rich, true, even poetic” (Spencer 9). Esther Harriott praises the play as well, claiming it as “one of [Mamet’s] best, [which] celebrates the rite of passage of Dale Katzman [the main character], announcing all of his characteristics at their strongest” (Harriott 63). While Harriott considers “the frequent outbursts of obscenity” by the characters “as a release from their boredom” (Harriott 64), C.W. E. Bigsby regards the same reason for their fantasising:

The fictions which they elaborate, and which they subsequently abandon without regret, are their protection against boredom. Like Beckett’s tramps they pass the time by talking. (Bigsby, MAD 225)

David Mamet himself in an interview with Esther Harriott in 1984 mentions Prairie du Chien’s similarity to Lakeboat and desires to have them done in a double bill on the stage someday as they “should make a nice companion” (Harriott 82). The play is different from the dramatist’s other works as it was originally written for a radio production and was first produced by ‘Earplay’ for National Public Radio in April 1979. Prairie du Chien was, of course, produced on stage at Chicago New Theatre in April 1985. However, its revised current-form premiere on stage was on December 23, 1985 at the Mitzi Newhouse Theatre, Lincoln Center in New York under the direction of Gregory Mosher and then moved to run in London in 1986, which was a relative success.
The critical receptions were not very friendly when *Prairie du Chien* was on stage. Clive Barnes called it “nothing but an incomprehensible tall story [in which] miniaturization has been taken beyond any natural limit” (Barnes 95). Frank Rich also named it a “trivial, largely humourless effort” (Rich C11). On the other hand, Brustein believed that the play “unravel[ed] on the stage like a Faulkner story . . . but [with] intriguing supernatural overtones” (Brustein 26). And Leslie Kane, looking differently, considers the storyteller as very integral part of Mamet’s work and claims that “as Christopher Bigsby and Anne Dean have argued, Mamet has given storytelling a central role as method and subject” (Kane 17).

If *Lakeboat*’s first production was overlooked due to its writer’s anonymity and *Prairie du Chien*’s production because of its original radio production, critics almost unanimously criticised *Edmond* negatively due to what they call its racist and sexist language (Piette 80) when it had its premiere in Goodman Theatre, Chicago in June 1982. It opened later in New York at the Off-Broadway Provincetown Playhouse in October 1982, and received mixed notices. However, it brought the writer the Obie award and the revival of the play in 1995 at the Atlantic Theatre in New York had a reversed reception. *Edmond* was also produced on stage in England at the Royal Court Theatre and the Newcastle Playhouse in 1985 and its production at Royal National Theatre in London in 2003 was a considerable success.

Although Frank Rich believed that Mamet’s “ear has gone tone-deaf, and his social observations have devolved into clichés” (Rich C20), in one of few essays published in favour of the play in The New Republic after its premiere in Chicago, Robert Brustein was the “one [who] want[ed] to express gratitude” because Mamet “has pushed our faces into a world which most of us spend our waking hours trying to avoid, finding a kind of redemption in the bleakest, most severe alternatives” (Brustein 24). Esther Harriott found it a play, in which Mamet has made “his serious points about American society through funny, dirty talk and through confronting taboos” (Harriott 73). Gerald Weales also believed that in *Edmond*, as “a skeletal descent-into-hell drama, the corruption is universal, a social malaise – sleaze, more accurately – that infects everyone” (Weales 604). And while Anne Dean calls *Edmond* “Perhaps Mamet’s most personal play” and believes that “it truthfully and alarmingly reflects [Mamet’s] darkest fears
about modern America and its damaging effect upon the ordinary citizen” (Dean 148), David Savran, labels the play as “perhaps the most ‘poetic’ of his ‘in-between’ plays” in his book called *In Their Own Words: Contemporary American Playwrights*. He maintains that “[t]he play charts the gradual descent of an American urban, white, middle-class Everyman who, though educated and articulate, is unable to connect with a world that doesn’t play according to his rules” (Savran 133). It is the world of *Edmond*, in which, Leslie Kane claims, “evocation of the unknown and its place in our lives” is crucially significant (Kane 214). Alain Piette compares *Edmond*’s world to Edward Hopper’s paintings and adds that like them, the scenes of the play “are fragments of a postmodern universe and are presented by a deconstructionist technique that invites the theatregoer to imagine the missing pieces to form a complete picture” (Peitte 82).

Twenty-eight scenes of *Lakeboat* are also pieces of crew’s lives on board a ship named T. Harrison, which forms a complete “picture of daily routine” (Bigsby 284). Each scene has a title that carries one way or the other the subject of the scenes. The title of the first scene (*What Do You Do with a Drunken Sailor?*) and the others’ as well denaturalise the titles in the American film series on TV, every episode of which comes with a new subject and a related title for the same fixed characters of the series. It is what Quentin Tarantino, a film director, has also done in his postmodern films, *Kill Bill 1& 2*. By using the title and the words like ‘you,’ the writer interferes and/or comments, presuming “a speaker and hearer, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the hearer in some way” (Benveniste 209). The characters are also taking the same roles in which the Pierman, as a speaker, is trying, by telling the story, to influence Dale, the hearer. Furthermore, it gives a presupposition, which only relates to the fantasies of the Pierman, and we are not sure whether what he says about the night cook is true or not. Therefore, the writer uses what Paul Cobley calls the ‘rupturing’ effect, “as part of a postmodernist cultural ‘logic,’” borrowing Fredric Jameson’s term (Cobley 183), or what Linda Hutcheon considers as “the simultaneous inscribing and subverting of the conventions of narrative” (Hutcheon 49).

The use of the titles and the numerous scenes in the play also remind us the variations in *The Duck Variations* whose setting was a bench in the park and the characters were talking about the ducks, and likewise *Lakeboat*’s setting is a merchant
boat of course with its different rooms. The writer’s suggestion for the setting is “a construction of a Lakeboat, so that all playing areas can be seen at once, [. . .] and the actors can simply walk from one area to the next as their scenes require” (Lakeboat 128). The ‘construction’ tries to be “a realistic set” (Bigsby 284), a setting which is to represent the real boat. Since the ‘construction’ is constructed by the words in the text that are representing the ‘realistic setting’ which, in turn, ‘re-presents’ the real, the setting itself becomes a Baudelairian simulacrum. The playwright’s, as Linda Hutcheon puts it, “use and abuse of both realist reference and modernist self-reflexivity is typically postmodern” (Hutcheon, 41). In a 1998 film called Pleasantville, a contemporary American brother and sister enter inside a late-1950s black and white film on TV and play the roles of the children to their ‘fictional’ parents (are not they themselves fictional!?). In a scene of the ‘film’, the girl wants to go to the Ladies’ Room in a restaurant, but finds out that there is no facilities behind the ‘construction’ of the door for answering the call of the nature. The film reminds us, and at the same time satirises the form of narrative re-presentation in Hollywood (Cobley 192), that it is just a constructed décor, which, as a sign, represents the realistic setting which itself re-presents the real in the outside world. The italic word of construction does the same function. Furthermore, the suggestion provides the play a modernist ‘photographic representation’ of scenes while the movement of the actors from one part of the ‘construction’ to the next without a theatrical gap between the scenes makes it seem like a realistic film. It also helps the notion of the movement in the journey from one place to the other in a rhizomatic world of a cyberspace. In a cyberspace network, there is not one end for a journey in the ‘hypertext’, but multiple alternative endings in different knots of the ‘web’ are accessible simultaneously by user(s). In his book, Narrative, Paul Cobley reckons:

[H]ypertext not only allows alternative endings to a narrative [. . .], it also allows alternatives within the body of a narrative, “exploring what in print culture would be described as ‘digressions’ as long and complex as the ‘main’ text” (Snyder 1998: 127). (Cobley 203)

The availability of all ‘playing areas’ of the ‘construction’ for the audience in the theatre creates such space like a hypertext in which the different variations of the stories narrated by the crew and their routine life on board become those alternative choices on the web
being available for the user-audiences; however “the possibilities will not be infinite” (Cobley 205).

