



## Manipulation as Marketing: Watson's Behaviorism in David Mamet's *American Buffalo*

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### Abstract:

This study analyzes David Mamet's *American Buffalo* in light of John B. Watson's behaviorism, indicating the way in which his views regarding conditioning and external stimuli affect marketing approaches and consumer behavior. Watson's proclamation that human behavior can be formed through deliberate manipulation of environmental matters echoes the relationship between the characters in the story, who are stuck in an ethically crooked environment discernible by sham and self-centeredness. By examining the characters' relations and their premeditated practice of language and persuasion, this paper reveals how their movements represent larger behavioral doctrines that regulate human communication inside a capitalist society. The tinges of trust, deceitfulness, and manipulation act as a miniscule image for grasping the mental procedures included in consumer behavior, signifying that the characters' unsuccessful efforts to proclaim power and authority echo the maneuvers used in marketing. Ultimately, this research implies that *American Buffalo* not only censures the virtuous qualms of its characters but also functions as a token of the unescapable inspiration of behaviorism in forming societal models and connections in a commodified domain.

**Keywords:** Behaviorism, Capitalism, Consumer Psychology, Deceit, Interpersonal Relationships, Manipulation, Marketing Practices.

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### 1. Introduction

In modern theater, there are just a small number of playwrights and scriptwriters who have been capable of efficiently depicting the intricacies of human behavior and social interface as competently as David Mamet (born in 1947). His writings commonly discuss the themes of manipulation, power relations, and the unrelenting search for pomposity, representing a strong understanding of the implication of psychological aspects (Bigsby & Miller, 2004, pp. 1-40).

One of the playwright's most appealing plays is *American Buffalo* (1975), which functions as a minor picture of these matters, and explores the association between human behavior and the art of persuasion. The dominant emphasis of this inspection is on the effect of behaviorism, chiefly the theories put forth by John B. Watson, which accentuate the importance of environmental stimuli in forming one's movements.

In *American Buffalo*, Mamet tells a story about a group of trivial offenders who become intertwined in a multifaceted plot to steal a treasured collection of coins. Consistent with behaviorism, the characters' movements and incentives can be viewed as reactions to their surroundings, molded by a combination of communal burdens, personal doubts, and the longing for corroboration. The play's dialogue, marked by its boisterous interactions and language, acts as a means of manipulation, not only in the characters' relations but also in the larger insinuations of marketing in a capitalist society.

The usage of language, hope, and perception becomes a critical device for the characters to deal with their relations and work towards their objectives (Dehghani & Sepehrmanesh, 2013, pp. 10-19). This study seeks to inspect the existing complicated layers of manipulation in *American Buffalo*, drawing parallels between Mary's representation of human behavior and the philosophies of behaviorism introduced by Watson.

By examining the characters' approaches for manipulating others and the moral insinuations of their actions, I will determine how Mamet's drama shows his viewpoint regarding the importance of marketing in modern society. By doing so, I will show how manipulation goes beyond sheer deceit and becomes an essential feature of human communication and an inevitable force in the capitalist framework.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

*American Buffalo* depicts a bright image of a world where manipulation, persuasion, and self-centeredness represent the pitiless reality of capitalism. In this play, the characters are included in a series of disingenuous approaches as they deal with their relations and follow their individual purposes, reverberating the leading mental stratagems in marketing practices. The problem stated in this article is the connection between manipulation and marketing in human interactions, bringing about serious questions concerning the ethical allusions of such behaviors in a capitalist setting.

Unambiguously, the present research aims to analyze how the characters in *American Buffalo* use persuasion and psychological control to affect each other. By investigating their relations in light of John B. Watson's behaviorism, this study seeks to discover the mechanisms of conditioning, stimulus-response associations, and behavioral control that reinforce their manipulative policies. Additionally, this investigation goes beyond the limitations of the play by stimulating a more comprehensive examination of the inferences of capitalist persuasion in contemporary society. Thus, the main questions to be addressed are:

1. How do these characters react to exterior incentives, and in what ways do their movements echo Watson's theories on behavior modification?
2. What does the manipulation displayed by Mamet's characters propose about the moral considerations surrounding marketing practices today?

