

A View From A Bridge Outline

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A View from the Bridge

Arthur Miller first heard the story of a Brooklyn longshoreman that would become the basis for his play, *A View from the Bridge* in 1947. He would not write it until 1955, when it was produced on Broadway as a simple, unadorned one-act. Miller would then develop and expand it into a full-length production with director Peter Brook in London in 1956. The incubation period of *A View from the Bridge*, spanning from 1947 to 1956, straddles and absorbs a host of major events both on the national landscape and in Miller's own life. In his autobiography, *Timebends: A Life*, Arthur Miller defines the trajectory of this turbulent chapter of his life that began with his curiosity in a new longshoremen's movement trying to clean up the corruption on the Brooklyn waterfront:

Out of it would come a movie script (never to be produced); a play, *A View from the Bridge*; and a trip to Hollywood, where I would meet an unknown young actress, Marilyn Monroe, and at the same time come into direct collision with the subterranean machine that enforced political blacklisting and the ideological disciplining of film writers, actors, and directors (149).

Miller's distillation of that period provides a convenient outline or a bounding set of markers guiding the search through the historical context of *A View from the Bridge*, as well as the personal and cultural influences at work on him. But before examining the details of Miller's life, we should zoom out to a larger view of this period and the currents leading into the 1950's to root our understanding in a broader context.

The economic depression of the 1930's had a profound effect on Miller as he has intimated in his autobiography, but not solely for the pain of watching his family and community suffer. Growing up in the Depression meant a time "when it had been all but impossible to think of one's fate apart from that of society" (Timebends 363). This is a belief that would stick with

Miller and so many other working class men and women because it was linked to their survival. Through a series of economic depressions – 1870s, 1890s, and now the 1930s – the disenfranchised working class had latched onto the ideas of Marx, socialism, anarchism, and labor unions, all pointing toward solidarity and their collective power. Of course, the historic cycle is that such ideas would soon be squashed or watered-down and fed back to the public in an impotent form. There is some argument that FDR used the latter principle in his New Deal legislative reform policies. It was a principle that had been effective in Teddy Roosevelt's progressive movement earlier in the century. If that is the case, it is a bit unclear whether or not the reinforcing spirit of the New Deal policies on working class beliefs was a good thing. By the 1950's, the working class would be made to feel ashamed, afraid and guilty for their communist, socialist or even leftist tendencies. Indeed, anti-Soviet propaganda was only taking a hiatus during the New Deal and WWII, when it was necessary to mobilize the people against the Axis powers. Anti-Soviet propaganda always made good economic sense to the elite class ever since they discovered the benefits of U.S. expansionism.

In the 1890s, the technological advances that created such huge increases in production capabilities led to growing rumblings for foreign markets. Not all were suggesting aggression or conquest, but the businessmen of the day were not opposed to such avenues if they could be disguised as a more benevolent venture. Expansionist policies or even war could have a very strong appeal “if the expansion looked like an act of generosity – as in Cuba” (Zinn 301). The Spanish-American War was sold to the people as liberating Cuban rebels fighting for their freedom from Spanish conquerors. Ultimately, the U.S. became the conquerors - economic conquerors in Cuba, and outright annexations of Puerto Rico, the Hawaiian Islands, Guam and the Philippines. A highly effective formula had been developed. Distract the labor unions and slow the social movements by appealing to the people's sense of solidarity with the Cuban rebels struggling for their freedom and rally everyone around a war production effort. Meanwhile, the

business elite, the Robber Barons of America, expanded their foreign markets and enjoyed the boom of a wartime economy. This formula was so lucrative that the partnership of business and government solidified. The formula became a repeating pattern in the 20th century. It was used in WWI, WWII and then transformed into a kind of perpetual suspended animation called the Cold War.

The stock market crash of 1929 came directly from the wild speculation on the future value of stocks. This was compounded by the fact that many investors had bought stock with borrowed money. Howard Zinn references John Galbraith's study of the "fundamentally unsound" economy leading into the 1930s: "[Galbraith] points to very unhealthy corporate and banking structures, an unsound foreign trade, much economic misfortune, and the 'bad distribution of income' (the highest 5 percent of the population received about one-third of all personal income)" (386). Many businesses closed and over five thousand banks closed. The businesses that survived laid off employees and cut the wages of the remaining employees. Henry Ford blamed the crisis on laziness of the average worker just before he laid off 75,000 workers. Those responsible for organizing the economy did not understand what had happened, and they all "refused to recognize it, and found reasons other than the failure of the system" (Zinn 387). When angry veterans of the First World War marched on Washington in 1932 to demand that Congress pay off their government bonus certificates so they could buy food for their families, Hoover greeted them with tear gas and set fire to their huts. This government's inaction and even hostility was in stark contrast to FDR's future program of reform legislation. But did the New Deal offer much more than encouragement? There are compelling arguments on either side, both pulling evidence from very different places. If we look at the numbers, the New Deal had only reduced unemployment from 13 million to 9 million. Howard Zinn points out that it was "the war that put almost everyone to work, and the war did something else: patriotism, the push for unity of all classes against enemies overseas, made it harder to mobilize anger against