The merchant boat always travels some fixed routes on the Great Lakes from Chicago to different destination on the other side of the lake in Canada and back carrying steel. The play covers their “voyage from East Chicago to Duluth” (Carroll 84) – the time that Dale Katzman has joined the crew on board. Hence, Dale’s ‘rite of passage’ becomes “a parody of the classic shipboard mise-en-scène of the youth-into-manhood ritual” (Harriott, 63) such as Herman Melville’s Billy Budd. Moreover, Mamet’s interest in lake (as it is referred as ‘inland sea’ in the title of the scene 18, and also in the other play of Mamet’s, The Duck Variations) rather than in ‘high sea’ and its adventure relates to the notion of infinity associated with the sea and the one of finiteness with the lake. As a result, the ship with its different rooms on the lake becomes a hypertext with its various icons on the ‘World Wide Web.’ You can roam and construct different narratives as the crew do. Nevertheless, it is finite and when you enter there, you are trapped in it and its circularity. So are the crew, “who seem to lack a sense of direction and purpose, trapped as they are in the circularities of something more than the ship’s unchanging itinerary” (Callens 42).

There are eight characters in the play. The oldest is the Fireman in his sixties and the youngest is Dale in the age of 20. He is a Jewish student of English literature in Massachusetts and is on the boat for a summer job. His marginality, despite his being the main character, is emphasised by his jewishness and his temporal presence on the boat; as he is not one of them. And of course he is also distinguished by his age as the youngest and his education, which nobody else on the board has. All of the crew have been given a name but two of them – Pierman and Fireman – “are identified only through their function” (Callens 42). There is no specific reason mentioned about this nomination either by the playwright or by the critics; but it could be argued that they are treated in this manner so that they could be distinguished from others. Both are introduced for the first time in the play (Pierman in the first scene and Fireman in the eighth scene) while telling a story they have ‘heard.’ Fireman, being alone in the engine room and the oldest sailor on board, reads books all the time and talks only about the missing cook and in fact, he is fabricating the story all the time. Pierman, apparently, is the person who
‘constructs’ the story of the cook in the ship for the first time and then keeps aside. He is the grand narrator who presents the first and ostensibly ‘original’ variation of the story (there is no way in and out of the text for the readers and spectators to prove or disprove its ‘originality’ as it is the first version given in the text and the others start ‘copying’). But he insists on saying that he has ‘heard’ it. So does Fireman all the time; he is fabricating the fantasies. Pierman is questioned by Dale about the end of the story, which he cannot or does not finish and Fireman’s story is interrupted by the other sailors furious of his being “Mr. Wiseass” (Lakeboat 155). They are presumed as ‘homogeneous identity’ of authoritative voice which is subverted by the ‘heterogeneity’ of different appearances of narrative.

The variations of the stories fictionalised by the crew become like the variations of the story fabricated by George and Emil about the duck’s life in The Duck Variations. As Alain Piette puts it, “the plot centres around the disappearance of the ship’s night cook, [. . .] to whom something may or may not have happened after he left the ship in Chicago” (Piette 75). In fact, when the first scene starts, the ship is at the pier offloading its cargo and Pierman is talking to Dale, the main character, while supervising the offloading. He tells Dale the story of the cook, (he does not even remember the cook’s name, Guigliani, at the beginning) in which he is robbed by a prostitute and left drunk without his identification card and gate pass to the port. Therefore, according to the Pierman’s version, “[t]he guards won’t let him in!” (Lakeboat 130). The crucial point is that the story is about a man who cannot be there for the journey in a play which is about a journey or different journeys: routine journey of the crew, a new and first journey for Dale on board the boat, and his and the readers’ journey through the life of the crew on board the ship. Whereas generally journey-oriented fictions start with news of going to a journey, Mamet’s play starts with a story about missing a journey. On the other hand, being on a sea voyage is always considered an adventure and a change in routine life on the land, and is the source of many stories such as Eugene O’Neill’s sea plays, and Melville and Twain’s fiction. However, land and being out there bring adventure and fresh material for stories. Hence, the play, which is about the journey on the sea, commences adventure with the ‘de-journey’ story. Therefore, from the very beginning,
the myth of the adventurous journey is denaturalised in the play – put another way, it is de-mythologised.

That the story is narrated in the present tense by Pierman suggests another feature of postmodernism. The development of technologies in the twentieth century has created a condition in which the past can be recorded as always something present. Steven Connor, therefore, believes that, due to the mentioned condition, “[p]ostmodernism [. . .] is concerned almost exclusively with the nature of its own presentness” and then consequently he deduces that “the past appears to be included in the present, or at the present’s disposal, and in which the ratio between present and past has therefore changed” (Connor 10). This ‘presentness’ feature of the storytelling not only helps the narration to get the feature of film narration currently on screen, emphasising the influence of the Hollywood films on the sailors [in fact, in the film version of the play directed by Joe Mantegna, the fantasies of the crew are presented “in a black and white film noir style” (Callens 43)], but also lets the Pierman take the role of the speaker who wants to influence his listener. Hence, the present tense allows him to undertake journey in his story and move forward, inventing more in order to dramatise the story:

PIERMAN. So, he stumbles back to the gate, drunk and sobbing. . . .
DALE. Nothing to be ashamed of. . . .
PIERMAN. The guards won’t let him in! I mean he’s bleeding,
he’s dirty. . . .
DALE. You didn’t tell me he was bleeding. . . .
PIERMAN. It was understood. . . .
DALE. So, go on. (Lakeboat 130)

The ‘presentness’ of the narration is, furthermore, justified by John-François Lyotard in his The Postmodern Condition when differentiating between storytelling and ‘scientific’ abstraction. He recognises two kind of knowledge: ‘narrative and scientific.’ Specifying the features of the ‘narrative knowledge’, Lyotard asserts that the time of the narration must be present because its recitation is happening in the present:

[Narrative] finds the raw material for its social bond not only in the meaning of the narratives’ reference it recounts, but also in the act
of reciting them. The narratives' may seem to belong to the past, but in reality it is always contemporaneous with the act of recitation. It is the present act that on each of its occurrences marshals in the ephemeral temporality inhabiting the space between the "I have heard" and the "you will hear." (Lyotard 22)

Moreover, Pierman’s logic to ‘justify’ his fantasy embodies another aspect of ‘narrative knowledge.’ Lyotard assigns five features for the ‘narrative knowledge,’ in the third of which, he claims, “the narrator’s only claim to competence for telling the story is the fact that he has heard it himself” (Lyotard 20). The authority is passed from the narrator to the ‘narratee’ “simply by listening.”

DALE. How do you know that?

PIERMAN. I heard it. I don’t actually know it. (Lakeboat 133)

Narrative knowledge and its authority, in the guise of the storytelling, unlike the ‘scientific knowledge,’ do not require ‘proof’ beyond its own internal consistency and rules of procedure. The ‘heterogeneous’ feature of storytelling, manifested by different twists given by the Pierman to his story, contrasts the authoritative, universal voice of ‘scientific knowledge,’ in which “the same referent cannot supply a plurality of contradictory or inconsistent proofs” (Lyotard 24).

He continues the storytelling by opening a new ending like a cyber text in which you can choose different ends (in both senses of objective and finale) and re-start the fabrication, the expedition, and the voyage. It denaturalises the detective stories and the Hollywood films, in which the end is the most important part of the story and people read or watch them for “the end – the bulk of the pages becoming sheer devalued means to an end” (Jameson 126). Fredric Jameson, in one chapter of his book, Signature of the visible, under the title of “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,” maintains that the desire for the end is a result of the capitalistic consumerism and the reading process takes place with regard to the ‘means/ends differentiation’ in respect of Frankfurt School’s notion of ‘instrumentalisation’. He believes that the detective story and the sub-genres of contemporary commercial art “come to constitute an end and a consumption-satisfaction around which the rest of the work is then ‘degraded’ to the status of sheer means” (Jameson 126). It is also a pastiche of the traditional modernist aesthetic notion of
'finality without an end.' The storytelling, in fact, neither carries a specific objective in the classic realistic sense of narrative nor comes to a very clear conclusion in regard to the concept of finality in modernism. Therefore, the binary opposition of end/means is subverted, the end is decentralised and the supplementary one, the process of storytelling, like the journey, like a network, becomes the centre. In a novel by Emma Tennant, *Two Women of London: The Strange Case of Ms Jekyll and Mrs Hyde* (1989), which is a postmodern rewriting of classic novel of Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the novelist substitutes for the series of male narrators in Stevenson’s novel, a network of female narrators. The substitution of network (which reminds us of Deleuze’s rhizome) for series means that Tennant’s rewriting “designedly sacrifices the sense of development towards closure” (Connor, *RW* 128). The story does not end with death or final act, but an escape, a journey perhaps to the continent. The network of the stories, like the journey, becomes an escape from the end – the death. Likewise in Mamet’s play, the storytelling like the journey itself becomes not only vital for sailors’ life, which is boringly routine and obsolescent on the boat (Carroll 84-5), but the life itself, “their sense of missing the point of [which . . .] is [. . .] presented [. . .] as a central fact of existence” (Bigsby 285). In yet another sense, the end is identical to death, as the journey of life, a stereotypised metaphor, ends with death. Hence they never want to bring an end to their journey on the lake and also to their stories. In fact, Pierman does not finish his story and leaves it without an end:

