A View From The Bridge: The Portrait Of Eddie Carbone

A View from The Bridge is a modern drama play written by Arthur Miller and is based in the ’50s. The play is set in Red-Hook, the American Italian neighborhood. In this play, Eddie Carbone was portrayed by Miller as a tragic hero. This was surrounded by the demise of Eddie throughout the play. Miller created Eddie to make us consider these types of people as bad, but some of us really wanted Eddie to change throughout the play but he never does and in fact, he calls the immigration bureau on Marco and Rodolfo. Arthur Miller showed us Eddies obsession with his niece Catherine and that Eddie was afraid that Marco gains all the power and control. Miller threw his exposition of Eddie’s hamartia (fatal flaw which is his obsession with Catherine) this leads the audience to reflect on the fallibility of man. Eddie’s death is his own fault as he was stabbed by his own knife trying to stab Marco. The biggest conflict is between Eddie and himself.

Arthur Miller portrayed Eddie as someone valiantly striving towards the American dream, and we respect him for that. He is just an average guy and what Miller is doing is showing us you don’t have to be a king to be a tragic hero. The reason that Eddie is considered a tragic hero is that he allowed Catherine to move in with him followed by Beatrice’s cousins Marco and Rodolfo. He also managed to become an American citizen and was not afraid to leave his country Italy and head off to America hoping to have a better life there, without a lot of money and without any help. At the beginning of the play, Eddie is portrayed as a hard worker and dedicated individual when says “he got a job as a longshoreman and worked his but off on those docks”. Eddie then tells Alfieri (the play’s Chorus): “In the worst times, I didn’t stand around looking for …I hustled”. This leads the audience to believe that Eddie was in fact a dedicated citizen who really did work hard and cared for his job. These are all the qualities of an ambitious man in search of the American dream. This is once again portrayed when Louis asked “you workin’ tomorrow?” Eddie then replied, “yeah, there’s another day yet on that ship.” This shows us that Eddie is a humble person who tries his best to get the job done. This sets him up as a heroic common man and adheres to Miller’s efforts to convey the themes set out by the convention of Greek tragedy. Miller further utilizes Greek tragedy convention through Eddie’s hamartia, which is his downfall. His hamartia is his incestuous feeling for his niece Catherine.

Despite Eddie’s good characteristics, Miller wanted to show Eddie’s downfall. At the start of the play, Eddie is over-protective and is unable to let Catherine live her life the way she wishes. It already seems he has more than normal feelings towards his niece. This is evident by “Listen, you been givin’ me the willies the way you walk down the street, I mean it.” This shows us that Eddie does in fact have jealous, taboo-Esque incestuous feelings towards Catherine. It is the nature of such a taboo to be denied and this denial fuels his inner conflict. Another reason we know that Eddie has incestuous feelings towards her is that Beatrice even told Eddie “You want somethin’ else, Eddie, and you can never have her!” showing us that Eddie is chasing Catherine all of the time and that he needs to stop - even his wife is aware of it but it seems his fate is sealed. When Eddie finally realizes that he can’t have Catherine he does something that is despised by all Italians; because of the closeness of Rodolfo and Catherine, he snitches to the police that Marco and Rodolfo are immigrants and that they need to deport them. As soon as the immigration bureau knocks on the door Eddie gets second thoughts and hides the

cousins to protect them revealing his ongoing inner conflict and his indecisive decision-making capabilities. Later, Eddie even kisses her in public showing that his feelings are starting to take control, and again, his fate is set on a path, reflected in his eyes which were labeled by Alfieri as: “dark tunnels.” This imagery is another of Miller’s hints at the destiny of Eddie’s demise.

The cousins act as a catalyst for the drama when they arrive. They spark a flame between the whole family. Eddie’s true personality comes to show when he attempts to be virtuous but does not succeed. This happens when the cousins arrive at the beginning and Eddie really does welcome them with a fresh cup of coffee, but later on, Rodolfo starts singing then Eddie tells him to stop; meanwhile, Catherine loves it and tells him to continue. This sparks the flame of jealousy Between Eddie and Rodolfo. Eddie realizes that Catherine likes Rodolfo, But Eddie does not want that due to the incestuous feelings he has towards Catherine. Due to Eddie’s hubris, his downfall began. He contacted the Immigration bureau on Marco and Rodolfo which lead him to his major denouement. This single phone call made Eddie lose all his pride. Eddie’s downfall rapidly increases during the fight as Rodolfo intimidates Him. This fight scene reveals that Eddie really is trying to solve the issue of Masculinity, honor, and pride But has been struggling since Marco and Rodolfo came, this is causing even more tension between this family. One by one Eddie started losing all of his Respect, Pride, and Honor. The cousins cause Eddie’s downfall which was in his hands as he was the one who allowed them to move in from the first place. This shows us that kindness does not always lead you to something good.

When Marco and Eddie fight, themes of masculinity and justice are prevalent. I think Miller is trying to show that Eddie is trying to earn back his alpha male status and masculinity. This is evident when Eddie says “come on, kid, put sump’m behind it, you can’t hurt me.” This shows us that Eddie is trying to be muscular. The final scene is the play's denouement, when Eddie dies with his own knife this reveals that Eddie’s death was actually his own mistake and he was always the one acting violently. What Marco did was self-defense otherwise Eddie would have re-attempted to stab him with a knife. We instantly know that Eddie regrets his violent actions by the last sentence that Eddie says before dying ‘My B..!’ then he dies in her arms. This shows us that Beatrice still loves Eddie and Eddie loves her with regret to his previous actions. Eddie’s death could not have been stopped by anyone but Eddie himself. Even Alfieri – a lawyer- said that there was nothing he could do to stop it. Many of Eddie’s mistakes are probably normal everyday mistakes that people make so maybe what Miller is trying to teach us that we should be more aware of our surroundings and things that are going on with the people around us.

Eddie Carbone is an Italian longshoreman working on the New York docks. When his wife’s cousins, Marco and Rodolfo, seek refuge as illegal immigrants from Sicily, Eddie agrees to shelter them. The trouble begins when his wife’s niece is attracted to Rodolfo. Eddie raised her and is not ready to let her go. Eddie’s jealousy culminates in an unforgivable crime against his family and the Sicilian community. Throughout the play, Eddie’s feelings for Catherine get the better of him and eventually resulting in his death. Eddie was unable to control his jealousy and pride over Catherine. Arthur Miller could be trying to tell us that we should think twice before we act as actions could have severe consequences just like Eddie’s scenario. He is also telling us it is sometimes better to let go even if it Is against your will. Eddie’s death was really unexpected and tragic which is a good way of teaching the audience that things could happen anytime, anywhere, anyway.