

Explain the dramatic significance of mr alfieri essay sample

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



The angle of the lighting casts a shadow across him however; it is clear from his demeanour that he is a man of importance. As he emerges from the silhouettes his attire is a contrast to the shabby backdrop. His name is Mr Alfieri and his character is vital in connecting the audience more directly with the play. Therefore, in the following piece of coursework on 'A view from the bridge' I will mainly focus on Mr Alfieri's impact throughout the play.

Mr Alfieri is a representation of a Greek chorus in this play. It cannot be said whether he is part of the audience or a complete character as the play write wanted him to be both. Mr Alfieri could decide how the play un-ravels however due to the fact he was only scripted to be a link between the audience and the play makes it hard for him to take control. Therefore he has little impact on the action that takes place during the play. It is very clear Mr Alfieri is respected but also slightly feared by the inhabitants of Red Hook as he is a man of authority. 'You see how uneasily they nod to me?' In his opening line Mr Alfieri tells the audience directly how he is seen by other characters and the reason they are so uneasy is 'because I am a lawyer', he explains. Mr Alfieri on stage is sat in his office and directly addresses the other character however once they have left he sits himself upon his desk and addresses the audience. In the final piece of the play Mr Alfieri is on the street with the other characters although the other characters appear not to see him, it is as if he is looking at it all through a shaded window. He then turns toward the audience and says the final words of the play and it is then he teaches us the lesson.

The words Mr Alfieri speaks are very simplistic when addressing the other characters and this is needed as the other characters are not as literate as him. This however changes when he turns to speak directly to the audience, he talks to them as if they were exactly like him well educated and of authority. There are very few props used by the character Mr Alfieri his desk is the only prop he uses as part of his acting and direct speaking with the audience. This makes it very easy to follow him as the audience are not distracted by a mass of props. The outfit he is dressed in is a black suit one typically associated with lawyers or people power.

The play is set in the 1940's a time when the world was at war for a second time. The 1940's were a difficult era globally. Whilst Europe was embedded in heavy conflict the rest of the world were also feeling the consequences. America was one of these places and was economically affected.

There was no regular work and gangsters were running many things. Even though there was a shortage of work, and violence was on the increase immigrants were constantly taking a chance, and searching for a better life elsewhere and heading to America. The immigrants typically came from Italy, as although life in America appeared tough it was a lot harder across the water. The immigrant's occupation usually became long shore men; Red Hook offered work and was a popular destination for them. Generation after generation came to Red Hook in search of a better quality of living; at the time the play is set Red Hook is seeing its third generation of immigrants.

By the 1950's the economy in America was looking up. Many play writes decided to base their plays in recent times. However Arthur Miller wanted to be different he wanted to highlight the bad times, he wanted to stress that the USA overcame the violence and problems with immigration. His play was seen as controversial; it had many macho values featured within the story line. These are values such as seeking revenge to defend your honour, keeping women in their place and only stereotyping them into two categories; hookers and Madonna's. These values were typical of the 1940's.

I believe Miller wrote this play in order to show everyone how America coped with the rough times. He also did it as it was a play with a lesson and teaches the audience many things. Mr Alfieri is the character that delivers the message to the audience and teaches them the lesson Arthur Miller wanted to. In the words of Mr Alfieri ' we settle for half and I like it better'. He is telling us we should be satisfied with what we have; Eddie is the example we should learn from. He was never happy and he met his death prematurely because of that. Being content is not something to be ashamed of as jealousy can end up being your own death just like it was to Eddie.

The presence of Mr Alfieri needs to be felt at all times by the audience. If I were directing him I would have him present at all times even if he was in the shadows at points during the exchanged dialogue he would be on set from his first to last word. He is a pivotal character so the actions he displays needs to reflect the words he is speaking.

The way he manipulates the props and stage must represent him as a character. He must control the stage and command the attention of the audience. Another way an audience make assumptions about a character is the way they move around stage and how they stand when static; this means Mr Alfieri's posture would be straight and authoritative.

The way in which Mr Alfieri has a one on one conversation with other characters is different to the way he engages with the audience. The language Mr Alfieri uses simplifies when talking to Eddie. ' Do you understand what I'm saying to you?' Mr Alfieri on various occasions during his meeting with Eddie checks that he is following their conversation. Eddie is not as well educated so Mr Alfieri switches to using short sentences, which is a contrast to how he talks to the audience.