DALE. So?
PieriMAN. So what?
DALE. So did he throw him in the canal?
PieriMAN. I don’t know, I was below. I heard this. (*Lakeboat* 133)

Hearing, rather than seeing, which is a trait of modernist fiction, is a typical feature of the postmodern texts. According to Joseph Conrad in his preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus,"* quoted by Steven Connor in his essay, “[t]he purpose of writing is to make its reader ‘see,’” in the modernist novels and stories. He argues that postmodernist narratives “depend on the voice rather than on the eye” (Connor 63) as the story is told to be heard and then to be ‘re-presented.’ The interesting point about the representation of the ‘hearings’ is that nobody questions the credibility of the stories ‘heard’ by the
narrator. However, when, in scene sixteen, Collins, the second mate, insists that he has “read [. . .] [i]n some book on the War,” about “the Walther Luger” (according to what Skippy had already mentioned in scene fourteen, Luger was a pistol for the enlisted men and Walther, the officer’s), Skippy, the first mate, rejects definitively: “Then you were lied to. There was no such thing. Believe me” (*Lakeboat* 177).

The second scene of the play contains other postmodern characteristics of the narrative. The second scene’s title, “Opening,” above and beyond carrying the same feature explained for the first scene’s title, in effect decentralises the role of the first scene. A prologue is always first part of a drama, in which the introduction is given. According to the deconstructionist argument proposed by Derrida, in the binary opposition of ‘the first/the second,’ the traditionally-considered supplementary one, say, ‘the second,’ is more vital for the existence of the binary opposition and the meaningfulness of ‘the first’ whose conceptual definition is not possible without the presence of ‘the second.’ Hence, choosing that specific typical title for the second scene, David Mamet has subverted the centrality of the first scene.

Furthermore, the scene starts with Dale, who “talks to the audience” (*Lakeboat* 135). It is a clear homage to Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie*, in which Tom speaks to the audience. But there is a difference. Tom’s address is a classic realistic technique of first-person point of view, by which Tom shares his feelings and situation with the audience. Dale’s address, however, beside “stamping] him as a privileged character and [. . .] an outsider” (Carroll 84), who steps out of the context of the play, denaturalises the former’s realism, and manifests a postmodern use of both *histoire* and *discours*, two modes of narration. According to the definition given by the French linguist, Émile Benveniste, and quoted by Tom Copley in his book, *Narrative*, “histoire consists of presenting [something in the fiction . . .] without mentioning that one is narrating and possibly creating a situation whereby ‘the events seem to narrate themselves.’” On the other hand, “discours corresponds to the kind of ‘meta’ level” where you feel the presence of the narrator (Copley 175).

One example of such a ‘meta’ level can be found in *The Master*, the 2004 Booker Prize short-listed novel of a British novelist, Colm Tóibín, which is a fiction about a period of Henry James’s life in Europe in the last years of the nineteenth century. It
mixes the historical facts and fiction. But through the significant use of this amalgamation, somewhere in the last pages of the novel, the writer brings one of the characters of James's own early novel, *Roderick Hudson*, as a young ambitious sculptor into the story, who is called Hendrik Anderson and becomes a friend of Henry James, the character, who himself recalls that Anderson has too close a resemblance to the character of his novel "as though one of his own characters had come alive" (Toibin 290):

> [A]s he learned more about him, he was struck by how close the sculptor was, in his background and his temperament, to the eponymous hero of his own novel *Roderick Hudson*, which he had published more than twenty years earlier. (Toibin 290)

The fictive character, who is now himself a part of history, is brought to the life of the real historical creator, who is fictionalized in the new story. The writer points to "solid context outside the discourse" (Cobley 177) and indicates that he knows that the implied readers share with him the knowledge of what he is mentioning about the publication of the novel.

More evident example of the postmodern attitude of 'meta narrative' is a novel of famous Turkish novelist, Orhan Pamuk, called *Snow*. The story brings a political Chekhovian petit poet, Ka, (does it remind us of Kafka?) as the main character in order to write about the current social issues in Turkey and is narrated almost totally in the third-person point of view. However, the narrator occasionally steps inside the story and speaks directly to the implied readers as if he is aware of the presence of a hearer to be influenced by what the narrator says directly to him as a 'fact.' On the second page of the novel, the story is narrated as follows:

Soon afterward, he did something else that he had not done for years and fell asleep in his seat. So let us take advantage of this lull to whisper a few biographical details. Although he’d spent twelve years in political exile in Germany, our traveller had never been much of an activist. His real passion, his only thought, was for poetry. He was forty-two years old, single and never married. (Pamuk 4)

or somewhere else in chapter eleven, the narrator steps in the current of the story inside the parenthesis:
Ka left the hotel at a gallop (a number of people remember seeing him race through the snow under the long line of propaganda banners in the direction of Baytarhane Street). (Pamuk 96)

In effect, the novelist violates the distinction between two kinds of narrative classified by Lyotard and it becomes “an example of histoire [narrative knowledge] disguised as discourse” [scientific knowledge] (Cobley 177) with the postmodern consciousness of the point that this sequence is narrated.

Back to the Mamet’s play, Lakeboat, the same disguised narrative is observed. Dale gives some ‘facts’ about the ship as if it is a real ship that exists outside the text:

Dale gives some ‘facts’ about the ship as if it is a real ship that exists outside the text:

\[
\]

The last sentence becomes an example of a classic romantic narrative that joins the address to the world of the fiction as Fireman follows:

\[
\text{FIREMAN. Guigliani got mugged.}
\]

\[
\text{DALE. I'm his replacement. Gross tons 8,225. Capacity in tons 11,406. A fair-sized boat. A small world...}
\]

\[
\text{FIREMAN. So I've heard. (Lakeboat 135)}
\]

Dale returns to his fictional role and answers back Fireman, who is mentioning the story of the nightman narrated in the first scene, and then turns back to his ‘non-fictional’ role to continue his ‘factual’ description of the ship, which again ends with the stereotyped expression of “a small world,” which is followed by the ambiguous sentence of Fireman. The sentence could be interpreted as the conscious reply by the Fireman to the clichés: that all of us including the implied readers have already heard. Moreover, the sentence is the completion of his former sentence about the story and implies the postmodern nature of narrative—‘re-presentation.’

David Mamet, like the other postmodern writers, and unlike the modernists who “had rebelled against realism” and “challeng[ed] the authoritative voice of the narrator” (Cobley 174), revisits the past and re-presents it consciously – as Hutcheon puts it, the
postmodern writer de-legitimises it. In one of his books, Reflection on the Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco emphasises this knowledge of the past with his artistic example and asserts:

I think of the postmodern attitude as that of a man who loves a very cultivated woman and knows he cannot say to her, 'I love you madly,' because he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still, there is a solution. He can say, ‘As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly.’ At this point, having avoided false innocence, having said clearly that it is no longer possible to speak innocently, he will nevertheless have said what he wanted to say to the woman: that he loves her, but he loves her in an age of lost innocence. (Eco 67)

This ‘age of lost innocence’ is also manifested in the next scene with the title of Drink, in which the two important characters of the play, Joe and Stan, being drunkard since the previous night, are philosophising about drinking. They are doing this because they have nothing to do but “killing time while the boat is at the pier” (Lakeboat 137). They, first, state how drunk they are and then conclude out of nowhere that drinking and being drunk is “[n]o fucking good”:

JOE. What? . . . Drinking?
STAN. Drinking, life, women, the Boat. No good. (Lakeboat 138)

Then they boast about their ability and long history of drinking and then that of their fathers and mothers and it ends when Stan, seeming mentally uncontrollable, philosophises that drinking is “a man’s thing”

STAN. They [women] don’t understand it. It’s a man’s thing, drinking. A curse and an elevation. Makes you an angel. A booze-ridden angel. Drinking? I know my alcohol, boyo. I know it and you know I know it. And I know it.