the corporations” (402). Once again, we have a recognizable pattern. The purpose of the war was sold as defending against aggression, which it indeed appeared to be as Nazi Germany invaded neighboring countries. But none of the following examples of aggression provoked our entrance: Hitler’s attack on the Jews, invasion of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Italy’s attack on Ethiopia, or Japan’s earlier attack on China. It was instead the “Japanese attack on a link in the American Pacific Empire that did it” (Zinn 410).

War profiteering was a major element in Miller’s 1947 play, *All My Sons*. Joe Keller sells defective parts to the military, risking the lives of GI’s, in order to save his business. Keller’s self-justification is saving the future of his family. During the war, the government and big business were already making plans for a new international economic order in the postwar world. One State Department official said, “As you know, we’ve got to plan on enormously increased production in this country after the war, and the American domestic market can’t absorb all that production indefinitely. There won’t be any question about our needing greatly increased foreign markets” (Zinn 413). England and the United States had already set up the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Both institutions touted many purposes, but essentially were for promoting foreign investment – in their favor, of course (Zinn 414). After the war, the U.S. only had one real competitor amongst the victors. England and France were too weak, but the Soviet Union presented a real economic rivalry.

Both these countries now went to work – without swastikas, goose-stepping, or officially declared racism, but under the cover of ‘socialism’ on one side, and ‘democracy’ on the other, to carve out their own empires of influence. They proceeded to share and contest with another the domination of the world, to build military machines far greater than the Fascist countries had built, to control the destinies of more countries than Hitler, Mussolini, and Japan had been able to do. They also acted to control their own populations, each country with its own techniques – crude in the Soviet Union, sophisticated in the United States – to make their rule secure (Zinn 424-425).

The pattern would now reemerge, but with a new and interesting twist.

The propaganda shift had to be swift from anti-Nazi to anti-Soviet. Miller describes the dizzying effect this shift had in his essay, *The Crucible in History*: “Only three or four years earlier an American movie audience, on seeing a newsreel of...a Russian soldier or even Stalin saluting the Red Army, would have applauded . . . now they would have looked on with fear or at least bewilderment, for the Russians had become the enemy of mankind, a menace of all that was good” (277). The rush was on, but not only to beat out Russia in foreign markets, but to justify a continually high military budget. The president of General Electric, a corporation that had profited immensely from the wartime economy, suggested a “permanent war economy” through an alliance between military and business (Zinn 425). A war-weary population was thrust into a new crisis. The rivalry between the U.S. and Soviet Union was real, but the Truman administration painted the Soviet Union as an imminent threat. The rhetoric was put in place with the Truman Doctrine, pitting democracy against communism as nothing less than the struggle between good and evil. Evidence was gathered and spun through the propaganda machine. Revolutionary movements of all kinds in Europe and Asia were presented as examples of Soviet expansionism with language recalling the descriptions of Hitler’s aggression. But Truman really set the wheels in motion for a new level of anti-communist hysteria when he issued Executive Order 9835 in March of 1947, which initiated a program to search out any “infiltration of disloyal persons” in the U.S. government (Zinn 429). Of the millions that were investigated, not one single case of espionage was uncovered. Douglas Miller and Marion Nowack point out in their book, *The Fifties: the way we really were*:

Despite the failure to find subversion, the broad scope of the official Red hunt gave popular credence to the notion that the government was riddled with spies. A conservative and fearful reaction coursed the country. Americans became convinced of the need for absolute security and the preservation of the established order (222).

The movement of North Korean armies across the 38th parallel in June of 1950 was the rallying point which created a liberal-conservative consensus on a new direction in foreign policy.