## 3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is its interdisciplinary attitude, which links the fields of psychology, marketing, and literary analysis to present a better understanding of manipulation as an important facet of human behavior. By inspecting *American Buffalo* through the lens of Watson's behaviorism, this study leads to a richer discourse on the mechanisms of manipulation that infuse both interactive associations and larger social constructs, predominantly in the outline of capitalism. First, this article emphasizes the significance of psychological theories, predominantly behaviorism, in comprehending the incentives and activities of the characters in Mamet's drama.

By using Watson's philosophies, we can better realize how environmental spurs affect

behavior and decision-making procedures. Furthermore, the present study underlines the unescapable nature of manipulation in contemporary society, principally in the framework of marketing. In an era marked by digital communication and consumerism, the strategies practiced by the characters in *American Buffalo* echo the modern marketing strategies that depend on psychological manipulation to affect consumer behavior. Besides, this investigation functions as a promoter for better debates regarding the ethical intricacies of manipulation.

#### 4. Literature Review

##### 4.1. On the Play

"Ethical Perversity in America: Some Observations on David Mamet's *American Buffalo*" (1981, pp. 270-275) by Barbera is about the ethical intricacies and moral obscurities present in Mamet's *American Buffalo*. In this paper, the researcher, Barbera, discusses themes related to ethical predicaments, dubious behavior, and abnormal principles portrayed in the play. Moreover, the paper analyzes how *American Buffalo* depicts characters who are included in ethically problematic activities or make morally uncertain choices. It also investigates the gray areas of ethics and morality as represented in Mamet's work and discusses how these themes mirror wider social matters.

Besides, the paper presents a criticism of capitalist morals and consumer culture as revealed in the play. It inspects how Mamet's narrative signifies the darker aspect of American society and the moral impasses encountered by human beings in a profit-driven system. The paper additionally studies the ethical scopes of power forces at work and control within the play. It actually analyzes how characters compete for power, manipulate others, or engage in immoral behavior in their chase of personal profits or supremacy, reflecting on the moral inferences of such movements.

"Real Classical Money: Naturalism and Mamet's *American Buffalo*" (2006, pp. 330-346) by Dietrick examines the association of naturalism as a literary movement and Mamet's *American Buffalo*. Dietrick probes into the features and main beliefs of naturalism as a literary movement, which arose in the late 19th century. Naturalism often underlines describing life "as it is" with an emphasis on illustrating the raw and unfiltered realities of human life. The paper also studies how naturalistic features are noticed in Mamet's play, such as deterministic dealings, resolute realism, and an illustration of characters formed by their surroundings.

Likewise, the paper compares and contrasts naturalism with realism as another literary genre. Whereas realism concentrates on portraying ordinary life and experiences authentically, naturalism has a more deterministic and scientific attitude, often showing characters as sufferers of their situations. By scrutinizing how *American Buffalo* is similar to or different from naturalistic settlements, the paper shows Mamet's storytelling selections.

"(Re) Making of Identity: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of David Mamet's *American Buffalo*" (2023, pp. 15-28) by Rehman and colleagues also analyzes the multifaceted themes of identity formation, social dynamics, and cultural impacts as depicted in *American Buffalo*. This paper examines how the characters in *American Buffalo* struggle with their sense of self and how their identities are created in the socio-cultural framework of the play. It studies how such issues as class, race, gender, and socioeconomic position affect the characters' observations of themselves and others.

Moreover, the article shows the emphasis on the procedure of identity (re)construction, demonstrating the moments of alteration, self-discovery, or clash in the characters' journeys. It explores how the characters face the challenges to their identities, redefine themselves, or defy social outlooks in the search of self-realization. To do so, the research

has used a socio-cultural perspective in order to reveal the numerous social and cultural forces at play in *American Buffalo*. It examines the more extensive societal situations, historical impressions, and power subtleties that define the characters' experiences and arrangements of the play.

