A View from the Bridge is Miller’s fifth major excursion into the field of playwriting. It further confirms and reinforces his recurrent preoccupation with the troubled human psyche. The play combines the essences of the personalities of Joe Keller, Willy Loman and John Proctor in quintessential form in its protagonist. Here, as earlier, the agonised cry for identity and self-respect, once again becomes a mute testimony to the individual’s desperate, tortured and laboured progress through existence, with guilt surfacing as a miasmatic fog surrounding his entire universe. Figuring at the end of the first volume of his Collected Works, A View from the Bridge concludes Miller’s delineation of the human image from the angle of retribution, redemption, assertion and affirmation. The individuals in these five major plays are made to encounter certain palpable and intangible forces which chasten and subdue them. These forces may be primarily external, but have also a corresponding and equally potent reciprocation inside the psyche of the human being himself. The ensuing battle thus becomes a marathon both socially and emotionally, sculpting the person into a chiselled figure necessitated by the demands of reality. In this struggle,
which becomes Miller’s central motif, the individual is catapulted into the centre stage. However, he does not lose his importance or dignity, but emerges as the single important factor, for whom the playwright has created these anchors and supports. The intention of the playwright is thus to heighten and enhance the human image in diverse terms. Such a person can be called the microcosmic representation of the macrocosmic reality around him. The constant tug-of-war between the external and internal forces invested in his being, could perhaps be on account of the essential sameness of the twin opposing forces.

A View from the Bridge, Miller’s next significant play, appeared first in 1955 as a companion piece to A Memory. Written initially in one-act form, it dealt with an intensely psycho-realistic truth of an individual vis-a-vis himself and his community. This integrated closed society, consists primarily of people knitted together by the same code of moral justice and loyalty, as the protagonist himself. The impulse to write on this subject was initiated in the playwright, when he chanced to hear a tale. Miller himself recounts it in the Introduction to A View from the Bridge:

I had known the story of A View from the Bridge for a long time. A waterfront worker who had known Eddie’s prototype told it to me. I had never thought to make a play of it because it was too complete, there was
nothing I could add. And then a time came when its very completeness became appealing.1

The playwright became so impressed by the tale that he started feeling an inner compulsion to translate it into dramatic form. But he cogitated for a long time before imparting to the tale a one-act form. His own explanation in the Introduction to A View from the Bridge is pertinent to recall:

I wrote it in a mood of experiment—to see what it might mean. I kept to the tale trying not to change its original shape....I wanted to create suspense but not by withholding information. It must be suspenseful because one knew too well how it could come out, so that the basic feeling would be the desire to stop this man and tell him what he was really doing to his life.2

Miller was impressed by the breathtaking simplicity of its evolution and the stark bareness of the tale. He also detected a mythical affinity between the story and its Greek counterparts. Though not factually parallel, it did deign to move forcefully towards a pre-destined fate in the same fashion. The playwright has explained it thus:

I have not been able to find such a myth and yet the conviction persists, and for that reason I wished not to interfere with the myth like march of the tale....There was such an iron-bound purity in the autonomic egocentricity of the aims of each of the

2. Ibid.
persons involved that the weaving together of their lives seemed almost the work of a fate.

With this as his aim Miller assiduously controlled his characters, permitting them only to act and speak insofar as it helped the protagonist to move towards his destiny. All else became subsidiary to this naked design of biological trapping. Miller was unable to find a point wherein to break the tension, as the design in his mind was so compact and complete. For this reason he chose the one-act formula. However, this version of A View did not find favour with the audience. Its reactions to the current play were as wary as those to The Crucible. A year after this experience Miller was ready with a revised, expanded version of two acts. He now gave greater significance to those characters who were emotionally allied to the protagonist. His effort in this version was to register the reactions of the subsidiary characters, in order to highlight the pressures operating on the main character, Eddie Carbone.

Miller’s picture gallery already boasts of people directly or indirectly related to Eddie Carbone. In manners he is a reminder of Joe Keller. His trauma and psychological pressures are reminiscent of Willy Loman. His moral dilemma

and need for self-respect and identity, are an echo of John Proctor. Eddie's world, however, is not the consumer-dominated, sales-oriented, automatic, soulless world of Joe, Bert and Willy. It subtly combines the value-ridden regions of Proctor's Salem, with visions of human solidarity glimpsed in *A Memory*. Miller was thus seeking to tie the loose ends in a tightly knitted, intensely powerful emotional drama. Yet another significant convention observed by the playwright was the use of a commentator or a narrator. The conventional device first used by Miller in *A Memory* was in keeping with its Greek origins. It became more effective in the guise of Alfieri who is reminiscent of the Greek chorus in his double duty of a commentator and a participant. Miller calls him an "engaged narrator".