When addressing the audience Mr Alfieri typically speaks in paragraphs using a range of dialogue. For example he uses similes ' like a dark figure walking down a hall toward a certain door'. The audience can easily follow the play because Mr Alfieri is like a constant update and a sly narrator. He cannot be called a direct narrator or a consistent Greek chorus as he is more of a half character; switching between roles in a schizophrenic way.

The way in which Mr Alfieri again changes is when he is talking to Marco. Marco is an Italian and Mr Alfieri being Italian American himself understands the way they work. He manages to get through to Marco as he understands Marco's reasoning for coming to America as he understands the struggle of the people he left behind when he arrived years earlier as an Italian. Mr

Alfieri reasons with Marco and plays to the fact he wants to earn money for his family back in Italy. ' You have five or six weeks you could work. Or else you sit here.'

Mr Alfieri is a complex character however he is unique to this play. His continual switch between talking to characters and audience means he himself must change the way in which he speaks.

Mr Alfieri is a character which makes the play ' A View from the Bridge' very similar to that of a Greek tragedy. Arthur Miller has chosen this theatrical device from two thousand years ago to bring together the past and present style of play writing in a very simplistic manor.

Mr Alfieri had the potential to change the fate of the characters and dramatically change the climaxed finale of the play. However, Arthur Miller did not allow this of Mr Alfieri and whilst he could have potentially been the most influential character with the ability to considerably change things, the writer in many ways went back on himself and created a half character. This character would be stuck in limbo between continually narrating the play to the audience and acting amongst the other characters as one of them. This created a frustrating character in Mr Alfieri as the audience could see his ability to change things thus will him to do so, though due to half character he was un-able to break the boundary and completely commit himself to becoming immersed in the story instead throughout he stayed a float drifting between roles.

The limitation to Mr Alfieri's performance meant that whilst in my own opinion he could have stopped Eddie; I do not believe this would have been best for the play as its morals and lessons that needed to be portrayed could only be done so by following the plight of Eddie without any other character influencing him. This is certainly what Arthur Miller believed.

Arthur Miller uses Mr Alfieri to get across and represent the themes of the play to the audience. There are powerful themes in the play most with a lesson to teach and a point to prove. I can therefore not pinpoint one main theme as they interlink with each other; for example Eddie's 'jealousy' leads to him 'betraying' for his 'forbidden love' thus leading to his 'alienation'.

The title of the play was chosen very carefully and is extremely significant to everything that happens as it is a representation of the characters in many ways. The audience can be seen as being the people who have that view from the bridge, as looking over the edge you would look down upon Red Hook and see exactly what the audience are seeing. However, the bridge may be personified as being the character Mr Alfieri. Mr Alfieri is the bridge in this play he gives the audience the view and paints the clear picture of what is happening. As Mr Alfieri is seen as being the bridge and he is of high class it may be that the bridge is in fact segregating the lower class underneath it and having the middle class professionals walk upon it. The fact we are saying Mr Alfieri is the bridge makes him in many ways god like. We know that if given the chance by the writer Arthur Miller Mr Alfieri could have been the biggest and most influential character of the play deciding the fate of the other actors.

A bridge links to places together. In many ways this is like Mr Alfieri as he is Italian but is also American thus linking the two countries just like a bridge does. However, we can also see the bridge as a bond between two very different places with one common thing both people at each end want to reach the same destination. This is like Rodolfo and Eddie both different people from different background however they both have on common interest Catherine. The bridge can also be seen as a metaphorical line never to be crossed however Eddie is intent on reaching the other side no matter what the cost. In this case it was his life. I believe the title was extremely clever and Arthur Miller chose a title that not only reflected where the play was situated it also gives a big insight into the actual characters and plot.

In many ways the character Mr Alfieri fills the audience with frustration and I think this is justified as they can see he knows what is going to happen and he has no intention of stopping it. However, I do think there is a point when they realise he has little chance to influence the play and this is what Arthur Miller wanted. I do not think he wants us to feel frustration towards this character instead he wants us to have this element of respect. We should respect him for his ability in talking to Eddie and convincing Marco of what to do. We should also respect him for the work he does within Red Hook. This character is the one who is clarifying what the audience should learn from Eddie's mistake. He is saying take the mistakes of others and uses them to your own advantage in many ways, to stop yourself following down the same path. The main lesson is 'we should settle for half'. Strive to get what you

want however always be aware of that line which should never be crossed no matter how much you want the thing at the other side.