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In Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge*, Eddie's death is made all the more tragic because it stems from his inability to understand – let alone articulate – his feelings. The play depicts the downfall and death of a decent man due to a fatal flaw. While Eddie's incestuous desire for Catherine is the impetus of his downfall and the threat of Rodolpho the catalyst, what ultimately causes his destruction is his inherent inability to understand or express what he feels. As a result Eddie suffers confusion and inner turmoil that lead to extreme overprotection of his niece, an intense hatred of Rodolpho, and problems within his own marital life. All of these problems stem from Eddie's inability to understand or express his feelings, and eventually they culminate in his death. The play is carefully crafted such that the audience becomes aware of Eddie's feelings for Catherine gradually, initially accepting his protectiveness as natural paternal concern, then growing increasingly uneasy as hints of a deeper inappropriate attraction emerge, until by the conclusion of the first act there is little doubt in the audience's mind that Eddie has found himself consumed by a forbidden desire. The interaction between Eddie and Catherine at the beginning of the play emanates subtle undercurrents of uneasiness- without actually being lovers, they share many moments of mild flirtation and affection beyond the regular levels of intimacy commonly shared between uncle and niece. Catherine fawns over Eddie, " walking him to the armchair," " taking his arm," and lighting his cigar for him, an action that, while perhaps lost on a modern audience, would have a more uncomfortable effect on an audience of the fifties, as in films of this period such a gesture was used to distinctly convey sexual attraction, and, though the audience never sees this, Beatrice's speech reveals that Catherine often walks around in her slip in front of Eddie, or sits talking to

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him while he shaves in his underwear. The stage directions often indicate the obsession that Eddie himself cannot himself express- despite how troubled he is, he " can't help smiling at the sight of her," and whenever Catherine is not present his gaze lowers or turns away. At one point, when Catherine leaves the room, Eddie " stands looking towards the kitchen for a moment," his gaze lingering after her, and he is " pleased, and therefore shy about" the attention that his niece pays to him. These small indications accumulate to establish a realization of the truth in the audience's consciousness, which is then emphasized by the affirmations of both Alfieri and Beatrice, who can also sense what Eddie cannot. Alfieri tries to gently advise Eddie that " every man's got somebody that he loves, but sometimes there's too much...there's too much and it goes where it mustn't," and urges him to relinquish his possessive hold over Catherine. Later, he more blatantly challenges him, " She wants to get married. She can't marry you, can she?" but, rather than absorbing this suggestion, Eddie's frustration explodes into rage, shouting " I don't know what the hell you're talking about!" Similarly, Beatrice's speech often reveals an awareness of Eddie's feelings that he lacks. She warns Catherine to behave appropriately for her age (" You're a grown woman and you're in the same house with a grown man. So you'll act different now, heh?"), suggesting that she is aware of the effect that Catherine's overly affectionate behavior is having on Eddie. She gives a " quiet, sad laugh" as she comments wryly that Catherine should have considered Beatrice's jealousy before. She grows impatient with Eddie, snapping at him " I want you to cut it out now, you hear me? I don't like it!" but Eddie dismisses her coldly, refusing to even contemplate any deeper cause of his feelings. Eddie knows that something in his life is wrong, that there is something distressing

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him and causing him such a confusing spectrum of emotions, yet he cannot decipher the cause of such feelings. As he lacks the ability to reflect insightfully on his emotions and figure out what the problem is, he transfers the real issue to whatever else he can. Initially, his suppressed desire manifests itself in an intense overprotection of Catherine, fretting about the dangers of her new job. He rants about the location being unsafe, snapping “ I don’t like that neighborhood over there,” and warning that “ near the Navy Yard plenty can happen in a block and a half,” concluding that he wants her to be “ with a different kind of people.” While his concern for her safety is surely genuine, Eddie deludes himself that this is the primary cause of his panic. In fact, his desperation is more likely to be stemmed from a desire to keep Catherine within his sight, worried about her slipping away from him, both physically (“ Where’s she going?” and “ Then you’ll move away”) and emotionally (“ Why didn’t you ask me before you take a job?”). Similarly, he grouches about Catherine being “ out on the street twelve o’clock at night” and even resorts to waiting outside for her and Rodolpho to return from the movies, believing his distress at her being out with another man to be merely concern for her safety. The arrival of Rodolpho and Marco instigates a new outlet for Eddie’s projected feelings, and as Catherine grows increasingly “ enthralled” with Rodolpho’s eccentric appearance and exuberant personality, Eddie comes “ more and more to address Marco only.” His initial “ concealed suspicion” of the younger man soon develops into an intense and irrational hatred that Eddie justifies through a range of different accusations and slights on his character. In his first campaign against Rodolpho, he disparages what he perceives to be excessively effeminate qualities, suspicious of his blond hair, slight build and talent for

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singing, cooking and making dresses. " He's like a weird," he scorns, unable to clearly articulate what he means, explaining simply that " the guy ain't right." Secondly, he convinces himself, and tries to convince Catherine, that Rodolpho is " only bowing to his passport," using her to gain the right to be an American. When these verbal attempts fail, Eddie resorts to articulating his feelings through action, attempting to humiliate Rodolpho by " mildly staggering" him in a supposedly playful boxing game and later, in a drunken rage, kissing him to " show [Catherine] what he is." Finally, the " passion that had moved into his body like a stranger" drives Eddie to commit the ultimate betrayal- reporting Marco and Rodolpho to the Immigration. Eddie similarly transfers his frustration onto Beatrice, periodically blaming her for being " mad at [him] lately" and victimizing him, interpreting his own dramatic change in character as a change in Beatrice. " You used to be different...you had a whole different way," he complains, and asserts that he is being continuously attacked by her arbitrary reprimands, claiming " it's a shooting gallery in here and I'm the pigeon." Beatrice's lament " When am I gonna be a wife again?" reveals the extent to which Eddie's desire for Catherine has affected the couple and how estranged from each other they have become. Eddie's physical impotence becomes a symbol for his inherent powerlessness and inability to express what he is feeling. Eddie exacerbates this problem by refusing to search for a deeper cause. Instead he dismisses the issue defensively, initially claiming " I haven't been feeling good since (Marco and Rodolpho) came," then refusing to discuss the matter (" I cant, I cant talk about it...I got nothing to say about it!") and finally declaring that it is his right as a husband to dictate " what I feel like doin in the bed and what I don't feel like doin." Although Beatrice accepts these explanations, Eddie

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continues to project his anger onto her, interpreting his tumultuous feelings as offence due to a lack of respect. “ I want my respect, Beatrice, and you know what I’m talking about,” he commands, and chastises her angrily with “ I don’t like the way you talk to me.” When Beatrice finally confronts Eddie with the truth, screaming “ You want somethin else, and you can never have her!” his reaction is not that of one who has been finally enlightened, but rather “ shocked, horrified, his fists clenching,” and he responds typically with anger: “ That’s what you think of me- that I would have such a thoughts?” Moments later Eddie dies by his own knife, a clear manifestation of his self destruction, but the true tragedy of his demise is that it occurred before he had the chance to work through his feelings, to properly absorb what Beatrice has told him and to at last understand the reasons for his downfall. In Marco’s eyes, justice is restored; he believes it “ dishonorable” for Eddie to live. Alfieri describes the death more aptly as “ useless,” for it came before Eddie had the opportunity to understand himself and his motivations.