Newspaper editorials, magazine articles, comic strip heroes like Captain America, and Hollywood films like *I Married a Communist*, were all lending a hand. Hollywood made over forty anti-communist films between 1948 and 1954. And all across the nation, children practiced air raid drills as preparation for a possible Soviet attack on America. The atmosphere was ripe for Senator Joseph McCarthy to make a name for himself by escalating the Red hunt to the point of absurdity. The House Un-American Activities Committee had been created back in 1938 but it lacked steam in those days. As Miller surmises, that steam was guilt. In the face of the heightened propaganda coupled with real events, like the blockade of Berlin and the Communist victory in China, shame and guilt over former Marxist beliefs arose. Miller believes that the 1950s Red-hunt never could have reached the frenzy that it did without this element:

Once it was conceded that absolutely any idea remotely similar to a Marxist position was not only politically but morally illicit, the liberal, with his customary adaptations of Marxist theory and attitudes, was effectively paralyzed. The former Communist was guilty because he had in fact believed the Soviets were developing the system of the future, without human exploitation and irrational waste. Even his naiveté in seeing Russia not as an earthly empire but rather as a kind of spiritual condition was now a source of guilt and shame (Timebends 341).

When the capitalist system had failed in the 1930s, many Americans had looked to the left. Now to secure the future of capitalism and support the growing American Empire, the left had to be attacked and pushed back. McCarthy even went so far as to label the Roosevelt and Truman administrations as “twenty years of treason” (Night 191). Of course, he crossed the line when he began to abuse an army general in his hearings. But even when he was censured, criticism of his anti-communist lies and exaggerations were avoided. At the time of his censure, “Congress was putting through a whole series of anti-communist bills” (Zinn 431). Clearly, the government that eventually disapproved of his method still understood his ultimate usefulness.

The fact that the Communist Party in the United States was the smallest of its kind in the world (less than 100,000), adds to the absurdity of McCarthy claims. But the Communist Party was still an important target because they were an influential force in the trade unions and in the

arts (Zinn 428). In the new anti-communist climate, the fight between big business and labor unions was translated into a fight between the U.S. Government and Communism – again, serving to secure capitalism. McCarthyism and its “blanket of suspicion was really smothering any discussion at all” in the press and injected caution into the artist (Timebends 312). Miller describes in his essay, *The Night Ed Murrow Struck Back*, a climate where “people were learning to keep a politic silence toward idiocies that a few short years before they’d have derided or laughed at” (195). In any state where McCarthyism reigns, the message being sent is “always warning artists – who, after all, are the eyes and voices of the society – that their souls ultimately belong to Daddy” (Night 195). One of the bitter ironies of the HUAC hearings is that “by the early 1950s there were few, and even fewer in the arts, who had not left behind their illusions about the Soviets” (Timebends 331). So many of the artists called before the committee had to choose between naming their friends and associates or defending with their silence a set of beliefs they no longer held.

While McCarthyism reigned in America, much of postwar Italy struggled for survival. Perhaps the most vivid and affecting records we have of the degradation and dehumanization suffered in postwar Italy are the films of the Italian neorealist movement. Cesare Zavattini and Vittorio De Sica defined the principles of the neorealist movement: “...to write fictions about the human side of representative social, political, and economic conditions; to shoot on location whenever possible; to use untrained actors...to capture and reflect reality with little or no compromise” (Kawin 342). Miller even references one of De Sica’s most popular films in an effort to communicate the desperate circumstances he witnessed while visiting Italy:

There was a so-called Ring around Rome where thousands of homeless families were living in lightless caves dug into precipices and hillsides. We climbed up and sat with them, skin-and-bones people living in their own filth, lugging pails of water up from hydrants far down below in the streets...This was the Rome of *Bicycle Thief* (Timebends 162).

Sicily was seized and occupied by Allied powers for thirty-eight days in 1943, almost two years before the rest of mainland Italy would finally be surrendered by the Germans. Sicilians hated Mussolini. Sicily had nothing to gain from the war despite its many material and human contributions, and “at its end, all it had was the names of the thousands of its sons who had lost their lives for the greater glory of a country that still treated it as an unwelcome appendage” (Privitera 129). In the last stages of the war, Sicily had Canadian, British and American forces battling German forces on their soil, causing great physical destruction, especially in the cities of Palermo and Messina. Several villages were obliterated and major damage to power supplies crippled postwar Sicily in their efforts to industrialize. American forces brought food and drugs for malaria, which had plagued the Sicilian countryside. But it also seems that the Allies brought back the mafia to Sicily to aid in the capture of the island and to keep control while Allied forces fought on the mainland. Denis Mack Smith confirms in *A History of Sicily* that “certainly there were very close relations between gangsters in America and Sicily, and mafia help would have been very useful for obtaining information (526). Vito Genovese, a known Sicilian-American criminal, was an official liaison used by the American unit, despite the fact that he was wanted in the U.S. for murder and other crimes, and he had served fascism in Italy. Genovese was able to use his “position and kinship with the local mafia to help restore their authority and so undo some of the little good that Mussolini had ever done” (Smith 527). Mafia networks now filled in the thousands of jobs left vacant by fascist officials. So, essentially the Allies reinstated a class of political bosses that quickly entrenched themselves and resorted to the old practices of banditry and terrorism. The landless laborers who formed most of the population were again at the will of the mafia, which now controlled both land and labor.