#### 4.2. On the Theory

Schneider and Morris (1987) refer to the formation of the idea of radical behaviorism by delineating its origins and development from early behaviorist theoreticians like John B. Watson to B.F. Skinner, who is often acknowledged as the one who introduced the word and its principles. Their article also contains an outline of Watson's inspirations on behaviorism, like his concentration on visible behavior and condemnation of observation and mental states as operative subjects of psychological study (pp. 27-29).

Also, a thorough review of Skinner's philosophies, predominantly his notions of operant conditioning, reinforcement, and the implication of the environment in modeling behavior has been offered by discussing how Skinner elaborated upon Watson's ideas and presented the term "radical behaviorism" to distinguish his attitude from other systems of behaviorism. An examination of the philosophical inferences of radical behaviorism, such as its position in willpower, mental states, and the systematic attitude to psychology is another remarked point. A discussion of the criticisms encountered by radical behaviorism, like the discussions in the field of psychology concerning the negligence of cognitive processes and the restrictions of a purely behaviorist approach is involved as well (pp. 30-33).

"John B. Watson's classical S-R behaviorism" (2017) by Moore probes the foundational facets of John B. Watson's approach to psychology, specially concentrating on his origination of stimulus-response (S-R) behaviorism. Moore has presented a summary of Watson's role in starting behaviorism as a central psychological model in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, highlighting his denial of introspection and the analysis of consciousness on the side of observable behavior (pp. 1-4).

Additionally, a comprehensive clarification of the S-R model, which suggests that behavior is a straight consequence of environmental stimuli (S) eliciting specific responses (R) is discussed in detail. The article then explores how Watson conceptualized this association and its inferences for understanding behavior. Moore then refers to the examination of Watson's faith in the dominance of environmental features in determining behavior, including his renowned declaration that behavior could be conditioned and adapted through appropriate stimuli (pp. 12-16).

Watson's *Behaviorism* (2017) is a significant text in the field of psychology that summarizes Watson's concept of behaviorism as a scientific attitude to understanding human and animal behavior. Whereas the book itself was published much earlier than 2017, it has likely been redistributed or discussed in that year, perhaps with new introductions or analyses. Watson argues against the usage of introspection as a way for studying psychology, supporting instead for a concentration on observable behavior. He alleged that psychology should be a natural science, depending on objective methods of observation (pp. 11-14).

The book also elaborates on the S-R model, which theorizes that behavior is a reaction to environmental stimuli. Watson highlights the significance of understanding the association between stimuli and responses in forecasting and regulating behavior. Watson proclaims that behavior is chiefly formed by environmental issues instead of distinctive qualities or psychological procedures. He excellently demanded that given a dozen healthy infants and the right environment, he could train any one of them to become anything he wanted, exemplifying his belief in the authority of conditioning (Watson, 2017, p. 31).

The book also discusses the ideologies of conditioning, principally classical conditioning, and how behaviors can be learned and revised through fortification and castigation. Watson calls for a demanding scientific approach to psychology, underscoring the necessity for experiential research. He supports psychology to be associated with the natural sciences, concentrating on determinate and observable phenomena (Watson, 2017, p. 19).

## 5. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, and focuses on textual analysis and theoretical application to examine manipulation as a kind of marketing in David Mamet's *American Buffalo*. The main method used is literary analysis, which embroils a close reading of the text to reveal the central psychological ideologies that affect the characters' behaviors and interfaces. By scrutinizing the play in light of John B. Watson's behaviorism, this research is going to show the relations between manipulation, conditioning, and marketing policies as they manifest in the characters' quest for self-interest.

Watson (2017) as the father of behaviorism accentuated the significance of discernible behavior over interior psychological conditions. He thought that emotional states could be adapted and manipulated through environmental incentives. Concerning the subject of marketing, this translates to using horror and longing as important devices to mark consumer behavior (p. 19). In *American Buffalo*, the characters are involved in a kind of emotional manipulation that reflects Watson's beliefs.

For instance, the character of Donny attempts to convey a sense of earnestness and horror of missing out in his partners, essentially regarding the capacity for profit from their arranged stealing. This horror disturbs their movements, pushing them toward selections that may not be in their best interest. The horror of failure, both in the stealing and in their lives, becomes a stirring matter for the characters, reverberating how marketers might exploit analogous terrors to compel consumers to act.

