

Do you think eddie
carbone is a tragic
hero? essay sample



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'A View from the Bridge' is a modernised version of a Greek tragedy with some similarities. Miller uses the idea in different ways, for instance Ailfieri could be seen as taking on the role of the Greek chorus. Eddie Carbone plays the tragic hero. He begins as a good, honest family man who has 'a lot of credit coming.' Problems begin with the arrival of Marco and his brother Radolpho, who find shelter at Eddie's apartment. They are both illegal immigrants. Tension begins to build up when Radolpho begins to go out with Catherine who is Eddie's niece. At first Eddie's reaction seems innocent as he is being overprotective. Eventually Eddie's fatal flaw, his obsession with Catherine, which he cannot come to terms with or prevent, leads him to commit a crime that is unforgiveable in the eyes of the Sicilian community in which he lives. Eddie is different from other tragic heroes due to his status. Unlike characters such as Macbeth, Eddie holds a low status in society. Miller shows that 'ordinary people' can be tragic heroes too.

This play is based upon the life of Eddie Carbone who is an Italian longshoreman working on the docks of Redhook. Eddie is an initially good character who is described as a good family man, kind to others and hard working, who is respected by his friends and family. 'He was as good a man as he had to be in a life that was hard and even.' He also considered it an honour to let Beatrice's cousins stay at his apartment, when they arrive from Italy even when he knows they are illegal immigrants. 'Suppose my father didn't come this country and I was starvin like them over there ... and I had people in America could keep me a couple of months? The man would be honoured to lend me a place to sleep.'

Eddie has a fatal flaw, a weakness that leads to his destruction, his incestuous sexual feelings for Catherine. However, Eddie does not consciously acknowledge these feelings and is disgusted when Alfieri hints at this. 'She wants to get married, Eddie she can't marry you' can she?'

He commits a serious crime against society and an individual. Eddie is in love with Catherine which is forbidden by society and also has a devastating effect on Catherine herself as an individual. Eddie loves her with a fanatical possessiveness which he does not understand, he wants to keep her as a child and won't let her go. This love turns into an obsession. 'If I take in my hands a little bird. And she grows and wishes to fly. But I will not let her out of my hands because I love her so much, is that right for me to do?' We see the effects of Beatrice's unhappiness and continued efforts to try to make Eddie face up to the reality of the situation.

'The truth is not as bad as blood Eddie. I'm telling you the truth - tell her good bye forever!'

Eddie is in a state of self denial he can't admit his feelings for Catherine even though Beatrice and Alfieri have tried to explain to him. He has the inability to face up to the truth, to the reality of his feelings about Catherine. 'Every man's got somebody that he loves, eh? But sometimes ... there's too much ... and it goes where it mustn't.' Eddie's stage directions emphasise his refusal to face facts, that he has strong feelings for Catherine. His reaction is to be absolutely appalled and very angry. As he never faces up to or even recognises his fatal flaw (love for Catherine) he never makes a conscious decision about his actions until the very end of the play when he phones the

Immigration Bureau. He is carried along by circumstances and reacts to what is happening around him. If Catherine had never fallen in love, had been happy to 'end up an old maid' 'Eddie would never have betrayed anyone and would never have done anything wrong. Nor it is likely that he would have ever got to the point of sleeping with Catherine or have done anything obvious to reveal the sexual aspect of his love for her. His emotions would have remained a hidden yet powerful force in his life.

Events dictate, however, that Eddie cannot escape the flaw in his character. He is lead by fate (all the things that happened over which he has no control; for instance, Catherine and Rodolpho falling in love) to his destiny (death) and his inability to escape what is happening. In Greek tragedy exactly the same thing happens - forces, events coincidences over which the central character has no control; together with the fatal flaw that the tragic end to the hero's life. Eddie is pushed on by emotions he will not name or face up to and so never understands. For his reason his phoning the Immigration Bureau directly contradicts the Vinny Bolzano story he tells Catherine to warn her not to give the immigrants away by mistake. 'The family has no uncle that they were hidin' in the house, and he snitched to the Immigration.'