Miller makes the connection in his autobiography that “the hiring system on the Brooklyn and Manhattan waterfronts had been imported from the Sicilian countryside” (Timebends 147). The job-seeking peasants of Sicily and the longshoremen of Red Hook were to play out the same

humiliating role under their respective hiring bosses. Perhaps that is why so many Sicilians working on the waterfront continued to accept this dehumanizing hiring tradition in the New World while a young Miller looked on with outrage. Their long history in Sicily of living with the mafia since the 16th century burned into their bones that resistance is a completely futile idea. Certainly, when Miller first entered the world of the waterfront, the Red Hook longshoreman had a compelling example of what happens to those who resist. The question “Dove [where is] Pete Panto?” covered the walls and sidewalks down near the piers. This haunting question confirmed the presence of a “sinister waterfront world of gangster-ridden unions, assassinations, beatings, bodies thrown into the lovely bay at night” (Timebends 146). Pete Panto was a longshoreman who tried to lead a revolt against the leadership of the International Longshoreman’s Association (ILA), namely the President Joseph Ryan and his mafia colleagues. Panto and his resistance movement disappeared one evening when he was lured from his home by a mysterious phone call. Panto became a hero for Miller and his story would eventually be the spark for his never produced screenplay, *The Hook*. Vincent James Longhi (Vinny) and Mitch Berenson had both worked with Pete Panto and were now trying to continue his anti-Ryan movement. They contacted and solicited help from Miller when they discovered his interest. Longhi and Berenson guided him through the waterfront world, outlining the rackets and the structured series of kickbacks that transformed Red Hook into “an isolated village ruled by a feudal lord” (Timebends 149).

Longhi and Berenson would also be Miller’s guides in Italy. During Miller’s tour through the cities of Palermo and Calabria, where many waterfront Sicilians come from, he discovered the key cultural connections between old world Sicily and new world Red Hook. Miller had jumped at the chance to go to Italy for research on his screenplay, but what he didn’t know at the time was that his observations would fill in the details of Longhi’s story of a waterfront man, which would ultimately be told in *A View from the Bridge*. Beyond the more obvious similarities

between Sicilian and Red Hook culture, Miller observed some subtle but significant cultural departures between the two communities. He described a growing alienation of the individual as they settled into life in America because “the difference between America and Europe was that Europe was full of relatives and in America the pull of the blood connection was gone” (Timebends 164). Donna Gabaccia echoes this phenomenon in her book entitled, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street*: “...many immigrant families expressed not satisfaction but considerable dissatisfaction with their family life. Some even claimed that America destroyed the family...Children’s individualism...undermined the economic solidarity of the nuclear family” (100-101). Elizabeth Street had started off as a fairly faithful transplant of communal family ideals from the agrotowns of Sicily, but as the children discovered in schools and through American popular culture their rights as individuals, this family tie and support system deteriorated. This phenomenon escalated with the later migration to boroughs like Brooklyn. Gabaccia writes: “The newly forming neighborhoods of New York’s outlying boroughs were even more fragmented than were areas of first settlement. The peers, kin and nonkin, scattered; their contacts became visits rather than everyday interaction” (108). The familial blood ties were being lost, much to the despair of immigrant parents. Miller expresses several times in his autobiography a similar kind of despair over such a loss:

The much celebrated “end of ideology,” which some influential ex-Marxists were elaborating, seemed to me to dissolve the very notion of human destiny. At bottom, people were to be left to their loneliness, each to himself and for himself, and this compounded the sadness of life, although it might liberate some to strike out on their own and make more money (355).

Much like those first immigrant parents whose children discovered their freedom as individual wage-earners, Miller did not find this liberation of the individual a fair compensation for the ensuing loneliness.

