

Dramatic impetus in a view from the bridge

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Dramatic impetus is defined as an impelling movement or force within a play. In *A View from the Bridge* it is dependant on conflicts between opposing sets of values in areas such as relationships, gender, age and the community. The main character we are opposed to is Eddie as his set of values towards the end of the play contradict values of society, his family and even his own. He represents the older generation and the male stereotype of the 1950's and also demonstrates justice being put to serve by the driving human emotions. His love is unevenly spread across the family causing conflict and destruction to his marriage, his family and even his life. There are five different relationships in the play, which are all affected by one conflicting emotion, causing the most important dramatic impetus. All the characters share a love as a family, at the start, as they all would take a risk for one another in any circumstance. The Italian brothers, Rodolpho and Marco, share a brotherly love so strong that they would lay down their own lives for the other brother. Rodolpho and Catherine develop a young romantic love, one set off at the very first sight and carries on throughout the play. Beatrice and Eddie are of course married but we are told mid way through Act 1 that their love has lost its passion. Beatrice questions Eddie when she asks " When am I going to be a wife again, Eddie? " in which he replies with " I ain't been feeling good. They bother me since they came. " This conversation is unnatural for a married couple as the act of sex is supposed to be a common activity in the marriage life and especially desirable for men. All these relationships create a tension, set off by the one relationship based upon Eddie's emotions and pride. Eddie's love for Catherine — although not admitted by him but clearly shown to the other

characters and the audience — enforces the dramatic impetus. Catherine and Eddie's love at the start is clearly affectionate like a father and his daughter however in this case; Eddie is Catherine's uncle. Catherine says, "I'll get you a beer, all right?" to Eddie at the start of the play, which evidently shows her affection to him as a father figure. However, this love develops into an incestuous love on Eddie's behalf which conflicts with every relationship and the value of love. This love opposes Eddie's love for his wife, Catherine's love for Rodolpho and the love between Rodolpho and Marco. When it comes to love in the play, dramatic impetus is dependant on the deep passion that creates jealousy and causes pain both to the person who loves, the person who is loved and those around them. The way in which the law takes part in a crime can never satisfy the victim's idea of justice as our decisions are based upon the emotions that we feel and therefore it is not true justice; it is not objective. However, where should our value be put when it comes to the betrayal of family and the betrayal of the law? Where can justice satisfy either values? At the start of the play, Eddie is seen as an honourable man for taking in two relatives as illegal immigrants and providing them with a roof over their heads and work on the pier, he even warns Beatrice and Catherine to not say a word, for the mere protection of the family. His warning is carried in a story about Vinny Bolzano whose family had hidden an uncle in the house. Vinny had "snitched" to the Immigration and suffered the consequences. "BEATRICE: Oh, it was terrible. He had five brothers and the old father. And they grabbed him in the kitchen and pulled him down the stairs — three flights his head was bouncin' like a coconut. And they spit on him in the street, is own father and his brothers.

The whole neighbourhood was cryin'. " The irony in this, is that Eddie becomes the betrayer, the " snitch", in the second act when he walks into a telephone booth and rings up the Immigration Buereau. His action goes against his own values of trust, family and honour because they have been dictated by his feelings for Catherine and against Rodolpho. The little trust that Marco had for Eddie is now gone and there is nothing more the two would want more than justice and revenge progressing into an outbreak of conflict as they fail to look for a higher principle of justice separate from their own feelings found in the law. Although Eddie values the honour in his name, Marco values the trust bonds of family, which provides the dramatic impetus of Eddie's tragic death. Values of sexuality and gender in the play are very conflicting even when the accusations are false. Men tend to value power, strength and honour in their name and not receiving the praise for these attributes can be very demeaning and conflicting to ones self. For example, Eddie is a very honourable man at the start of the play but his honour gradually decreases due to his own emotions and when that honour in his name is taken away by Marco there is an external conflict between the two in the last scene. Both Eddie and Marco are masculine characters and their similar values are conflicting in both a competitive way and in a form of loyalty, especially in the last act where Marco defends his family's honour. Women also have values that conflict with their own. Catherine and Beatrice have a minor conflict in that they both fight for Eddie's attention; for male affirmation as the daughter and as the wife. They both value Eddie's opinion at the start and so they work to satisfy his needs but when another male comes onto the scene, this changes causing the conflict between males for

the woman's attention. This is clear in the play when Rodolpho steps onto the scene and captures Catherine's attention, dragging it slowly away from Eddie. Due to his pride and jealousy, Eddie makes accusations that Rodolpho is homosexual which was not valued in 1950's society. Eddie tries to give evidence that Rodolpho just "ain't right" and explains to Alfieri, "I know a tenor, Mr Alfieri. This ain't no tenor. I mean if you came in the house and you didn't know who was singin', you wouldn't be lookin' for him you be lookin' for her." These accusations not only create dramatic impetus but also provide a shock value when in act 2, Eddie "pins [Rodolpho's] arms, laughing, and suddenly kisses him." This reveals to the audience Eddie's true thoughts and feelings in a very dramatic way. It is obvious that Eddie does not value homosexuality as he represents the masculine but his accusations to this opposing value creates a conflict and furthermore provides dramatic impetus. Amongst different age groups come different sets of values and attitudes towards traditional manners. Rodolpho and Catherine represent the youth and when Rodolpho and Catherine decide to marry without Eddie's permission, this is scene as disrespectful. It is generally polite and traditional in past generations to ask the parents for a daughters hand in marriage so when this tradition is broken then conflict breaks out. Eddie also does not value materialism like Rodolpho does as the consumerist generation which takes part in the conflict between Eddie and Rodolpho. It is said that wisdom comes with age and so do wrinkles, which is why the idea of beauty in older women is valued. Beatrice represents the older generation in the play and it is clear that she feels jealous of Catherine's young beauty. "BEATRICE: You think I'm jealous of you, honey?"

CATHERINE: No! It's the first I thought of it. BEATRICE: Well you should of thought of it before..." Although these values between youth and adult are not major factors of conflict, they contribute to the dramatic impetus and create a momentum towards the final outburst of built up tension between the characters. Arthur Miller creates dramatic impetus in A View from the Bridge through conflicting character values. The different types of love shared are all conflicted with the one emotion that brings about a roll of events and an outburst of tension. Justice is values only by the state of ones emotions and therefore can differ depending on the situation but will always intend to provide revenge on the criminal or victim. Gender and sexuality creates conflict through accusations as the 1950's did not value homosexuality. The values between different generations provide dramatic impetus in the play.