

# A view from the bridge essay sample



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A View From The Bridge, written in 1956 by Arthur Miller, is set in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Eddie Carbone is the central character, and it is sordid feelings around which the entire drama of the play is based. His actions and emulous motives provoke arrant sorrow and a betrayal with grave consequences. The character of Eddie Carbone is the driving force of the plot. From the beginning, he displays a certain dismissal of the youngest cousin, Rodolpho, as he is 'coming more and more to address Marco only' (Act I, page 29).

This instant disliking of Rodolpho is unjust, and shows a judgemental side to Eddie; a contrast to the warm, affectionate attitude he exhibits to Catherine, his niece. This personality change propels the plot along here because he becomes more aware of his incestuous feelings and tries to conceal them under a thick duvet of overprotection, thus leading to arguments and tension between the family.

Also at the commencement of the play, Eddie's longing for and compulsive interest in Catherine becomes overt, which impels an uncomfortable ambience to be created amongst the household; this of course has to be solved and confronted, and therefore the plot builds up. From here on, the main way in which Eddie drives the plot along is by his obsession over Catherine's protection. He stops at no abnormal behaviour to try and keep his niece close to him and away from leaving his fortification.

Consequently, he greatly upsets the latter, who, when enduring firm discouragement from marrying her new found love interest, resorts to crying out, 'I don't believe it and I wish to hell you'd stop it!' (Act I, page 42.) She begins to increasingly become partial to the idea of leaving the house with

Rodolpho, contrary to her uncle's wishes, which accumulates his emotions and causes him to spiral out of control and lose respect for everyone around him. Furthermore, he thrusts the plot forward with his language. His speech is very different to that of Alfieri's, for example, as he can boast of little diction skills.

Nevertheless, he is still able to speak in a fiercely unpleasant manner when he wishes, such as when he orders Rodolpho to abscond from the house, post discovering that he has been in the bedroom with Catherine. Following this, Eddie establishes his authority over his niece by rigidly declaring that she 'ain't goin' nowheres' (Act Two, page 64). This power in his inadequate, non-learned vernacular allows him to brusquely speak his mind and confront others without fear, while determining his stubborn, domineering personality, which is the ultimate reason in the end for him betraying the cousins to the Immigration Officers.

Eddie Carbone's role in propelling the structure of the play is not unlike that of voltage in a circuit. He is the source of power, the motion without which the current could not flow. Other characters such as Alfieri are also important to this, in the sense that the lawyer opens and closes the play, as well as acting as the spokesperson of Arthur Miller in quickly drifting along the action, however Eddie's position is slightly more involved with the actual drama itself.

It begins with a brief atmosphere being constructed by Alfieri, who then introduces the protagonist, Eddie Carbone. Following this is the scene in the house, where Eddie, Catherine and Beatrice, the former's wife, discuss the

arrival of the cousins. Eddie commences by commenting on his niece's outfit, saying that she looks 'like one of them girls that went to college' (Act One, page 13). His aberrant affections linger in the air like a pungent odour, and the conversation moves uneasily to Beatrice's excitement at the coming of the relatives she has never before set eyes on.

Eddie then moves the structure along by interfering with Catherine's new relationship with Rodolpho, as he is perceptibly resentful and gradually coming to terms with the knowledge that his niece can never be his. As he begins to accept this realization, the structure becomes clearly laid out in a series of events; Eddie's confrontation of the couple, his betrayal of the family to seek revenge, his refusal to act contrite, and his death. Thus, it is because of him and the methods in which he deals with his awareness that propels the structure of A View From The Bridge.

Eddie Carbone additionally adjusts the relationships of the play as he progressively begins to destruct each alliance he knows. The first friendship he ravages is the one between himself and Catherine. Subconsciously, he reveals his feelings towards her by openly disapproving of her intimacy with his wife's cousin, which alarms her, hauling her out of her comfort zone and the special understanding the two of them share, and into an unfamiliar world in which she has to be careful about how she dresses and acts around him.

The more conscious she becomes of the way he thinks about her, the more she speaks in shorter, sharper sentences, such as, 'Cause I did.' and 'No, I made up my mind.' - clear signs to show that the bond between them is

gradually falling apart; she no longer makes an effort to reason with him. His behaviour also has a significant effect on the relationship between him and his wife. Primarily, in Act I, when the latter offers advice on how to allow Catherine freedom, Eddie visibly rejects this, generating an angry reaction from Beatrice: ' I want you to cut it out now, you hear me? (page 36), and creating friction, as she discovers how his focus is on their niece, not on her.

Eddie confronts his wife's behaviour at a later point, asking her the reasons for her rage and it appears he is attempting to put the entire blame on her. However, Beatrice rejects his accusations, and instead implies she is concerned for his sanity, using the word ' mad' three times. This demonstrates the growing complexity of their relationship; that although it is struggling, underneath there is still care and love. Conversely, Eddie always harbours the desire to be in command.

When he and Beatrice are involved in a heated conversation regarding Catherine and the cousins, he shrieks that he wants ' his respect' (Act Two, page 68), and then demeanours her and puts forward his idea that he is the one with the authority, by telling her he doesn't like the way she talks to him. This is affecting their relationship as Eddie is demonstrating in an unmistakable manner that he is not interested in her anymore. This is upsetting for the viewer, as there is nothing Beatrice can do to rectify the situation. Lastly the central character in the play propels forward the themes.

An important one which Arthur Miller introduces is manliness, and this is mainly portrayed with the behaviour of Rodolpho greatly perturbing Eddie.

With the former's blonde hair and singing skills, Eddie calls into question his suitability for Catherine; whether this being simply an excuse or not, as Beatrice suggests, it is patent that Eddie does not approve, and entitles him 'Paper Doll', 'a weird' and 'Canary' (Act One, page 35). A further way in which the theme of manliness is analyzed is through the arrival of the cousins.

Whereas his wife displays hospitality and affection, Eddie is reluctant to exhibit his emotions, as he does not feel it would be masculine to do so. He also makes other characters feel uncomfortable and intimidated with the insulting remarks he makes. Nevertheless, it is difficult to discern Eddie's beliefs about masculinity, as in Act Two, page 69, he firmly declares to Beatrice that he isn't concerned about allowing her to carry out her wifely duties, as he says, 'I do what I feel like doin' or what I don't feel like doin'.

Therefore, this theme is propelled by Eddie as he meets restrictions, becomes troubled at the thought of dealing with them (such as when he finalizes that he 'don't want no more conversations about that'), and is consequently a very complicated character, which potentially is the reason for the disloyalty he performs at the end. Another theme explored by Miller which Eddie sets in motion is loyalty verses betrayal.

In the early stages of the play, Eddie is seen warning Catherine how she must never inform on the cousins to anyone, and recounts a case in which someone did betray their family, with horror. 'How's he gonna show his face?' (Act One, page 24), he asks her with disdain. This automatically creates a subtle curiosity as to Eddie's evident strong beliefs for loyalty, and

thrusts forward this theme as something the viewer is intrigued to learn more about.

And so, they do, and it is with great irony that Eddie's ending action is to deceive the cousins with bitter jealousy and craze from his irrepressible yearnings, thus resulting in his dismissal from the community, and finally, death. Therefore, it can be concluded that the main character, Eddie Carbone, is without doubt the driving force of all the essential factors in A View From The Bridge, without whom it would have little to encourage its flow at all.