Elia Kazan, who had directed the first production of Miller’s *All My Sons*, saw potential in Miller’s waterfront script, *The Hook*. Kazan agreed to direct the film and help Miller sell it to

a studio. So, in 1950, Kazan and Miller departed for Hollywood where they would “meet head-on the new American beast that was one part film studio, one part Cold Warfare, and one part mobsters masquerading as patriots” (Wertheim 102). After selling the script to Columbia Pictures, they were in for a surprise when studio head Harry Cohn informed them that he needed to run the script by a union official and the FBI:

Cohn wanted some changes; if I agreed, the film would be doable, he said. The main one was that the bad guys in the story, the union crooks and their gangster protectors, should be Communists...Roy Brewer, the head of all the Hollywood unions had been brought into the matter – by the FBI, presumably; he had read the script and said flatly that it was all a lie, that he was a personal friend of Joe Ryan, head of the International Longshoreman’s Association, and that none of the practices I described took place on the piers. Finally, he informed Cohn that if the film was made he would pull all the projectionists across the country out on strike so that it could never be shown. The FBI, moreover, regarded it as a very dangerous story that might cause big trouble on the nation’s waterfronts at a time when the Korean War was demanding an uninterrupted flow of men and material. (Timebends 308).

Essentially, without the changes equating the crooks with Communists, they were saying, “the movie would be an anti-American act close to treason” (Timebends 308). Miller found their requests idiotic and completely counter to his experiences on the waterfront, so he shortly sent word that he would be unable to meet their demands and withdrew the script. He received an ominous message by telegram the next day: “ITS INTERESTING HOW THE MINUTE WE TRY TO MAKE THE SCRIPT PRO-AMERICAN YOU PULL OUT. HARRY COHN.” (Timebends 308). But it seems Kazan was not so willing to burn his bridges in Hollywood. In his autobiography, *A Life*, Kazan tells how he decided to come clean to Harry Cohn about his past with the Communist party and quickly received assurance that he would work with the studio in the future. Kazan had adapted to this corrupt Hollywood environment in order to survive, while Miller attacked this dangerous political environment with his play, *The Crucible*.

In April of 1952, Kazan was called before HUAC. Kazan had brief affiliations with the Communist party almost fifteen years prior and had long since abandoned any kind of political life. Certain studio executives had made it clear that he would never direct another film unless he

satisfied the Committee. To avoid being cut down in the prime of his career, Kazan decided to comply with the Committee and name names. Miller was not called before HUAC until 1956, but would refuse to cooperate in naming any colleagues, for which he was convicted of contempt of Congress. The U.S. Court of Appeals would later overturn this in 1958. Kazan went onto a successful career in Hollywood. Two years after his testimony, *On the Waterfront*, a script with heavy debts to Miller's *The Hook*, swept the Oscars with eight awards, including best director. Kazan and screenwriter Budd Schulberg, who had also named names, made a film about an informer-hero. Both had been severely criticized and ostracized by their community and they now quite clearly voiced their anger and self-justification through this film, while endorsing some Cold War politics. Kazan later wrote in his autobiography, "When Brando, at the end, yells at Lee Cobb, the mob boss, 'I'm glad what I done – you hear me? – glad what I done!' that was me saying with identical heat that I was glad I testified as I had...*On the Waterfront* was my own story; every day I worked on that film, I was telling the world where I stood" (489).

Albert Wertheim makes a compelling argument in his essay, *A View from the Bridge*, that "to see *A View from the Bridge* in the context of its time and in the context of *The Hook* and *On the Waterfront*, is to see Miller's profound and admirable ability to understand the mixed motives of his friends who named names" (113). Indeed, when Miller first heard the story of Eddie Carbone's prototype, he describes the feeling of knowing "its ending a few minutes after the teller had begun to speak" (Introduction 379). Such prescience seems to suggest an instant empathy and thorough understanding of the main character's motives and point of view. Miller caught hold of the inevitability of Eddie's actions, but still never lost sight of the magnitude of Eddie's betrayal. Again, Wertheim relates this theme to historical context: "The moving, sympathetic portrait of Eddie Carbone allows Miller to acknowledge and to make his audience understand that those who named names at the HUAC hearings were men like Kazan whose actions stemmed from a constellation of motives, some conscionable, some damnable" (113).

But there is something too perfect, too easy about Wertheim's conclusions. If Arthur Miller did indeed "work out" his ill feelings towards Elia Kazan and finally came to understand the point of view of "the rat" through the story of Eddie Carbone, then this suggests that in the period of 1952 to 1955, before he had written *A View from the Bridge*, he must have had a measure of animosity towards Kazan. Certainly his feelings were complicated, but Miller's account of Kazan revealing his intentions to comply with the Committee show a tremendous understanding already:

I found my anger rising, not against him, whom I loved like a brother, but against the Committee...It would be easy, I thought as he spoke, for those with less talent to sneer at this, but I believed he was a genius...where actors and scripts were concerned a seer who worked along an entirely different trajectory than other directors. To be barred from his métier, kicked into the street would be for him like a nightmarish overturning of the earth itself (332-333).