Correspondingly, desire plays a vivacious role in the characters' motivations. The desire for approbation, verification, and financial victory affects their movements and choices. This desire can be likened to how marketers form a longing for their products by portraying them as entryways to a better life or enriched social place. In *American Buffalo*, the characters' ambitions and desires make them take risky decisions, exemplifying how manipulation of emotional states can bring about illogical behavior.

Moreover, as stated by Samelson (1981, pp. 402-403), Watson's behaviorism laid the basis for understanding habit formation, which is decisive in both consumer behavior and the subtleties between characters in *American Buffalo*. Habits are formed through recurrent associations and underpinnings, and in marketing, this can be perceived in the way brands generate allegiance and consumer habits. In the play, the characters display habitual behaviors formed by their environment and past experiences.

For example, their recurring negotiations about the theft and their dependence on each other create a routine that strengthens their obligation to the plan. This echoes how consumers grow brand devotion through repeated exposure to marketing messages or products. Just as consumers may become habitual purchasers of a brand because of constant constructive fortification, the characters in *American Buffalo* become engrained in their plans and relations, often to their disadvantage.

The analysis will concentrate on some chief dialogues and character exchanges in *American Buffalo*. Particular emphasis will be given to moments that demonstrate persuasion, conditioning, and stimulus-response behaviors. For example, the communications between characters such as Donny, Teach, and Bob will be inspected to

ascertain patterns of influence and control.

Watson's behaviorism suggests that feelings and behaviors can be habituated through reinforcement and punishment. This idea is crucial in understanding how people react to their environments based on learned experiences. For example, through standard conditioning, a neutral stimulus can induce a conditioned reaction when paired with an unconditioned stimulus. This can be realized in advertising, where brands establish associations between their products and encouraging feelings (like contentment or victory) to inspire consumer behavior (Watson, 2017, pp. 54-59).

In *American Buffalo*, the characters show some behaviors determined by their past experiences and conditioned responses. Their relations are absorbed in learned behaviors, shaped by their socio-economic background and the burdens of their settings. This denotes Watson's outlook that behavior is not just a product of individual resolution but is utterly determined by external issues.

Watson's behaviorism is also connected to the terrain of societal undercurrents and capitalist competition. In a capitalist society, power subtleties are often affected by monetary position, access to resources, and the aptitude to regulate consumer behavior. In *American Buffalo*, the characters are included in a minimal form of capitalist competition, where power is resultant from financial gain and the capability to outdo others. Donny, for instance, seeks to assert his power over Bob and Teach, leveraging their qualms and longings to stimulate them into contribution to the stealing.

To support the examination, the study assimilates the theoretical agenda of behaviorist psychology and marketing principles. Academic sources debating Watson's theories, primarily his ideas of conditioning and behavioral control will be critical to understanding the psychological mechanisms at play in the characters' interactions. The paper will also include some secondary sources, such as academic reviews of Mamet's drama and negotiations on manipulation in literature.

These sources will present extra perspicacity to the investigation, leading to a more inclusive understanding of the ethical insinuations of manipulation in both the play and modern society. Finally, the research aims to offer an explanatory and thematic investigation with the intention of recognizing how the characters' policies of influence represent behaviorist philosophies and marketing strategies. By scrutinizing their discussions, movements, and motivations, the research will underline the role of manipulation as a device for control and economic survival in the play.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. Manipulation as a Marketing Strategy

Watson (2017) believed that repeated exposure to messages could condition people to respond in a desired way. In fact, Watson's behaviorism essentially changed the landscape of psychology by supporting an empirical tactic concentrated on discernible behaviors instead of introspection or the study of mental states. Watson highlighted the role of stimuli and responses, stating that emotional responses could be formed through systematic exposure to particular stimuli. Watson's theories mean that behavior can be conditioned through reinforcement and punishment, bringing about expectable reactions to specific stimuli. This idea is chiefly pertinent in the dominion of marketing, where repeated exposure to advertisements can establish relations between products and desired emotional responses (pp. 26-29).