Eddie never sits down and discusses with himself what course of action he should take or even why he is acting the way he is acting the way he dose, he simply dose things because he is a man and he thinks men should not talk about their feelings. All the major events that are turning points in his life for instance hitting Rodolpho, kissing Catherine and Rodolpho, phoning the Bureau are actions which are a result of an emotional reaction to a

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situation like Rodolpho going out with Catherine, his suspicion that Rodolpho and Catherine have slept together, his desire to get rid of Rodolpho and he is unable to control or rationalise what he does. He acts in a purely instinctive way and does not 'settle for half.'

This portrayal of Eddie as a Greek style tragic hero is further reinforced by the role of Alfieri in the play. Alfieri has two parts to the play. He is a character, a lawyer and also the narrator, a commentator on the action. In the second role he is very like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. The chorus were a group of actors who discussed what was happening in the play but also took part in some of the scenes. It is also significant that Alfieri is the one to grant Marco bail although it is clear that Marco gives his word not to hurt Eddie in a very hesitant, grudging manner. The fact that Alfieri accepts this, suggests that even he is forced to act in a certain way because Eddie's destiny is already fixed, Eddie is being controlled by forces stronger than himself. This is reinforced by the fact that Alfieri, although can see exactly what is going to happen to Eddie, it is powerless to stop it. It is inevitable that is going to happen. 'I could see every step coming, step after step, like a dark figure walking down a hall toward a certain door. I knew where he was heading for, I knew where he was going to end.'

Linked in with this is the importance attached to justice. It is as if fate and justice are one and the same thing. Eddie has broken the social religious and moral law by his feelings for Catherine, which is ultimately a terrible betrayal of trust and abuse of the positive responsibility he assumed when he took her in as an orphan. However, because these feelings developed

unconsciously without deliberate actions or decisions by Eddie, we ultimately

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feel sorry for Eddie. He is indeed a tragic hero and we watch the inevitable conclusion of events with disbelief and sorrow. Just as he has betrayed the position of trust with regard to Catherine, it is inevitable that he will commit the same 'crime' against Rodolpho and Marco. He takes them in, gives them food and shelter and then betrays them to the Immigration Bureau. The first breach of trust inevitably leads to the second and Sicilian justice demands that he pay the price. 'Oh, there were many here who were justly shot by unjust men. Justice is very important here.'

It is evident that Miller portrays Eddie Carbone as a tragic hero in 'A View From the Bridge'. In the conclusion of the play only two people keep their respect for him, his wife Beatrice and Alfieri. 'I confess that sometimes perversely pure calls to me from his memory - not purely good, but himself purely, for he allowed himself to be wholly known and for that I think I love him more than all my sensible clients.' It is brought more to our attention of Eddie being a tragic hero because of the simplicity of his character. Even though he does become vicious, Eddie isn't hypocritical towards other people and he is a man of principles. It is probably his problem of not taking notice of what is happening in his life and also being an open character, you can see his motives for doing something straight away.

'Macbeth'

To what extent is Lady Macbeth responsible for the tragedy?

In the play 'Macbeth' there are many factors that contribute to the tragedy.

It is clear by the conclusion of the play Macbeth is guilty of evil deeds due to his own actions. However, it must be stated that there are two other factors
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which are also held responsible for the tragedy. First of all if he had never met the three Witches he would not have killed Duncan. But he always had the ambition and desire to be king. It is the powerful force of Lady Macbeth's determination in inciting her husband to commit the crime of regicide which is also partly to blame for the tragedy of Macbeth, but Lady Macbeth is not entirely responsible. This is as his actions after Duncan's murder are largely done without consulting Lady Macbeth such as the murder of Banquo.