At the end of Kazan's confession Miller describes "a silence rising around me, an impeding and invisible wash of dulled vibrations between us, like an endless moaning musical note through which we could not hear or speak anymore. It was sadness, purely mournful, deadening" (334). This is what Wertheim had missed. Wertheim's conclusions are ignoring an important theme in both the play and the surrounding historical context: loss of community, fear of alienation, disconnection. We see these themes echoed in the culture shift from Sicily to America, the loss of blood ties. Eddie's actions don't violate the codified laws of the New World, but for Marco it is an unfathomable betrayal of the communal-familial laws of the Old World. Marco says to Alfieri: "In my country he would be dead now...All the law is not in a book...He degraded my brother. My blood. He robbed my children, he mocks my work...Where is the law for that?" Earlier in the play, Eddie is seen making a similar appeal to Alfieri for some law that might keep him from losing Catherine. Alfieri, a Sicilian-American lawyer, is the bridge between these two worlds, and Miller has chosen him as our guide – our view from the bridge. Miller is also interested in the communal experience within the theatre. In the period between *The Crucible*

and *A View from the Bridge*, Miller's view of Greek tragedies had changed: "They must have had their therapeutic effect by raising to conscious awareness the clan's capacity for brutal and unredeemed violence so that it could be sublimated and contained by new institutions, like the law Athena brings to tame the primordial, chainlike vendetta" (Timebends 342). We, as the audience, join the on-looking neighbors in the waterfront community and share their shock, horror, pity, and dumb silence. Alfieri steps forward to speak for us all: "Most of the time now we settle for half and I like it better."

The shortfalls in Wertheim's argument became apparent after wrestling with a few elements of the Zeder analysis¹ that did not reconcile. At first view, Eddie's internal conflict seemed straightforward and obvious. Eddie's conscious objective or desire is to protect Catherine, to keep her safe from the threatening or unworthy elements in their world. Unconsciously, he desires to possess Catherine as his own, as a lover or wife. Soon after Rodolpho arrives, Eddie's fear of being replaced as the man in Catherine's life quickly surfaces. This internal conflict is most clearly illustrated in Eddie's first meeting with Alfieri. Eddie desperately needs an ally, if not in the law books, in Alfieri himself. Alfieri spies the problem: "...every man's got somebody that he loves...But sometimes...it goes where it mustn't...sometimes...there is too much love for the daughter, there is too much love for the niece." Eddie sardonically replies, "What do you mean, I shouldn't look out for her good?" Eddie cannot comprehend Alfieri's advice and he cannot see his own subterranean desires. This internal conflict in Eddie is clearly accurate from the overwhelming textual support within the play, but like Wertheim's thesis it lacks the necessary scope. Later in the analysis, the need for a broader language for this internal conflict becomes evident.

As the action of the play opens, Catherine is the first to greet Eddie as he comes home. She immediately shows off her new dress, looking for his approval. Eddie admires and then