In his 2017 work, Watson argued that "repeated exposure to messages could condition people to respond in a desired way" (p. 26). This idea is principally applicable to *American Buffalo*, where the characters engage in a kind of emotional conditioning that reflects the ideologies of marketing and consumer behavior. The repeated reinforcement of certain

ideas forms the characters' principles and movements, representing how conditioning can affect not just consumers but individuals in their societal and financial interfaces.

In the play, Don tries to condition Bob into believing that loyalty is crucial to become successful. He recurrently stresses the significance of belief and companionship amongst their group, framing their association as one that should be based on loyalty above all else. This conditioning procedure matches how advertisements establish associations between brands and emotions like trust or safety. Just as consumers learn to associate a brand with positive feelings through repeated exposure, Bob learns to associate loyalty with triumph, which eventually drives his choices and movements. For instance, Don says, "You can't trust anyone but your friends" (Mamet, 1975, p. 44), underpinning the idea that loyalty is supreme in their world. This announcement summarizes the view that success is derived from abusing dealings, a belief that Don tries to impart in Bob.

In *American Buffalo*, manipulation thus functions as a very important marketing strategy that mirrors the greater themes of trust, dishonesty, and the human condition. The characters in the play, chiefly Donny, Teach, and Bob, are involved in diverse kinds of manipulation as they try to deal with their associations and the world of business. In fact, the characters in *American Buffalo* are continuously exchanging the value of objects and affiliations. This intervention is a kind of manipulation, where they endeavor to affect each other's insights to attain their own aims.

For instance, Donny, the shop owner, assumes that the buffalo nickel they plan to steal has a higher value than it actually does. This opinion is entrenched in a manipulation of perception, where value is not intrinsic but constructed through narrative and suggestion. We read in the play, "It's not what you think it's worth, it's what the market will bear" (Mamet, 1975, p. 23). This citation emphasizes the view that value is idiosyncratic and can be manipulated. The characters are alert that their hypothetical value can be leveraged to manipulate others into making decisions to their advantage.

Trust is another intermittent theme in the play, and manipulation often undermines it. Specially, Teach employs manipulation to deceive both Donny and Bob. His intimidating strategies are planned to convey reluctance and fear, which he then misuses with the purpose of attaining power over the situation. He says, "You can't trust anyone in this business" (Mamet, 1975, p. 45). This statement abbreviates the play's cynical view of human relations and business. Teach's declaration echoes a manipulative attitude where trust is alleged as a responsibility rather than a good quality. This manipulation of trust creates an atmosphere of disbelief and contention, which is negative for truthful associations.

Furthermore, the characters assume they can regulate their status quo through manipulation; nonetheless, their subtleties often unravel, unveiling the senselessness of their strategies. This misinterpretation of control signifies Mamet's dissatisfaction with capitalism, where manipulation is perceived as a plain policy for resolution. It is stated, "We're in control here. We make the rules" (Mamet, 1975, p. 67). This extract symbolizes the characters' yearning to sustain authority over their condition. However, the irony is in the fact that their controlling policies ultimately bring about misperception and deception. The delusion of control is a manipulation in itself, as it causes them to make thoughtless decisions based on wrong confidence.

Ultimately, it has to be told that language in *American Buffalo* is an influential device for manipulation. The characters often take part in verbal fighting that discloses their deeper purposes and cravings. Teach's usage of persuasive language is a crucial tactic in his manipulative arsenal. He utters, "Words are just words, Donny. It's the meaning behind them that counts" (Mamet, 1975, p. 89). This citation emphasizes the idea that language can be exercised as a weapon of manipulation. The character's use words to produce

narratives that serve their benefits, often at the expense of others. This manipulation of language mirrors the more extensive theme of how marketing depends on persuasive communication to form consumer behavior.

## 6.2. Watson's Behaviorism in the Characters' Actions

As mentioned before, Watson (2017) has heightened the importance of noticeable behavior over inner mental conditions. He thought that approaches could be hardened and operated through environmental incentives. Concerning the matter of marketing, this translates to using dread and desire as influential devices to determine consumer behavior (p. 19).