The character of Lady Macbeth plays a vital role in the play as she encourages her husband to commit regicide. Lady Macbeth plays a major part in the fatal downfall as her powers of persuasion lead to the murder of King Duncan. Lady Macbeth is shown as a very determined person who likes to be in control, as it is clear from the start of the play she has schemed and planned Duncan's murder. Our first impressions of her are a ruthless strong individual that the prophecy will be fulfilled, as she is prepared to do anything so Macbeth can become king.

' Yet do I fear thy nature;

To catch nearest way . Thou wouldst be great,

Art not without ambition.'

Lady Macbeth knows that her husband has ambition, but she has insight into his character and feels he does not have the strength to carry out the murder, but she is confident that she will be able to persuade him into killing Duncan.

In the film version 'Macbeth' by Polanski, Lady Macbeth is portrayed differently from the play. This is as she is shown as a innocent looking blond. She is also very tactile as she touches Macbeth very often, and when she plays the role of the persuader she uses her tears to make him change his mind and to encourage Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth reveals her dark nature by invoking evil spirits to help her. She tells the spirits to give her the strength of men, to take away her femininity and to stop her good spirits.

'Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts!

Unsex me here,

And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full

Of direst cruelty;'

This shows how determined Lady Macbeth is that she will succeed and Macbeth will become king. Macbeth is a claimant that they will not kill Duncan, however she manages to convince him to agree to her plan it is clear in the play, Lady Macbeth has planned King Duncan's murder before persuading Macbeth.

'When Duncan is Asleep.

Where to the rather shall his day's hard journey

Soundly invite him - his two chamberlains

Will I with wine an wassail so convince,'

This demonstrates she is not willing to give up, and is confident that they will succeed and get away with this crime. Lady Macbeth's influence is so great on Macbeth she eventually pressurizes Macbeth into making a decision, when he protests she reacts by undermining and appealing to his manly hood.

' When you durst do it then you were a man;

And, to be more that what you were, you would

Be so much more the man.'

Lady Macbeth starts to make accusations of cowardice, she insults his virility and questions his love for her. Lady Macbeth is manipulative, she implies that if he can change his mind so easily then he may decide that he no longer loves her, his promises are worthless, she breaks down his defences.

' From this time

Such I account thy love.'

She suggest if Macbeth can change his mind so quickly about killing Duncan, what is there to say he has not changed his mind about their love they share for one another. Lady Macbeth uses indirect blackmail. By making him feel ashamed and guilty. When Macbeth wavers to reassure himself, by

explaining the plan, Lady Macbeth has already had it formulated in her mind. It inspires Macbeth with confidence.

‘ Bring forth men children only!

For thy undaunted mettle should compose

Nothing but males.’

Lady Macbeth has a clear strategy that plan, is fool proof, that they will not fail only succeed. After the murder of King Duncan , Lady Macbeth is no longer involved in any of the other murders and has no knowledge of them either. Lady Macbeth though feels guilty due to the murder of Duncan and this subsequently leads her to sleepwalk and insanity.

‘ It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus

washing her hands. I have know her continue in

this a quater of an hour.’

Throughtout the play Lady Macbeth is seen as dominant character, but at the end the murder of King Duncan drives her to commit suicide.

However , although Lady Macbeth is partly responsible, there are other factors which also contribute to the tragedy of Macbeth, such as the role of the Witches and the prophecies. The power of fate and the supernatural has a strong presence within the play opens with the Witches who are planning to meet Macbeth. The Witches know that he is predestined to meet them.

Banquo and Macbeth believe in the power of the prophecy as they do not dismiss it and indeed Banquo asks the the Witches to tell him his future.

‘ If you can look into the seed of time,’

This demonstrates the point, which represents a part of Banquo’s belief and interest in the supernatural. The period in which Macbeth is set in, the audience at the time believed in the power of witchcraft.