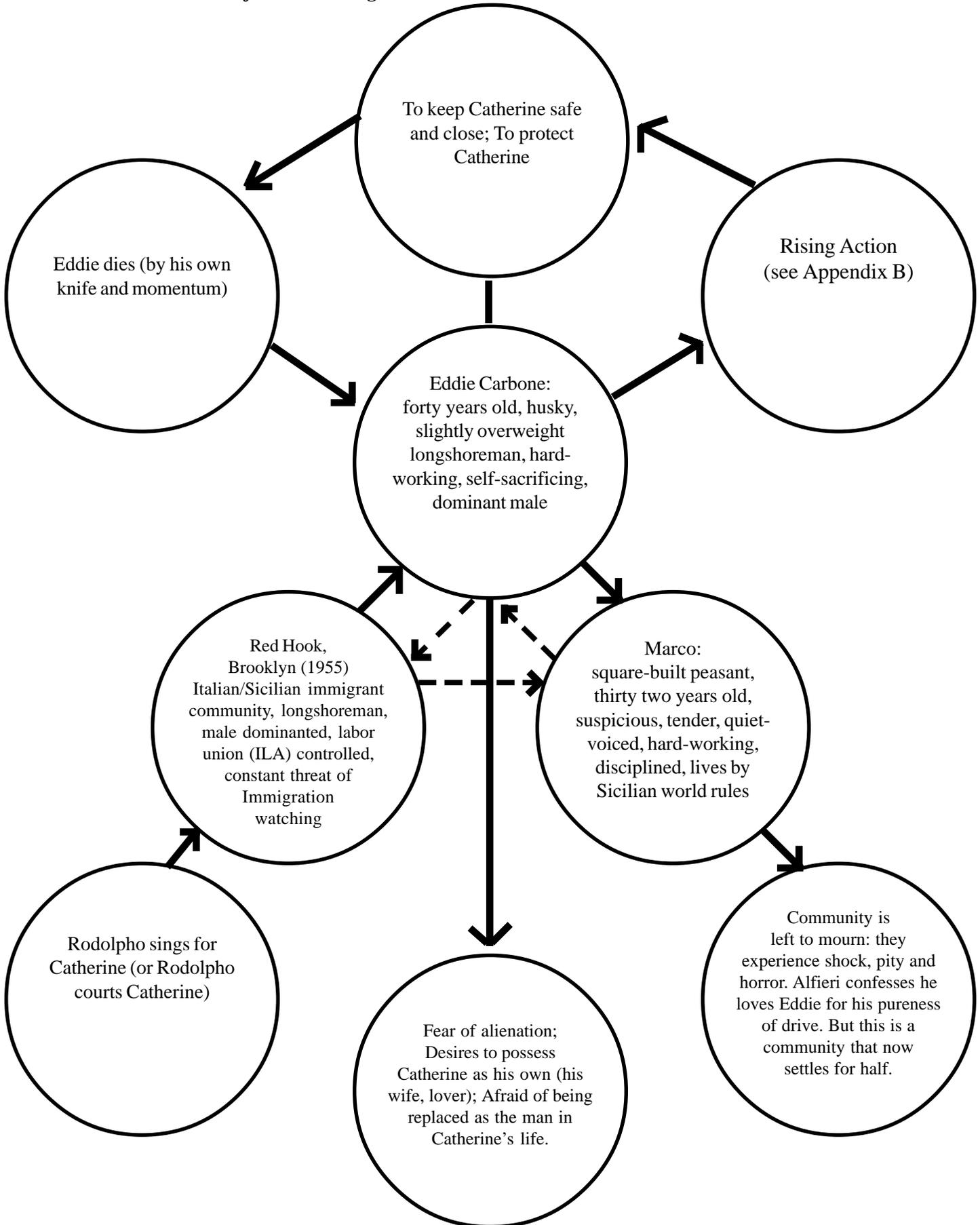
¹ See Appendix A for Zeder Chart and Appendix B for List of Dramatic Actions

quickly reprimands her about “walkin’ wavy” and wearing high heels and talking to the local riff raff. The suggestion of his conflicted feelings for Catherine is already there in the first four dramatic actions: he alone can admire her. With both Catherine and Beatrice, Eddie performs the paternal actions of reprimanding, reassuring and instructing. Clearly, Eddie is master of his household. Catherine serves Eddie and looks to him for the ultimate affirmation in her life; and as Miller’s stage directions indicate, this lights Eddie’s world with great pride and almost overwhelming emotion. But that world is threatened when the young, high tenor voiced Rodolpho sings for Catherine. Everything shifts: this is the inciting incident. Catherine is enthralled with Rodolpho. Eddie tries to interrupt his singing, but Catherine gushes: “Leave him finish, it’s beautiful! He’s terrific! It’s terrific, Rodolpho.” In an instant, Eddie has fallen from his cherished place of high esteem. He can’t compete for her admiration, so he asserts his authoritative, fatherly role by ordering Catherine to change out of her high heels. Catherine’s embarrassment and anger at his demand highlights the shift in their relationship. She is suddenly unwilling to play the obedient child for him.

With the competition between Eddie and Rodolpho, it can initially appear as if Rodolpho is the antagonist of the play. But if the climax leads to a showdown between the protagonist and antagonist and results in a resolution and establishment of a new world, then the focus pulls away from Eddie’s “incestuous” desires and zooms in on the clash between two worlds – the primary conflict of the play. As discussed earlier, Marco represents old world Sicily with its inviolable laws based on blood and community. Eddie represents the new world of codified, book-based laws. This is the analysis that justifies Miller’s title, his choice of a Sicilian-American lawyer as narrator, and the crowd of neighbors as final witnesses to Eddie’s demise. This is the analysis that demands a fuller context represented in the protagonist’s motivations. The analysis of Eddie’s conscious objective cannot change significantly. Eddie’s objective is to keep Catherine safe and close; to protect Catherine. We can’t inject much more detail into this