In *American Buffalo*, the characters' actions can be investigated in light of Watson's behaviorism, which accentuates the observable behavior rather than interior psychological circumstances. The characters in *American Buffalo* take manipulative actions that represent their conditioning by their environment, and their reactions to stimuli can be realized through behaviorist notions.

The characters in *American Buffalo* display behaviors that are conditioned by their experiences and the socio-economic environment in which they live. Their actions are often responses to professed pressures or opportunities, echoing a learned reply to their surroundings. Teach says, "You can't trust anyone in this business" (Mamet, 1975, p. 45). This declaration underlines a conditioned response to the competitive and suspicious environment of the criminal underworld. Teach's behavior and outlook are affected by past experiences of disloyalty and opposition, causing him to a state of everlasting caution and manipulation. His actions are thus dictated by the view that others will act in self-centeredness, which is a learned behavior and in line with Watson's emphasis on the environmental conditioning.

Likewise, the characters use manipulation as a policy to strengthen their favorite behaviors in others. Teach, for example, uses belligerent persuasion and bullying in order to manipulate Donny and Bob into following his instructions. This issue represents the behaviorist principle of reinforcement, where behaviors are fortified or dejected based on the consequences that follow. Teach also utters, "You want to come in with me, you need to listen to what I say" (Mamet, 1975, p. 60). This allegation stresses his efforts to establish control through manipulation. By forming a situation where compliance brings about impending triumph (the theft), he underpins the behavior he wishes in Donny and Bob. This manipulation agrees with behaviorist principles, where Teach's commanding posture is a conditioned reply to his desire for power in a muddled situation.

Furthermore, the interaction between the characters exemplifies social conditioning, where their behaviors are affected by group dynamics. The characters' relations denote learned behaviors based on their social environment, which is prevalent with competition and manipulation. It is remarked, "We're a team. We look out for each other" (Mamet, 1975, p. 72). This quote shows the social conditioning that happens in the group. Whereas the characters admit faithfulness, their actions often deceive a profounder drive for survival. The manipulation of language helps to emphasize group unity, but it also masks the suspicion that characterizes their associations. This division stresses the behaviorist view that social interfaces can condition individuals to implement behaviors that may not be in accordance with their true purposes.

## 6.3. Power Dynamics and Capitalist Competition

Watson's behaviorism is also related to the territory of power dynamics and capitalist competition. In a capitalist society, power intricacies are often inspired by monetary status, access to resources, and the aptitude to regulate consumer behavior. In *American Buffalo*, the characters participate in a minimal sort of capitalist struggle, where power is

derivative from financial profit and the capability to outshine others (Watson, 2017, p. 32).

In sum, in *American Buffalo*, power undercurrents and capitalist rivalry are strictly intertwined with the story, which embodies how manipulation and behaviorism influence the characters' relations and resolutions. The play works as a minor account of capitalist society, where trust is sporadic, and relations are often transactional. The key characters live in a world defined by competition, manipulation, and the quest for authority.

They are mostly preoccupied with a competitive attitude that initiates from their socio-economic context. Their communications are hence marked by a continuous struggle for authority and control, which mirrors the merciless nature of capitalism. Teach once expresses, "You want to come in with me, you need to listen to what I say" (Mamet, 1975, p. 60). This sentence demonstrates his efforts to proclaim ascendancy over Donny and Bob. In the context of capitalist competition, Teach places himself as the authority figure, leveraging manipulation to guarantee obedience. This dynamic discloses how competition raises a hierarchy amongst the characters, where those who can manipulate and control others attain power.

Moreover, the characters recurrently stick to manipulation in order to achieve a benefit over one another. This manipulation is not only a plan for individual advantage but also an image of their understanding of the power dynamics at play in their environment. There is a quote saying, "You can't trust anyone in this business" (Mamet, 1975, p. 45). This quote summarizes the omnipresent disbelief that characterizes the characters' affiliations. In a capitalist context, manipulation becomes a required way for existence, and the characters' incapability to trust one another underlines the competitive nature of their environment, where each person is conscious that others may benefit from deceitfulness so as to reach an upper hand. This absence of trust preserves a cycle of manipulation, and strengthens the power dynamics at play.