Once Lady Macbeth and Macbeth have murdered King Duncan it is seen as a heinous as they are committing a crime against God. In the time ‘ Macbeth’ is set, people believed that the thrown Monarch was chosen by God, this was know as the Divine Right of Kings. Macbeth has gone against God by Commiting regicide. He has upset the sence of the natural order as it is remarked Duncan’s horses ‘ ate each other’, this actknowleges agenral belief in the supernatural. Macbeth’s ambition is instigated by the Witches’ prophecies, as when he first hears their prognosis of his future, he claims that the idea of becoming king ‘ stands not within the propect of belief.’ At this stage Mabeth finds it unbelievable, but there is believe in it as he nor Banquo dismiss it, but instead questions the Witches for futher information. When hearing that he has been given the new title ‘ Thane of Cawdor’ Macbeth begins to consider the truth of the prophecy, that there might be a chance he could become king.

‘ Two truths are told,

As happy prologues to the swelling act

Of the imperial theme.’

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The prophecy triggers Macbeth's thoughts, as it provokes him into surmising whether he could be king. Macbeth begins to wonder about the future, it makes him consider the reality of becoming king that murdering Duncan has seemed so unreal.

' If chance will have me king, why, chance,
may crown me,'

Even at this point he deliberates whether fate will make him king.

Macbeth begins to believe in the power of the witchcraft, whereas Banquo remarks on the whole situation. He considers the Witches to be a sign of evil. Banquo is suspicious, as the Witches have predicted only good deeds and not any bad deeds for both Macbeth and himself, he is wary of them.

After becoming king, Macbeth becomes more dependant on the Witches, as he wants his questions answered and wants reassurance about his future. But he begins to fear about his future after his second visit with the Witches.

Thou hast hap'd my fear aright.'

Despite her influence over her husband. Lady Macbeth is not fully responsible for the tragedy. Macbeth himself also plays a vital role, as it is his ambition which motivates him into murdering Duncan.

At the beginning of the play the ' noble Macbeth' appears to be a loyal, trustworthy subject, as he is brave in battle and therefore is rewarded by Duncan for his efforts.

' O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!'

Macbeth appears not to believe in the prophecy but after hearing it, as one of the prophecies is he shall be ' Thane of Cawdor,'however ' the Thane of Cawdor lives'Macbeth does not know he shall be greeted with the new title ' Thane of Cawdor.' This is ironic as it is shown in act one scene two Macbeth is going to be given a new title. But on hearing the good news he has been titled ' Thane of Cawdor'he begins to believe in the credibility of the prophecy, as he harbours some desire to become king.

(Aside) ' Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor;

The greatest is behind.'

His ambition lays dormant as he begins to deliberate. The prophecy makes him consider whether it could become a reality.

Macbeth has a potential desire for power, which is shown by his reaction when Malcolm is made Prince of Cumberland, seeing him as an rival.

(Aside) ' The Prince of Cumberland, that is a step

On which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap.'

Macbeth sees this as a obstacle which he must tackle , as it comes in between him being crowned king.

Before Macbeth hes spoken with Lady Macbeth, he appears to be a loyal subject by claiming to Duncan that he needs no thanks for his service.

' The service and loyalty I owe,

In doing it, pays it self.'

Macbeth already begins to contemplate his desire to be king but never had the belief it could be possible. It is clear that Macbeth is going to continue to be a loyal subject on the surface, as the audience knows this through his asides, the reality of his feelings. The audience knows that he has the ambition, but he fears they will not succeed as he has ' no spur '. He needs Lady Macbeth ' s reassurance, he admits he has desires, but can't carry out the act, as he has conscience and knows it's wrong.

' He's here in double trust;

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,'

Macbeth knows Duncan is a good king but he still goes ahead with the murder. Even on the night of the murder Macbeth is still unsure, he is in turmoil and is hallucinating.

' Is this a dagger I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee;'

But Macbeth is fully aware of the gravity of the crime, as he feels that he's been cursed.