JOE. I’ll take you below. I gotta go on watch. (Lakeboat 140)

The characters’ obscene, fragmented and purposeless statements are the instances of what Julia Kristeva calls ‘the particularities of poetic language,’ which illustrate the position of the ‘unsettled, questionable subject-in-process’ of poetic language. In her
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essay, *From One Identity to an Other*, by referring to the ideas of Louis-Ferdinand Céline and his essay, *Death on the Installment Plan*, she argues two particularities of poetic language: *Sentential rhythms* and *Obscene words*. By the former, she means the sentences which are ‘condensed;’ the phrases which are “numerous and juxtaposed with a verb [... and] separated by the characteristic ‘three dots.’” She reckons that:

> By using three dots to space the phrases making up a sentence, thus giving them rhythm, [the writer] causes connotation to rush through a predication that has been striated in that manner; the denoted object of the utterance, the transcendental object loses its clear contours. The elided object in the sentence relates to a hesitation (if not an erasure) of the real object for the speaking subject. [... ] Literature is witness to this kind of deception involving the object, [...] the existence of [which] is more than fleeting and indeed impossible. (Kristeva, *FOIO* 85)

The second feature, *Obscene words*, also refers to the impossibility of existence of objects. She claims that the obscene words have no ‘objective referent’ in the exterior context to discourse, and therefore, “identifiable as such by consciousness, the obscene word is the minimal mark of a situation of desire where the identity of the signifying subject, if not destroyed, is exceeded by a conflict of instinctual drives, linking one subject to another” (86).

Both the mentioned features can be traced easily in *Lakeboat* and, in general, in most of Mamet’s plays. The sentences uttered by the characters are fragmented and frequently separated by ‘three dots’ and, as Mamet’s plays are famous for, the utterances are full of bathetic and obscene words (Bigsby 225). These decisive factors in characterisation lead to the existence of ‘subject-in-process’ – a subject whose very subjectivity is itself endlessly deferred, endlessly differing – in postmodern literature. The argument presented by Kristeva can be better understood in this play as well as many of Mamet’s plays for there is no woman character and it is so called an all-male play. However, we gradually learn that Fireman and Fred are divorced and Joes’s mother is blind. The ‘Not-I’ subject (what Kristeva calls woman in the masculine texts) is, although, absent, it is the main topic of the crew’s life and their fantasies. It is the “soft
things with a hole in the middle” (*Lakeboat* 166), “an identity without identity” (*Lucy* 13), whose absence gives a distinguishing importance to the boat:

Fred: [. . .T]he main thing about the boats, other than their primary importance in the Steel industry, is that you don’t get any pussy. You got that?

Dale: Yes. (*Lakeboat* 159)

Hence, as Thomas Docherty argues in his essay, *The Ethics of Alterity*, by referring to Kristeva’s ‘subject-in-process,’ the postmodern characters “always dramatise their own ‘absence’ from themselves.

The following extract from scene eight (whose title itself, *Woploving*, is obscene: Wop, according to Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, is a disparaging and offensive slang for an Italian or a person of an Italian descent) is another example of Kristeva’s poetic language in the play, which also confirms definition of postmodern characterisation presented by Docherty:

Joe: That’s how they drink in Italy.

Fireman: You never been to Italy.

Joe: Now how the FUCK do you know?

Fireman: I . . .

Joe: How the everlasting cocksucking FUCK do you know I never been to Italy?

Fireman: Jesus.

Joe: Don’t do shit all day and tells me where I never been. *(Exits.)*

Fireman (to Stan): So, Collins tells me, she’d have a drink . . .

[. . .]

Say, I wonder what’s the matter with Joe?

Stan: Why do you say something’s the matter with him?

Fireman: I only . . .

Stan: Who the hell are you?

Fireman: I only meant . . . (*Lakeboat* 154)
Docherty maintains that in the postmodern ‘representation,’ the character cannot gain an identity independent from the others and finale for himself. In every stage of characterisation, he points out, “the ‘character’ or figure constantly differs from itself, denying the possession of and a self, and preferring an engagement with Otherness” (Docherty 143) and then in this kind of representation, there is no final point for the character that “leads into irrationality, incoherence, or self-contradiction” (Docherty, 140). Thus one sailor, when asked to make a sandwich, does not “mind it, [but] I just fucking hate making sandwiches”; Fireman, whose job is watching the engines, is always reading some books and at the same time doing his” job okay;” he tells Dale that he reads a bit and “keep[s] an eye on those two main” gauges and some seconds later, infuriated when asked “you keep an eye on them, huh?,” and bursts back: “What do you mean, ‘keep an eye on them?’ I’m watching ‘em constantly. That’s my job.” And Dale is booked as the night man, even though, when asked if he knows cooking, his answer is “No, a little.” The self-contradictory tone is more prominent in the stories fabricated by the sailors about the fate and life of the missing night man, Guigliani.

In scene eleven, Fred, while soliloquising the fantasies about Guigliani, says that he “knew him. Not overly well, but I knew him;” but later in scene twenty three, he tells Fireman that he “didn’t knew him,” and the last scene witnesses him telling Dale that he “knew him very well, Dale, very well.” In his soliloquy, Fred also labels Guigliani as “a gambling degenerate,” nonetheless he himself does gambling, loses on horseracing, and finds it ‘clean.’ In scene fifteen, Joe and Fred fantasise about the cars the cook has. First they say he has two “Cadillac Eldorados” and then Joe changes them to “a couple of Chevys” or “a pair of used Volkswagens” or “a beat-up Buick, and at last “a fucking DeSoto for Christ’s sake. Who the fuck knows he’s got two Caddies?” (Lakeboat 173). And at the end, they, being sure of Guigliani’s death, cope easily with the news of that he simply overslept and shall join them soon. This is an example of what Docherty calls “endlessly proliferating heterogeneity” of identity, by which he means that constantly a new narrative is released for a proper name, which is “typically at odd with the narratives ascribed to that proper name in the fiction” (Docherty 143).

Therefore, the stories fabricated by the sailors about the night man, and the stories they tell about themselves, as an instance of postmodern narrative, enact all the
characters, including Guigliani, as a Heideggerian *Dasein* (literary meaning ‘being-there’). It means that they become the characters who “constantly escape the fixity of identity by existing in and through” (Docherty 144) the fantasies and stories.

That is also what Deleuzian notion of ‘becoming,’ as well as Derrida’s notion of indeterminacy, implies but in another way. They believe that “Ideas are merely effects of operations such as repetitions and difference that do not possess an ontological status as ‘things’ or as ‘events.’ They make all such things and events possible while never being able to assume thingly or eventual form” (Rivkin 342). Thus, Deleuze, contrary to Platonism and Hegelianism, gives priority to the surface appearances, which cannot be called appearances, because they do not make anything appear. This is the criteria of the stories in *Lakeboat*. They are only ‘the depth-less surfaces’ which do not stand for any ideas, things or events beyond. That is how the crew continue what Deleuze calls ‘becoming,’ as the processes of material life, by repeating different versions of the story to prove their own existence. Their unending repetition of journey on the lake also carries the same notion. The sailors have to continue the process of becoming by stories and repetitive journeys because they cannot be “a being present to” (Docherty 144) themselves, as they are only entities trapped in nowhere “between the world of matter and the world of language or between the realm of signifiers (appearances and simulacra) and the world of meaning” (Rivkin 342).

Fredric Jameson also gives an important role to the repetition in post-structuralism and as an example, mentions the repetitive structure of Baudrillardian simulacrum: the reproduction of ‘copies’ which have no original. He believes that it characterises “our object world with unreality and free-floating absence of ‘the referent’” (Jameson 130). The reproduction of copies reminds Jameson the notion of ‘intertextuality,’ which, according to him, is the outcome of the capitalistic consumer society and its mass-production market system (Jameson 134).

Philip Auslander also affirms this while looking specifically at the postmodern drama. In his essay, *Postmodernism and Performance*, mentioning the postmodern subjectivity, he reckons that the characters in the postmodern drama are deconstructed and become decentred and fragmented ones. They are just ‘textual entities’ which are formed by the language that, in fact, does not belong to them. He believes that the
characters “are patchwork of second-hand language who use words that clearly belong to others, not to themselves, not even to the author who created them” (Auslander 105). Consequently, the characters become the manifestation of the postmodern “death of the subject,” according to which, in Michel Foucault’s idea, “the figure of ‘man’ is [. . . hence] a dim notation at the edge of the shore, awaiting the incoming tide of history, and with it his liquidation” (Sheehan 26). Furthermore, if we refer to the Lacanian psychoanalysis, the subject will be seen as subsequent to language, and always dependent on it for its existence (see Lacan by Philip Hill).