Whereas the characters often speak of allegiance and cooperation, their movements show a deeper truth: interactions are transactional and egotistic. This delusion of companionship is a method used to disguise the fundamental rivalry and manipulation. The quote, "We're a team. We look out for each other" (Mamet, 1975, p. 72), echoes the facade of teamwork that the characters uphold. Still, the reality is that their associations are flimsy and based on reciprocated egocentricity. The manipulation of language helps to generate a sense of harmony, but the characters' actions inform on their true incentives. In a capitalist society, such misapprehensions are common, as individuals often present an amalgamated front while following their own plans.

Correspondingly, economic desperation causes the characters to take part in ethically problematic behaviors. Their struggle for monetary gain leads them to manipulate and misinform one another, emphasizing the obscurer facets of capitalism. Teach says, "You think I'm going to let you take my share?" (Mamet, 1975, p. 85). This quote from Teach signifies the distress of loss that reinforces their rivalry. The characters are intensely alert that their financial endurance relies on their capacity to outdo one another. This fear nurtures an environment where manipulation is not only common but anticipated.

#### **6.4. Ethical Implications of Manipulation**

Manipulation in *American Buffalo* acts as a fundamental theme and leads to highly important ethical implications concerning the characters' actions and inspirations. The play revolves around the way in which manipulation, often observed as an essential means in the competitive world of capitalism, brings about ethical uncertainty and impasses. The characters' inclination to deceive and abuse one another for personal profits highlights the murkier sides of human behavior and the magnitudes of selecting egotism over honesty.

The characters in *American Buffalo* are in an environment where trickery is standardized. Their enthusiasm to manipulate one another leads to ethical questions about trust, faithfulness, and the veracity of human interactions. When it is noted, "You can't trust anyone in this business" (Mamet, 1975, p. 45), Mamet means to reflect the unescapable atmosphere of disbelief that characterizes the characters' interfaces. The standardization of dishonesty suggests an ethical deterioration, where ethical attentions are dominated by the wish for profit. This viewpoint defies the viewers to think through the moral inferences of living in a society where manipulation is not only acknowledged but predictable.

The manipulation that the characters engage in eventually contributes to damaging results, and stresses the ethical implications of their movements. As they arrange their egotisms, they disrespect the probable damage their behavior may impose on others. The quote "You can't get away with this" (Mamet, 1975, p. 101) indicates the foreseeable outcomes of manipulation. The characters' actions not only give up their dealings but also begin a chain reaction of battle and vengeance. The ethical implication here is obvious: manipulation can result in a collapse of trust and community, leading to individual and cooperative damages.

Also, the characters repeatedly abuse one another's susceptibilities to attain their objectives. This manipulation brings about moral anxieties about the ethics of taking advantage of others' flaws for personal advantage as suggested in the following excerpt, "You think I'm going to let you take my share?" (Mamet, 1975, p. 85). This quotation displays the competitive nature of the characters' exchanges. Teach's terror of losing his share discloses an enthusiasm to exploit others' liabilities to preserve his spot. The ethical implication here is substantial: manipulation that preys on liability not only weakens individual self-possession but also preserves a sequence of misuse.

## 7. Conclusion

In *American Buffalo*, David Mamet has crafted a captivating narrative that intricately weaves together themes of manipulation, inducement, and egotism, effectively mirroring the cutthroat nature of capitalism. By studying the characters' associations in light of John B. Watson's behaviorism, we can attain a better understanding of their underlying forces. This research has scrutinized the emotional implication of their misleading strategies and the ways in which these dogmata act as a sort of marketing.

The characters' belief in conditioning and stimulus-response apparatuses not only forms their individual schemes but also mirrors the larger societal tendencies where manipulation is an inescapable device for attaining triumph and authority. The investigation of manipulation as a marketing approach discloses important perceptions regarding the ethical judgments related to behavior in personal associations and business events.

As the characters circumnavigate through their world, their movements prompt substantial questions about the ethics of affecting others and the extents people are eager to go to protect their wishes. This examination also inspires us to think about connections in a capitalist outline, heartening us to consider how commonly we stick to manipulative maneuvers to reach our objectives.

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