' Macbeth shall sleep no more!'

He realises he has killed God's annointed one and has done a great sin.

' I am affraid to think what I have done;'

But the audience sees his capacity to be brutal. After killing Duncan, Macbeth becomes dominant and more brutal as he kills all his rivals, such as Banquo. He also dose not depend on Lady Macbeth anymore, as she is on longer involved in any of the other murders and she has no knowledge of them either.

By the end of the play, Macbeth has realised the futility of what he has achieved and is resigned to his fate, that he cannot undo what has happend.

' it is a tale

Told by an idiot, fullof sound and fury, Signifying nothing.'

Overall it can be stated that Lady Macbeth is not held entirely resposible for the tragedy, as she can only take partly blame as she plays the role of the persuader and inspires Macbeth. But after Duncan's murder Macbeth continues to murder others such as Lady Macduff and Banquo who suspects Macbeth of killing Duncan. The Witches are also partly to blame, as they predict the prophecy but Macbeth could have ignored this, but he did not and challenges God and fate to make sure the supernatural happens. Macbeth also had ambition and desires to be king which he cannot prevent. Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the Witches have all taken part in this tragedy as they all have had a important role to play. So, it is only fair to say that each individual is partly to blame for their actions.

WIDER READING

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Compare and contrast the presentation of the male characters in 'The Seduction' and 'Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver.'

The story 'Tony Kytes the Arch Deciever' and the poem 'The Seduction' both portray two male characters, 'Tony Kytes' and 'the boy.' Both characters feature a range of similarities in terms of presentation but also share a great significant contrast in attitudes and relationships towards women. However, both writers decide to structure and set the two pieces in different ways and times. As 'The Seduction,' is presented as a modern 1980's poem set in the urban area of Merseyside. Whereas, 'Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver' is structured in terms of a short story set at the end of the 19th century in the rural area of Wessex.

In 'The Seduction,' the title straight away indicates a negative sense of atmosphere. From the outset of the boy in 'The Seduction,' he is conveyed as being a dark shadowy and scheming figure. This is because throughout the poem he is shown as a negative character and his name is not mentioned as he is referred to as 'the boy.' Throughout the poem he is viewed as a manipulative character who deliberately sets out to take advantage of a young niave girl.

He meets the girl at a party and deliberately gets her drunk, 'he handed her the vodka.' He then takes her to the docks, a quiet lonely place and has sexual intercourse with her. The consequences of this, is that the girl becomes pregnant. From the poem it clearly shows that the boy does not keep any contact with her after the night of the party. The boy is presented in a negative way. The reference to his actions such as smelling paint thinner

and reading magazines shows him to be an opportunist with no feeling or regard for the girl, 'as he muttered, little slag.' The use of the slang word 'little slag' serves to reinforce his cynicism and the fact that he has no respect for her, as he is insulting her by calling her a 'little slag'. There is no meaning in terms of the boy's motives, as it is clear that he is only after one thing from her.

The boy's abuse of the girl lies in the way that he treats her as he has coldly, calculated what is going to happen and his obvious indifference once he has slept with her. The setting for 'The Seduction' even shows the cold and darkness, 'the Mersey green as a septic wound' and this seems to tie in with the overall presentation of the boy. The girl's real belief and trust of the boy evokes a sense of pity and she is shown as the victim in this whole situation. The girl is presented in a sympathetic way as she is miserable and frantic with worry. She feels alone and is missing out on opportunities. 'Where were the glossy photographs of summer, day trips to Blackpool, jumping all the rides?' She also fears she is a young mother, with no job and is trapped in a cycle of poverty. She is unaware she has not much knowledge about sex as this is her first experience. She has a romantic expectation in her mind which has been destroyed, 'full of the glitzy fashion features and stories of romance.' This makes the boy seem more malicious and intentionally cruel.