Therefore, the non-original and ‘non-identity’ situation, and fragmented stage of the characters are “the result of having absorbed their [. . .] environment” (Auslander 106). The sea voyage, of course, “is a Romantic motif in American literature and drama” (Carroll 84). However, the lakes themselves, apart from being different from the sea as earlier discussed, “have lost the romance which had once been part of their appeal” (Callens 43). The early years of the steamers were romantic indeed, and even as late as 1970 the trade was strong. But then it fell away, partly through competition with new, powerful ocean freighter. “Functional in design, graceless in appearance, the lakeboat inspires none of the romance that surrounds her salt-water cousin” (Scott 5). The economic relevance of the lakeboats has declined, along with the industries they served. That threatening obsolescence attaches itself to those who serve on board. They, now, are a part of the society, whose older one was “the America of small business,” where the “individual private enterprise [is] a now outmoded kind” (Jameson 141), and where Hollywood mass-produced dream ‘appearances’ feed the fantasies of the sailors to be able to overcome the boredom and endless life on board. That is why Joe, one of the sailors, “always wanted to be a pirate” (Lakeboat 175). “With no real excitement, no sense of progress in their lives” (Bigsby 284), the sailors become the Lilliputians in Gulliver’s Travels, one of whose issues, for example, was their quarrel over the question of whether eggs should be broken at the big or the small end. Likewise, they dispute over the issues such as who drinks more or who has ever been to Italy, or who is to make sandwiches, or which actor in Hollywood is the best.

The ‘reality’ of Hollywood films replaces the ‘real’ reality of their life. They copy the fantasies of the big screen. In scene 22, Stan “buttonholes Collins” (Lakeboat 194)
and describes in a soliloquy-wise monologue a scene of film in which Jonnie Fast faces eight people in a bar and overcomes all bare-handed. The demonstrative pronouns he uses to describe the action show that he acts out the actions of the film hero while describing them [STAN. {...} He’s giving ‘em one of these (whack) and a couple of these, {...} like that]. The following scene witnesses Fireman who fantasises the story of the cook like the film of Jonnie Fast, in which the cook becomes a member of the mafia, wanted by the cop and then arrested in the bar with a big gun.

However, their imagination, too, cannot help them out of the “triviality of their daily life” (Bigsby 285). That even brings the attempt of suicide to the mind of one of the sailors, Joe, who thinks that “the big problem wouldn’t be the drowning as much as the boredom” (Lakeboat 182). The sailors have nothing to do but “[s]ailing the lakes [, to] touch shore occasionally and then to anaesthetise themselves with alcohol and sex before sailing again” (Bigsby 285) as Joe tells Dale “it’s like having a job, for crissakes” (Lakeboat 189). The only person who seems to stand aside from this is Dale. Contrary to the legend of Wandering Jew, Jewish Dale has the chance to escape the situation, but the Christian sailors are condemned to wander all the life on the lake. Deligitimising the traditional logic happens in the binary opposition of Christian/Jew and the sailors seem to be forever condemned like the mariner in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner of Coleridge to travel from land to land relating their stories. If the repetition of the story, as confession of the ancient mariner is traditionally in romanticism considered as a sign of the mariner’s continual renewal of spiritual recognition, the stories repeated by the sailors are their desperate endeavour for their existential recognition.

Their “empty lives” (Callens 42) on board create “an asocial society of individuals” (Bigsby 284), which reflects “an image of a wider world” (Bigsby, MAD 224) – A world that was supposed to be a chosen Utopia in which they would have freedom. The sailors, perhaps, themselves have chosen their way of life because it leaves them free to cut loose from marriages and domestic duties, booze all night, not be too competitive. They do not even feel, as mentioned earlier, that they are working at all. However, “like the wider society of which they are a part, and which they perhaps exemplify” (Callens 43), they “themselves recognise that such ‘freedom’ is a chimera” (Carroll 85). In Tom Stoppard’s celebrated play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are
Dead, the Player emphasises that nobody decides; “[i]t is written [. . . and] [w]e follow directions – there is no choice involved” (Stoppard 58). Thus, the collective ambitions, myths and ‘pipe dreams’ of O’Neill’s characters for Utopia – doomed not to be ever fulfilled – in his plays like The Iceman Cometh, Beyond the Horizon, The Great God Brown and Anna Christie turns out to be, through tall tales, memories, and drinking of the sailors, the individuals’ discontinuous myths, their disappointing awareness of their failed ambitions, their surrender to the fated dystopia, and their desperate struggle to prove their existence, as Michel Foucault has observed that “speaking so as not to die is a task . . . as old as the word” (see Bouchard on Foucault). If O’Neill’s characters are after their Utopia, Mamet’s characters, being aware of the failure of Utopia, have surrendered themselves to the anti-Utopian world or disappointed to find their Utopian desires.

The norms and orders, the features by which Utopia is recognised, according to Fredric Jameson, creates a collective system whose systematic production of fantasies and bureaucracy is “redirected against Utopia itself” (Jameson 390). This failure of the Utopian system is somehow directly echoed in the play when the second mate systematically asking Joe to pick up the phone instead of coming personally and at the same time Stan and Fred pass the scene, having the following conversation:

STAN. This boat is becoming a bureaucracy.

FRED. Tell me. (They continue off. Phone rings.) (Lakeboat 150)

And the de-doxification of utopian features, therefore, legitimises the existence of dystopia, which reflects disunity, disorder, and rebellious spirit against any source of the power. As Joe reassures Dale that the first mate of the boat cannot make any trouble for him:

JOE. You don’t have to take no shit from him, you know.

DALE. I know that.

JOE. He give you any trouble?

DALE. No, not at all.

JOE. Well, you don’t have to take nothing from him. You just do your job. And if he gives you any trouble you talk to the Union Rep when we hit The beach. You just do a good job... because that’s what he’s there for. (Lakeboat 192)
David Mamet’s plays in this chapter as well as some others such as Reunion, Dark Pony and The Woods, also highlight another feature of dystopia that Jameson has elaborated in his essay. He argues that utopia stands for non-narrative, authoritative, monogeneous context. While dystopian texts consist of narrative, anti-authority, and heterogeneity. As Jameson says, the utopian text “does not tell a story at all” (Jameson 385), but dystopian one always does. Utopia is assumed to be a perfect place to settle down and be stable. It conveys that when someone is in the utopia, s/he does not have to travel, to explore any more (see Bercovitch 111-12). Fabricating the stories means exploration of new territories and deconstructing the perfectionism of the authoritative story of Utopia and creating their own dystopias. That is why the sailors are set in the concomitant never-ending journey on the sea and storytelling. The same notion is repeated in another play of David Mamet, Prairie du Chien.

If there is an influence of O’Neill’s sea plays in Lakeboat, there is a narration of a story in Prairie du Chien, which seems very close to one of O’Neill’s plays. The play is Desire under the Elms and the story is of the ruinous end of an old husband and his young wife. If the story in O’Neill’s play was dramatised by the absent, authoritative, and omnipotent viewpoint, it is a first-person narrator who tells the story in Mamet’s play.

