

A comparison of brian friel's philadelphia, here i come and arthur miller's a vie...

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



Both Brian Friel's Philadelphia, Here I Come, and Arthur Miller's A View From the Bridge bear a resemblance to each other as plays, particularly in certain areas. For example, both plays are set at a similar time, in similarly isolated, and to a certain extent impoverished setting. Dramatic tension is used to great effect in both plays, to hold the audiences attention. The key moment, or climax also plays an integral role in both plays, and in both instances, these moments ultimately determine how the play is resolved.

Also, stage directions in both plays are very similarly structured, as both Miller & Friel use very specific and intricate stage directions. Philadelphia, Here I Come is set in Ballybeg, a small town in Donegal, in the heart of rural Ireland. It is a quintessential small town community, very close, introverted with an air of inescapable predestination. A View From the Bridge is set in Red hook, Brooklyn, a tough impoverished area of New York, home to immigrants and the masculine culture of the longshoremen.

Red hook is similar to Ballybeg in the sense that it too appears to have sense of inescapability and a predestined future, which is due to the poverty within Red hook. Both settings inspire dreams of escape in the play the plays characters, as Gar dreams of leaving Ballybeg for Philadelphia, and Catherine dreams of leaving Red hook for Italy. The key moment, or climax plays a very important role in both plays. It is that moment when the inevitable ending becomes apparent to the audience, and the characters destines confirmed.

In Philadelphia, Here I Come, this moment occurs when Gar's father S. B, fails to recall a blue boat, while it appears trivial S. B. 's failure to remember

the blue boat leads Gar to believe, incorrectly, that he doesn't care, and that his leaving would have little emotional effect on his father. While it is never fully mentioned in the ending, I believe that Gar chooses to leave Ballybeg for Philadelphia, and that his decision is based almost entirely on his father's remembrance of a blue boat. In comparison, there is a similar key moment in Miller's *A View From the Bridge*, where Eddie's fate is partially decided upon one moment.

After being humiliated by Marco, an already furious Eddie is told by Beatrice that what he can't have, alluding to his niece Beatrice. This realization that his wife knows how he feels about their niece causes Eddie to go into a rage and to seek a fight with Marco even more vehemently. This ultimately results in Eddie being stabbed by his own knife, and dying. While it could be argued that in both cases, the ending was already inevitable, as Gar was practically set on leaving for Philadelphia, and Eddie was already out of control, I do not doubt that these two key moments had a massive impact on how the play was resolved.

Stage directions are used as a way of allowing playwrights to give direction as to what is supposed to be happening on the stage, and is used to enhance the audience's experience and involvement in the play. Stage direction is used to great effect by both Arthur Miller and Brian Friel in their plays. In *A View From the Bridge*, Arthur Miller's stage directions are very intricate, and detailed to the point of sounding strange at times, "After a moment of watching her face Eddie breaks into a smile, but it almost seems that tears will form in his eyes".

Brian Friel's stage directions are very similar, as they too involve a considerable amount of detail, and oftentimes are quite long, an example being Friel's description of Gar's friend Joe, "The youngest of the trio and not yet fully committed to the boy's way of life (...) he is patient, gauche, innocent, obvious" (55). Both Friel and Miller use lighting as an effective way of highlighting important aspects of the stage, as light is used to highlight the wall clock in Philadelphia, Here I Come, and the phone booth in A View From the Bridge.

Friel's Philadelphia, Here I Come, and Arthur Miller's A View From the Bridge are similar in many aspects, as are Friel and Miller, as shown by the similarity in their stage directions, and to a certain extent writing styles. Comparisons can be easily be made between the settings of Ballybeg and Red hook, and the inclusion of turning points in both plays further supports their similarities. While there are obvious contrasts that could be made between the two plays such as the themes which differ greatly, there are certainly some very strong similarities between the two plays.