However, in the story 'Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver,' the male character behaves differently as his attitudes to the women in the story are extremely different. The title gives him a sense of grandeur that is very quickly contradicted by his appearance. Tony Kytes talks himself into trouble with three girls as he persuades two of them separately to hide in the back of this <https://assignbuster.com/do-you-think-eddie-carbone-is-a-tragic-hero-essay-sample/>

waggon to avoid being seen by the others. He allows the third to take control of his horse and wagon, and he watches in disbelief as his horse bolts and the wagon capsizes as the three girls fall onto the road. Tony Kytes is confused he does not know which one to marry. ' Now which would you marry, father, if you was in my place?' He feels obliged to propose marriage to all of them in turn and is rejected (though not without a backward glance by two). Tony Kytes is presented as a well known flirt and is seen as a bit of a rogue.

The contrast between the characters lies in their motives, Tony's intentions are not malicious. In fact he genuinely likes the girls and his dilemma is that he cannot make up his mind which one he wants to marry. Also he appears to be honourable to show his genuine affection for the girls and the fact that he has respect for them as he takes off his hat, whereas the boy in ' The Seduction' does not have any respect for the girl. At the end of the story Tony Kytes is indignant at the suggestion that he slept with the girls and denies it vehemently. ' She's as sound as a bell.' The girls in the story are viewed as being childish in that they engage in and are willing to participate in the flirtation. Unity Sallet and Hannah Jolliver both want Tony Kytes to compliment them and say how pretty they are, and Tony Kytes falls for this and goes along with their idea. At the end of the story the only thing that has been hurt is the girls pride.

The writers attitudes in the poem and story are very different. Thomas Hardy creates a sense of indulgence. He makes us enjoy and laugh at Tony Kytes' predicament, but this is enough punishment. The use of the Wessex dialect gives him a sense of naivete, which has a certain charm. Essentially we <https://assignbuster.com/do-you-think-eddie-carbone-is-a-tragic-hero-essay-sample/>

laugh at all the characters and the ridiculous situation they creat, by doing this the audience does not condemm him. Thomas hardy elevates Tony Kytes' character by calling him ' The Arch Deciever'this gives him a sence of grandeur. This is ironic because Tonys Kytes is silly and very simple. However, Eileen McAuley creates a real loathing for the boy and his behaviour. The reference to the magazines and paint thiner presents a repulsive character totally lacking in charm. She is sympathetic to the girl and her situation. She conveys the fear and hysterie of the girl as she begins to realise the consequences of her actions.

It can be stated that the characters ' Tony Kytes' from the story and ' the boy' from the poem differ in many ways. The contrast between the characters lies in their motives, as Tony Kytes wishes to marry one of the three girls and the fact he has respect for them. However, the boy has calculated the night. He has one motive only which is to have a one night stand with the girl and not a relationship. Tony Kytes has feelings for these girls, whereas the boy has no respect for the girl and after the night of the party he is no longer in the scene.

In the 19th century the period ' Tony Kytes the Arch Deciever' is set, marriage was a big and important part of a persons life. People put up banns before their wedding to show the town that they were getting married. Most weddings were very traditional and alot of money was spent on the wedding. If a woman became pregnant before getting married, she therefore had to marry the father of her child or she would be the talk of the town, as shown in the story when Hannah Jolliver's father says to her ' be you willing,

Hannah? I ask ye to have spirit enough to refuse him, if yer virtue is left to'ee and run no risk?'

A woman remaining chaste was very important to herself and her husband. Most women did not sleep with a man until they were married. However in the time 'The Seduction' is set, marriage is still an important part of a person's life but not as it was in the 19th century. People are not so traditional as they have registry weddings with only close friends and family or sometimes only witnesses. The views for a woman staying a virgin before getting married and getting married to the father of her child has changed. Some couples also live together and have children before deciding the fact they want to get married, or even consider getting married a waste of money as it is only a piece of paper and if they split up more money would be wasted on getting divorced.