Prairie du Chien, despite being a relatively short, one-scene play, with limited number of characters in comparison to Lakeboat and Edmond, carries three different stories of journey. The play takes place in “a railroad parlor car heading west through Wisconsin in 1910. The time is three A.M.” (Prairie du Chien 56). Perhaps the choice of the time was intentional to signify a critical period in American history. During the first decade of the twentieth century, USA witnessed the highest number of immigrants who entered the American territory – specifically 1285000 people just in 1907 –, and the country as a united nation headed increasingly fast towards modernism, industrialism, and commercial mass production – telephone, electricity, railway expansion, and Ford cars (see Bradbury). “In early twentieth-century America, everyone – and everything – seemed to be in motion and in the service of commerce” (Elliott 728) and consequently “American intellectual life and public discourse displayed all the symptoms of a mid-life crisis” (Elliott 716).
The train is heading towards west in the darkness of the midnight. The movement reminds us of the colonial advancement of the European countries in the New England towards the west and the south. The phenomenon is observed in Thomas More’s *Utopia*, where “[o]ne important attribute of the kingdom is that whenever more territory is needed, it simply takes over unused lands on its borders” (Bercovitch 111) by extending them unlimitedly towards west. This is how the train moves towards the seemingly infinite west in darkness, the darkness that implies the self-contradictory feature of classic utopian narration, which has made up “a form of travel literature that, perversely, usually condemns travel” (Bercovitch 111). It also reflects “a time when ‘things precious to the race, things rare and delicate, may be overpowered, lost in the criss-cross of modern currents, the confusion of modern immensities’” (Elliott 717). Loss of the individuality is, further, denoted in the play with the naming of the characters according to their functionalities. The passengers on the car are five people: a Storyteller, a Listener, his Son, a Card Dealer and a Gin Player; and there is also a Porter of the train, another all-male play of Mamet. The story of the storyteller does contain some characters who have not been given any proper names as well. They are a man “in his fifties” (PdC 61) with a “drygoods store” (PdC 60) and a farm, his “lovely little wife,” the sheriff and the storyteller himself, who seems to be a voyager, always in travel, [STORYTELLER. { . . . } I’d see him five, six times a year when I’d swing through. (PdC 60)], like the sailors in *Lakeboat*. The characters, without proper names, become like the people in Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Time*, where “anxieties about the anonymity of urban industrial life were intensified by the worker’s faceless presence on the assembly line [. . .], threatening individuality” (Elliott 718-9). The process of being as a Heideggerian ‘Dasein,’ already discussed in relation to the characters of *Lakeboat*, is betokened here as the characters’ ‘escaping the fixity of identity’ turns to the fixity of ‘non-identity,’ as Julia Kristeva names it.

The play unfolds two violent tales simultaneously. One is dramatised and the other is narrated. Furthermore, both are formed in conversation, a form of speech acts which is essential part of Mamet’s plays and in fact of the human life. The conversation is, as Alasdair MacIntyre, in his essay, “The Virtue, the Unity of a Human Life and the Concept of a Tradition,” says, “the most familiar type of context in and by reference to
which speech acts and purposes are rendered intelligible [. . . and if we] remove conversation from human life [. . .] what would be left?” (MacIntyre 541). When the play starts, Dealer and Gin Player are playing cards and afterwards the storyteller returns inside the car and continues his story, which he has apparently left unfinished. He mentions his insomnia and his wish to be able to sleep “’[s]pecially on a long ride” (PdC 60) like the Listener’s son, who is asleep almost all the time of the play:

STORYTELLER. A night train. (Pause.) Never could sleep.

(Pause.) Never sleep. Where was I?

DEALER. Take it.

LISTENER. Up in Council Bluffs, I think. (PdC 60)

Both the stories are dealing with the two classics of “adult nefariousness” (Rich C11): ambition and jealousy. The dramatised story conveys Gin Player’s ambition to gain money as he loses more and more and the narrated story is the one of an Othello who suspects his young wife of being unfaithful to him and having affair with the hired man. Concomitant rise of tension in both stories ends in the attempt to murder. Gin Player is losing and suspending Dealer of cheating, pulls out his gun and shoots him twice fortunately unsuccessfully. However, the wife in the other story is not that much lucky and, as the Storyteller narrates, is killed by her husband. The story and his narrator also remind us of Aeneid by Virgil and of Troy. In the epic, Aeneas, meeting Dido, the queen of Carthage, on his voyage, tells her of what happened in Troy. The wife is Helen, the husband is Menelaus and the hired man is Paris. This intertextual installation of the classic stories and representing them differently is a postmodern parody of the past. This parody becomes Jameson’s pastiche, the ‘empty parody,’ as the texts being parodied are not themselves original ‘real’. They are a part of the past fiction, which has been historicised to be the history for and/or myth of today. Therefore, Mamet de-naturalises the past as his postmodern parody “confirms and subverts the power of the representation of the history” (Hutcheon 95).

Moreover, the story of O’Neill in Desire under the Elms is mystified by adding some mysterious, superstitious elements to the story in Mamet’s. The sheriff is haunted by the red-dressed soul of the farmer’s wife, who is killed by his husband, who suspects she is pregnant from someone else. Some years later sheriff, dressed in a red dress and
repeating the words he had heard from the red-dressed woman in the burning house that day [He said, “Please help him. They are in the barn. (Pause.) Help him. Please.” (Pause.) *(PdC 75)*, is killed by a man who “[c]aught the sheriff with his [ten-year old] daughter” *(PdC 73)*. It is in fact what we call de-mythologising of the myths, for David Mamet uses the past stories constructively, recreates them by mythologising them, and then deconstructively criticises them (see Hutcheon 98).

The criticism is more intensified because of the presence of a sleeping “[f]ine-looking boy” *(PdC 79)*, who plays different roles in the play. Firstly, it takes a linguistic function in order to give the rhythm of the life-like, ‘natural-sounding’ speech to the Storyteller-Listener interaction as August Strindberg did it. Strindberg was concerned that his characters’ speech should sound as lifelike as possible and, in order to give the impression of naturalism, he “allowed their minds to work irregularly, as people’s do in real life, when in conversation, no subject is fully exhausted, but one mind discovers in another a cog which it has a chance to engage” *(Strindberg 98)*. Mamet also believes in this and he uses recurrent motifs, both verbal and purely dramatic, to create natural-sounding speech. Therefore, in *Prairie du Chien*, the motif takes “the form of the Storyteller repeatedly asking if the child in the carriage is asleep, as he builds up the suspense of his dark, chilling tale” *(Dean 29)*.

**STORYTELLER.** He was not well. *(Pause.)* And then this man caught him. There had been stories . . . Is the boy asleep?

**LISTENER.** Yes. *(Pause.)*

**STORYTELLER.** There had *(whispering)* been those stories . . .

and then This man caught him with his daughter.

**LISTENER.** Caught the sheriff with his daughter. *(PdC 73)*

Secondly, the sleeping boy reminds us of the sleeping beauty, but of course here the male one. The fairy tale of sleeping beauty is also de-mythologised. If in the fairy tale the princess “has a spell put on her by a wicked fairy [to] fall sleep for a hundred years” *(Delahunty 345)*, the sleeping boy is made to sleep so that he is not able to hear the wickedness of the adult world. And if she “is finally wakened from her slumber by a prince’s kiss” *(Delahunty 345)*, he is finally wakened by the Gin Player’s gun shot:

**BOY.** Poppa?
LISTENER. It’s alright.
BOY. What happened?
LISTENER. Nothing, these men had a fight. (pause.) It’s alright.

Go back To sleep. (Pause.) Everything’s alright now.

BOY. Where are we?
LISTENER. You go to sleep. We have a long long time to go yet.

(PdC 83)

The child’s innocent sleeping during the long journey allows him to stay out of the matured world of the adult travelling into the darkness; the time has stopped for him. It means that the world he still lives in and the storyteller envies is a world of utopia. The world adults live in is illustrated through the violent gambling and the despondent story, the insomnia of the storyteller, and the long journey they undertake in the darkness towards the west. Their world is the dystopia where there is no stability, peace, innocence, tranquillity, permanency and ‘settledness.’ (At the end of the play, the porter announces that the train is stopping for five minutes in the station of Prairie du Chien to get some water in order to cool the engine.) Hence, instead of having his share of the experience, maturity, purification, elevation and evolution, according to the classic motif of journey, the child is protected not to be infected by what happens during the voyage towards the west.

The utopia, people were wishing to find by travelling to the western new world, was and is still based on the capitalistic freedom. It means people try to possess individually everything they can and need, like the world of More’s *Utopia*. The American society had become and still is what Thorstein Veblen, who is Mamet’s “intellectual hero” (Galens 12), had suggested in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899): an era of “conspicuous consumption.” The capitalistic notion of possession, as a result, becomes another self-contradictory, totalitarian feature of the utopian world. The concept of the dystopia is stressed more emphatically when Mamet’s parody, as Hutcheon states, contests that capitalistic notion. The farmer wants to possess his wife, and he is allowed to protect his possession by all means, and the Gin Player is furious as his money is lost and he feels cheated. Thus, myth of utopia is de-mythologised.
If a desperate hope for a better, utopian future is entrapped in the characters’ circular journeys in Lakeboat, and is manifested indirectly in Prairie du Chien as the characters travel during the night while the violence bursts out inside the car, it is declared very explicitly in the last play of the chapter, Edmond, where, in the very first scene a fortune-teller persuades the title-character to look for a better future. (Dean 149)

In addition, Connie Booth, the actor of Mamet’s plays, in an interview with Anne Dean mentions the similarity between the two latter plays as he likens Mamet’s ‘pacy dialogue’ – indeed entire play – to the movement of an on-rushing train:

Prairie du Chien is actually set on board a train, the Storyteller’s tale gaining impetus from the movement of the journey [. . .] Edmond, too, has a similar compulsion, an inexorable feeling of onward movement. I have a feeling that both the text and the content of Mamet’s work are like a relentless train journey. (Dean 176)

Edmond is another play of David Mamet, which has plenty of scenes and minor characters: 23 scenes and 28 characters. Its setting is New York, “a city that to [Mamet] represents everything that is wrong with modern society” (Dean 150), where Edmond Burke, the title-character of the play, “a man in his mid thirties” (Edmond 218), with a good job, American Express credit card and his own apartment, goes to different places as the titles of each scene in the play indicate. Speaking in a television programme, The South Bank Show, on 20 March 1985, David Mamet has described New York as an “inferno [that is] infested by hustlers and thugs” and “a vision of hell.”

