View From The Bridge 2 Essay, Research Paper

A View from the Bridge

After reading Arthur Miller’s play “A view from the bridge,” I am

convinced that the most striking character is Marco. He is an Italian

immigrant that moved illegally to the United States with his brother

Rodolpho to work as longshoremen, since at the time (the play was

written in 1955) his country of origin, Italy, was going through a

major economic depression because of the outcome of World War II. In

the play, we are told that Marco’s plan is to make enough money to

survive and be able to send some of that money to his wife and his

three kids back in Italy, who are starving. Marco physically resembles

the Sicilian stereotype, with dark skin and dark hair. He is also very

strong and he could easily “load the whole ship by himself.”(pg.541)

In this play, the author uses plot, dialog, actions and symbolism to

emphasize Marco’s honor which, in my opinion, is his prominent

characteristic.

Throughout the play, we can clearly see that the plot helps us

develop Marco’s character in our imagination. For example, he is an

illegal alien, and this might give the reader a less honorable view of

him, and it might justify Eddie’s action. But the fact that Marco left

his family to give them support and to save his oldest son who is

“sick in the chest,” (pg. 535) makes the reader forget about his

illegal stay and makes his status rise to the one of a hero.

In this play, Marco’s actions lead us to the discovery of a

violent side which he uses to defend his honor in a number of

occasions. For example, when he challenges Eddie to lift the chair at

the end of the first act, we understand that he did it to save his

brother’s face and his family’s honor. In addition, the killing of

Eddie by Marco’s own hands at the end of the play, is the final

display of his character. Marco’s character is definitely expressed

more by his actions than by his words. He is very strong, and he is

obviously aware of that, but doesn’t like to show it in words, or brag

about it. In fact, when Eddie was making fun of his brother Rodolpho,

instead of replying to him in words, he chose to use his strenght to

get his point across by lifting the chair. In addition, Marco doesn’t

talk about his family much; instead, he works as hard as he can, and

that is enough to show everybody how much he cares about them. As a

final insult to Eddie, Marco chooses to spit in his face in front of

everybody. This is because in the Italian culture, that act is

considered as an extreme expression of anger toward a person, and it

is rarely left without punishment. In addition, the action of going to

the church before facing Eddie shows us that he is very religious and

cares about his soul.

Marco is a very honorable man and believes in his tradition, and

the author shows us that through a number of symbols. For example,

spitting on Eddie’s face once he realizes that Eddie turned him and

his brother to the police is a symbol of disgust and revolt for

Eddie’s actions. In addition, at the end of the play, we are told that

Marco went to church before going to talk to Eddie. This action tells

us that Marco is ready to give up his life and commit a mortal sin to

defend his honor, because what Eddie has done, the breaking of the

“omerta’”, the breaking of trust, is something that in his culture

must never be left unpunished.

Throughout the first act of the play, Marco is only referred as a

flat character and the only time we are really aware his persona

and his strength is at the end of the first act, when he lifts a chair

over his head and makes it seem like a challenge to Eddie, as a

response for mocking Rodolpho. But only in the second act his

character is fully exposed and we see his image transform into a

round character. In this play, Marco is portrayed as the victim, since

he hasn’t done anything to Eddie but he still gets arrested. In

addition, although his brother Rodolpho gets away with it by marrying

Catherine, he has no other choice but to go back to his hungry wife

and sick children in Italy. This thoughts, and knowing that Eddie has

no regrets for what he has done makes him furious, and at the end of

the play he seeks revenge.

I belive this play would not be complete without this character.

If Marco would have not existed, it would have left Eddie unpunished

and alive, and this would be in conflict with the very conception of

drama which drives this works.