objective and still be able to support it textually as truly being conscious. So, the unconscious need/desire/fear is the element of Eddie's motivation that must expand to: the need to preserve the connection with the light of his life (Catherine), or the fear of alienation or loneliness. In this light, the intricacies of Arthur Miller's writing shine through. In the first act, Eddie finds no satisfaction in the cold, unfeeling, new world laws. By the second act, he uses them in an effort to prevent the loss of Catherine or to avoid alienation (unconsciously), while simultaneously betraying the old world laws that prize and preserve exactly what he is seeking. Eddie essentially destroys the very thing that could have saved him. And at the climax, by his own knife and through his own momentum, he destroys himself. In the fashion of Greek tragedy, he realizes all of this in his last moment. Beatrice, who he had been avoiding as his wife, could have saved him from his loneliness. But the realization is far too late, and there is only time to say, "Oh, B! . . . My B.!"

Amidst the "dull prayers of the people and the keening of the women," Alfieri defines how their world has changed, "Most of the time now we settle for half and I like it better." There is a sadness and loneliness in that word, "settle", but it must be! That is the new doctrine, the new institution that contains the community's capacity for brutal and unredeemed violence. And Eddie raised to the conscious awareness of the community the need for this new institution by allowing himself to be "wholly known" – wholly known to the community and to himself. Alfieri acknowledges Eddie's sins and how pointless his death was, but as he tells us, "the truth is holy." The truth is also alarming and frightening, but ultimately, Eddie's truth was a gift to the community.



Appendix B
List of Dramatic Actions for *A View from the Bridge*

Act I

1. Alfieri sets the scene (sets the mood)
2. Catherine shows off for Eddie
3. Eddie admires Catherine
4. Eddie reprimands Catherine (or “babies” Catherine about new dress and movement and behavior)
5. Beatrice frets (about immigrant relatives coming)
6. Eddie reassures Beatrice
7. Catherine and Beatrice gang up on Eddie
8. Eddie instructs Catherine & Beatrice (about “rules” of boarding immigrants)
9. Catherine serves Eddie
10. Eddie and Beatrice welcome Rodolpho and Marco
11. Rodolpho sings for Catherine (or courts Catherine)
12. Eddie orders Catherine (to remove heels – or “babies” Catherine)
13. Eddie sizes up Rodolpho
14. Eddie campaigns against Rodolpho to Beatrice (attacks Rodolpho’s manliness)
15. Beatrice confronts Eddie (about not sleeping with her)
16. Eddie leaves (talks a walk – avoids confrontation)
17. Eddie confirms his theory (about Rodolpho with Mike and Louis)
18. Eddie confronts Catherine (not spending time with him, feelings and intentions with Rodolpho)
19. Beatrice shames Eddie (or stands up for Catherine against Eddie)
20. Beatrice counsels Catherine
21. Eddie pleads for help (for an ally – Alfieri)
22. Alfieri advises Eddie (about law options, about his feelings for Catherine)
23. Eddie justifies himself
24. Eddie asserts his dominance (or household authority)
25. Catherine asserts her independence (puts on record and dances with Rodolpho)
26. Eddie challenges Rodolpho’s manhood (occupational skills, boxing)
27. Marco challenges Eddie’s manhood

Act II

1. Alfieri sets the scene
2. Catherine looks for answers from Rodolpho (Eddie’s theory, What to do about Eddie?)
3. Rodolpho leads Catherine to bedroom
4. Rodolpho tests Eddie (stands at bedroom door, points out that they were alone)
5. Eddie claims Catherine as his own (forces kiss on Catherine)
6. Rodolpho squares off with Eddie
7. Eddie gives ultimatum (Rodolpho must leave alone)
8. Eddie seeks answers from Alfieri
9. Alfieri warns Eddie

Appendix B continued

10. Eddie rats out Rodolpho and Marco
11. Beatrice pushes Eddie to make up with Catherine
12. Eddie creates a cover story
13. Beatrice accuses Eddie
14. Marco accuses Eddie
15. The crowd shuns Eddie
16. Alfieri (Catherine, Rodolpho) make Marco promise (to not kill Eddie)
17. Eddie gives Beatrice an ultimatum (with me or Marco?)
18. Rodolpho warns Eddie (about Marco coming)
19. Catherine, Beatrice, Rodolpho persuade Eddie (to avoid Marco)
20. Marco calls Eddie out
21. Eddie demands Marco (to give him back his good name)
22. Eddie lunges at Marco
23. Eddie dies (by his own knife and momentum)
24. Alfieri mourns (or speaks for the community: shock, pity, horror)

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