The main difference between Edmond and most of Mamet’s plays is the distinguished treatment of characterisation. Edmond is chosen as the main sole (anti)hero of the play unlike the other plays, in which “the emphasis is less on a two-person relationship communicative potential than it is on a process whereby barriers to self-knowledge in one central character are removed” (Carroll 91). The influence is told to be directly from the cinema because when he started working on the play, he had just completed the screenplay for Sidney Lumet’s film, The Verdict. The extreme economy of means used in Edmond “reflects [Mamet’s] desire to say as much as possible in the briefest of scenes” (Dean 38) and both the film and the play focus, unusual for Mamet, on one character rather than a pair and “the pattern of the journey of the mythic hero”
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(Carroll 91) in a series of fragmented scenes. The postmodern fragmented representation of reality stresses the importance of the absence in conceiving that reality. Colin Stinton, an American actor who has appeared in a number of Mamet’s plays, in an interview with Anne Dean bears out that Mamet expects the audience “to fill in the blanks and to follow the clues, the very definite clues, he provides” (Dean 38). The same is uttered by David Mamet himself quoted in Bigsby’s *Contemporary Writers: David Mamet* as saying that “the whole truth lies in what you leave out” (Bigsby 124). Comparing Mamet’s play to the paintings of Edward Hopper, as mentioned earlier, Alain Piette likens the scenes of *Edmond* to “a window whose frame, together with the walls that surrounds it, makes it impossible for us to see the complete picture of the subject observed and forces us therefore to imagine the rest, the invisible, the unseen. The window must thus be considered as both an opening on that reality and an obstacle hiding it from our view” (Piette 81) and then concludes:

> [T]he scenes of Mamet’s play are fragments of a postmodern universe and are presented by a deconstructionist technique that invites the theatregoer to imagine the missing pieces to form a complete picture. (Piette 82)

The scenes’ titles function in the same way in which the titles of *Lakeboat* do. However, the difference between the first scene’s title and the rest looks meaningful. While the following titles indicate usually the places the action takes place, the first title is a noun of the person to whom Edmond goes for direction: “The Fortune-Teller.” The distinction tries to emphasise the clairvoyant motif, which is also present in another play of the author, *The Shawl*. It “is specifically concerned with the power of clairvoyance” (Dean 149), a play in which a ‘Miss A’ goes to a young fortune-teller to contact her mother, she has recently lost, for she has a legal problem with her will. Carl Jung has noted how, in modern society, “it is chiefly in times of physical, political, economic, and spiritual distress that men’s eyes turn with anxious hope to the future, and when anticipations, utopias, and apocalyptic visions multiply” (Storr 349). The fortune-teller mentions “our diet, or our genes, or our stars,” which “are signs” and things, being “predetermined, [. . .] must manifest themselves” (*Edmond* 220). The references to heredity and environment “indisputably attack naturalism” (Demastes 85), and the historical notion of fate is de-naturalised. The way Edmond is encouraged to change his
life as he is told that he is not “where you belong” (Edmond 221) contrasts the discouragement Aeneas receives from Sibyl, the priestess in Aeneid, where she asks him not to go down to Hades. For the priestess, in the description of Sibyl’s cave, the prophetic leaves remain fitted in their places, giving a coherent account. But as soon as a mortal tries to consult them, the wind from the opened door scatters them in confusion. It means that Aeneas should not go to the journey to change his fate. On the other hand, contradictorily his journey is predetermined as he and Trojan must found Roman empire, which will destroy the Carthage which was supported by a goddess, Juno, who, knowing the prophecy, tries, of course unsuccessfully, to prevent the Trojans to reach Italy. The concept of the fate is subverted as it is considered to be only the word uttered. In fact, the word ‘fate’ comes from a Greek word, ‘fatum,’ which is a noun of the verb ‘fari’ meaning ‘to speak’ and fatum means ‘that which has been spoken.’ According to the recent discourse theories, which Mamet also believes, “language itself constitutes reality” (Norton, 6), and the world “is an illusion” (Roudané 49). The characters and what they say are only words and ultimately, Mamet asserts, quoting Oscar Wilde, “life imitates art [and it is] not the other way around” (Roudané 49). If Aeneas refutes the priestess’s caution about changing the fate and takes a journey down to Hades to “descend into himself and his own past and then [to] re-emerge” (Commager 6), Edmond obeys the clairvoyance and goes down to New York “trying to discover himself,” Mamet says, “and what he views as a sick society” (Schvey 68). The protagonist, like Aeneas, “goes on a journey,” Bigsby also states, “not only into his own psyche but into that of a culture still at odds with itself” (Bigsby, CCTDM 19). Therefore, Edmond becomes a man who takes action “to move beyond his constricting social role and experience something deeper in his nature, even at terrible personal cost” (Carroll 99). However, later in the play, as a result of that choice, he is sometimes victim of forces over which he has no control.

Edmond’s journey starts from the second scene after a very absurd dispute over an antique lamp broken by the maid. The absurdity of the dispute is magnified when it becomes an excuse for the husband to announce his leaving her as he has known for years that she does not “interest me spiritually or sexually” (Edmond 224). The next scene sees him in the bar getting direction from a man to find “the things to do . . . Pussy . . . Power . . . Money . . . uh . . . adventure . . . to get out” which the man believes Edmond needs to
do though he thinks it is “... uh, self-destruction (Edmond 227). The nameless character of ‘Man’ becomes the pastiche of the classic and especially Romantic character of devil that has disguised himself and approached Edmond to lead him into the inferno. He gives Edmond the address of Allegro, “[a] bar on forty-seventh Street” (Edmond 229). It is the name of a poem by John Milton, whose famous poem is Paradise Lost, in which the issues such as God’s foreseeing the Fall and doing nothing to stop it and man’s fated fall and free will are addressed. Furthermore, ‘L’Allegro’ is a companion to ‘Il Penseroso,’ and the poems together are shaped as representation of opposed states of mind. While ‘L’Allegro’ “somewhat forcibly celebrates the rustic joys of ‘Jest and youthful Jollity, / Quips and Cranks, and Wanton Wiles,’ Il Penseroso calls for the company of a ‘pensive Nun, devout and pure, / Sober, stedfast, and demure” (Sanders 232). Mamet has woven intertextual elements and references into his play. In fact, the name of the character, Edmond Burke is the name of the author of The Vindication of Natural Society, and its allegorical pattern clearly reveals the influence of Joseph Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces and its mythic pattern (Carroll 98-9). Edmond, furthermore, reminds us of Jewish Leopold Bloom of Joyce’s Ulysses, who takes a one-day journey in the streets of Dublin, as both have their reason for feeling that “Home I cannot go” (Ulysses 423) and then as an outsider, they wander among their fellow New Yorkers/Dubliners. 

Dennis Carroll has suggested that Edmond’s journey has three stages. The fourth scene, in effect, is where Edmond, as “an American Everyman” (Shulman 28), starts his pilgrimage through sin in three stages to get salvation but “in the wrong way” (Dean 152) to jail. It reminds us of the journey of Europeans to the New Land. They left their home country in order to find happiness somewhere else, in a new home; they had quite an adventurous, brutal and cruel exploration before settling down in their new ‘home,’ where they are now imprisoned. David Mamet believes that:

People are only too aware of the fact that their hold on a stable, safe society is disintegrating before their eyes and they live in constant terror because of this. (Dean 151)

It is also a personal journey from innocence to experience that is embedded in the journey from childhood to adulthood in Prairie du Chien. This romantic motif, which is pastiched as well, can be traced in the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the novels of
Mark Twain, Herman Melville and Charles Dickens. The parody of the past is more momentous in *Edmond*, where the title-character like young Billy Budd and Pip gains experience by moving into ‘disjunctive,’ ‘bleakly jarring and dissonant’ world of modern America with “the black iron fire escapes and tawdry neon signs that littered the stage in Richard Eyre’s Royal Court Production” (Dean 153) and is eventually destroyed. It is the society which is also presented in the postmodern novel of Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*, in which the female main character, Oedipa, goes, like Edmond, to an odyssey in America, where “the ‘waste-landers’ are neurotics, sexually inadequate, aimless, alienated, divided by guilt, longing for escape and for death; [. . .] their lives are artificial, facing total disintegration of values and all their energies inverted resulting in death and destruction” (Ilyas 124).

In the ensuing scenes unto scene twelve, he goes to different places to find what he looks for: his sensuous satisfaction. His encounters with a bargirl, a peep-show girl, a brothel-manager, a whore, a card-sharper and a pawnbroker are vividly described. However, every time he gets on his “middle-class ‘business’ notion of being ‘straight’” (Carroll 100), he is left hopelessly outmanoeuvred. The second stage of his journey starts when he wants to sell his ring and buys “a *survival* knife. G. I. Issue. World War Two” (Edmond 254) in ‘the pawnshop’ in scene twelve. The transaction marks a turning point in the journey for ring, as a womb symbol, stands for his heterosexual life and knife, as a phallic symbol, for his coming homosexual life. In fact, knife is present as an intertextual element in a lot of Mamet’s works and even he refers to his own works.

If in the modernist absurdist play, *The Lessons*, by Ionesco, the teacher uses the symbolic gesture of knife, which stands for the power of his language, to murder the girl student, Mamet uses the language as a double-sided knife to destroy the teacher’s career and life, and the student’s as well in *Oleanna*. He then uses the ‘real’ knife, which is in fact within the text, created by the words, in *Edmond* to commit the murder as there is no possibility of the communication by language and it leads to violence. Mamet does subvert both the modernist symbolism and referentiality of realism. As Irving Howe states, reality is “no longer something to be acknowledged or experienced, it is fabricated according to the need” (Howe 193) of the people. And Jean-Francois Lyotard believes that “Realism is the art of making reality and knowing how to make reality” (Lyotard 91).
So does Mamet with the titles of his plays at least included in this chapter. Unlike the eighteenth and nineteenth-century novels which had ‘realistic’ titles, twentieth-century novels tended to have symbolic titles, such as *A Passage to India, Ulysses, To the Lighthouse* and *The Golden Bowl* (Lawrence 388). The titles of Mamet’s plays, *Edmond, Prairie du Chien,* and *Lakeboat,* are all referring to something or someone ‘real,’ which at the same time can be interpreted symbolically if so desired. But his “symbolism is never heavy-handed or obvious; each symbolic image can be quite painlessly offset with one of absolute realism” (Dean 27). Apparently the same survival knife becomes, in *Cryptogram,* a late 90s autobiographical play of David Mamet, a souvenir tool to disclose, to the wife, the secret between the husband and the family’s gay friend, who has assisted the husband to betray his wife. Intertextually the same knife is talked about in the bar and used by the main character to kill the anti-hero, played by famous actor and Mamet’s student, William H. Macy, in his latest film called *Spartan.*

By his transition to the second stage of his journey, Edmond’s behaviour as well as his language is changed. It implies that he has gained enough experience in the first stage to practice in the second stage, which starts from scene thirteen onwards. His language becomes harsh; he uses obscene, street-language more and more and attacks people wildly: a woman in subway station, who avoids speaking to him, a black pimp who wants to mug him, and at last a waitress whom he sleeps with and kills with the survival knife in scene sixteen. He wears a mask in the first phase that obliges him to be cautious with his behaviour and language. When he discusses sex, he uses euphemisms or talks in clichés: “you don’t interest me spiritually or sexually” (*Edmond* 224), he tells his wife; “[m]y wife and I are incompatible” (*Edmond* 227) he tells a Man in the bar; “I’m putting myself at your mercy” (*Edmond* 230) he tells the bargirl; and “I’d like to have intercourse with you” (*Edmond* 241), he informs the whore. But, in his second phase, he finds a new voice with a vengeance. By the end of scene thirteen, he removes his mask and “his sentences become staccato bursts of certitude, peppered with four-letter words” (Carroll 102). He now thinks that he has freed himself from the previous ‘self,’ that he has his ‘real self,’ that he has re-emerged after years of repression.

His freedom from his past years of repression in the old world and his transition to the new world leaves him battered, penniless, lonelier, helpless and without identity.
His identity is his wallet, his possession and his American Express credit card. Since he has lost his wallet and his card, nobody cares for him. The receptionist does not bother to answer him, and the policeman asking for the ID in front of the church arrests him:

EDMOND. I want a room.
CLERK. Twenty-two dollars. (Pause.)
EDMOND. I lost my wallet.
CLERK. Go to the police. (Pause.)
I don’t want to hear it.
EDMOND. You can call the credit-card people. I have insurance.
CLERK. Call them yourself. Right across the hall. (Edmond 248)
POLICEMAN. Could I see some identification please?
EDMOND. Please, officer, I haven’t time I . . . I . . . it’s been a long . . . I don’t have my wallet on me. […]
POLICEMAN. You want to show me some ID?
EDMOND. I don’t have any. I told you.
POLICEMAN. You’re going to have to come with me. (Edmond 276)

His detention takes place in front of a church, where Edmond, attracted by a preach, answers the call of the preacher, who asks someone to “[p]raise God and testify with me” (Edmond 275). In effect, it is his readiness to testify that brings about arrest and the following events:

(WOMAN from subway walks by. She sees EDMOND and stares at him.)
EDMOND (speaks up). I will testify.
PREACHER. Who is that?
[…] 
WOMAN (shouts). That’s the man. Someone! Call a policeman!
That’s the man. (Edmond 275)

Hence, the third stage of his voyage starts in front of the church. Edmond is arrested and returned to his ‘home,’ a new home where he is forced to find peace and salvation in a new order. He “is put in his new cell. His cellmate is a large, black” (Edmond 284) prisoner who rapes him and when he reports it, he is told “That happens” and Chaplain of the jail “is sorry it happened to you” (Edmond 288).
Thomas Harriot, a sixteen-century colonist explorer of America, in his book, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virgins*, quoted in *the Cambridge History of American Literature*, believes that in order to possess the ‘New Land’ the Indians should be forced to love Europeans because he had the ‘good hope’ that “they may be brought through discreet dealing and government to the embracing of the truth, and consequently to honor, obey, fear and love us” (Bercovitch 38). For all its ostensible benevolence, this colonial marriage vow makes explicit the implied adjunct to the love, honour, and obedience clause of marriage bond: fear.

The history of colonial marriage is repeated between the colonised black and the colonising white while reversibly subverted. It is a fable that, as Lyotard asserts, unmakes and remakes the reality:

The fable is realist because it recounts the story that makes, unmakes and remakes reality. It is also realist because it takes the note of the fact that this force has already greatly transformed reality and its art, and that, except for a catastrophe, this transformation ought to be pursued. (Lyotard 91-2)

The play concludes, as Mamet himself has explained, “in prison where he finds actual love with the African-American cell mate who began the relationship by raping him” (Mamet, 16). His play de-mythologises the past that “contains evidence of the very betrayals, cruelties, human derelictions which he identifies in the present” (Bigsby, *CCTDM* 19). Mamet’s play pictures the “gradual disintegration of civilisation” (Dean 154), a world in which “hell is not so much other people as the degradation of human relationships into soulless transactions” (Bigsby, *MAD* 230). Edmond, as well as Mamet himself, cries out for a world that is “full of life. And air. Where people are kind to each other, and there’s work to do. Where we grow up in love, and in security we’re wanted” (Edmond 289). Therefore, it becomes a place in which, as Kenneth Keniston has mentioned, “our vision of the future has shifted from images of hope to vistas of despair, utopias have become warnings [. . .] the vast majority of our visions of the future are negative visions, extensions of the most pernicious trends of the present. They are deterrents, cautionary tales: utopia has become counter-utopia” (Keniston 43).
Edmond, Prairie du Chien and Lakeboat are “the embodiment of all terror of our age” (Dean 188), in the western world where the “dominant realities are sex and money” (Bigsby, MAD 230). The next chapter shall deal with other three plays of the author in relation to new sense of sexuality and business, the Hollywood-promoted myths in the American society.