The action opens in the street and house front of a tenement building, which includes Carbone's typically worker's flat. Consisting of the bare necessities, it is clean, sparse and homely. Close at hand is Alfieri's law office. The foghorn in the distance indicates the closeness of the sea. The action in the street is normal with two longshoremen, Louis and Mike, pitching coins. The presence of these two characters acquires significance when it is noticed, that they are present at practically all the important junctures of the action, and serve as a link in the total movement.
Alfieri, a portly, and good humoured, thoughtful man, a lawyer by profession enters, and notices the wary uneasiness of the two pitchers. In a monologue addressed to the audience, he seemingly talks about the present. However the incident recounted by him belongs to the past. Louis and Mike supply the link between the past and the present, bridging the time gap. The narrative is dredged out of the speaker’s memory. He appears to be reliving a powerfully poignant drama. Its very intensity compels Alfieri’s mind to translate the narration into action. His brief introduction contains a tentative exploration of the psyche of the community, which traces its antecedents to the Greeks and the Italians.

The neighbourhood comprises people who had from time to time migrated illegally from Italy. The chief reason behind the exodus was poverty, starvation, and lack of job opportunities. The modus operandi involved voyages on sea on fake passports and subsistence as daily wagers till papers were formally legalised. All these operations were conducted furtively. Rooted in the Italian culture, these people imported to the American segment they frequented, their own values, moral codes and loyalties. The apprehension of the people at the sight of a lawyer in the street was part and parcel of their Sicilian heritage, which
distrusted Law. With these pre-conceived notions, they had been implanted into a society where justice is supreme. But Alfieri’s mind also dwells on the powerlessness of this machinery of Justice in the face of certain situations. The choric figure insists that there is a universality in the helplessness of Law, because it functions merely on the written word.

This monologue gets punctuated by the appearance of Eddie Carbone, a forty year old slightly overweight longshoreman. The advent of the protagonist gets filtered out of the narrator’s consciousness, becoming prominent in the presence of the mind that creates his image. With this, Alfieri’s presence recedes into the darkness. External reality in the guise of the two pitchers also bids adieu, as Eddie moves away from the doorway of his flat, encountering the single most important object of his devotion in the shape of Catherine. This child was the daughter of Beatrice Carbone’s sister. On her mother’s death, the Carbones themselves childless, had decided to adopt her. In their capacity as foster parents, they brought up the girl tending and looking after her material comforts, giving her the love they considered was her due. The girl, now seventeen years old, was both Eddie’s pride and discomfiture. Seeing her Carbone feels a certain embarrassed shyness and pride:

Eddie: Where you goin’ all dressed up?
Catherine: (running her hands over her skirt) I just got it. You like it?

Eddie: Yeah, it's nice. And what happened to your hair?

Catherine: You like it? I fixed it different....

Eddie: Beautiful. Turn around, Lemme see in the back. Oh, if your mother was alive to see you now! She wouldn't believe it.

Catherine: You like it, huh?

Eddie: You look like one of them girls that went to college.4

Carbone himself deprived, illiterate, and uneducated, had secretly nurtured the hopes of providing Catherine with college education, which in his opinion was a certain passport to respectability. Though unable to fulfil this desire in its literal sense, Eddie could not restrain himself from imagining Catherine likewise. The relationship shared between the girl and her foster parent is candid, teasing, affectionate, caring and indulgent enough to allow her liberties. But beneath this apparent facade is a careful overprotective manner which makes Eddie sound a strict and prudish Victorian grandmother, reprimanding a child on short skirts, rather than a foster father belonging to the twentieth century:

-----------------------------

Eddie: Catherine. I don’t want to be a pest, but I’m tellin’ you, you’re walkin’ wavy.

Catherine: I’m walkin’ wavy?

Eddie: Now don’t aggravate me, Katie, you are walkin’ wavy! I don’t like the looks they’re given’ you in the candy store. And with them new high heels on the sidewalk-clack, clack, clack. The heads are turnin’ like windmills.5

For Eddie, this child woman is special because "You ain’t all the girls." But this extra care suffocates her into exasperation, because in addition to the two previous strictures she is also not permitted to wave to Louis from the window because:

Eddie: Listen, I could tell you things about Louis which you wouldn’t wave to him no more.

Catherine: (trying to joke him out of his warning) Eddie, I wish there was one guy you couldn’t tell me things about!6

Catherine is forced to enquire "What do you want me to do" and "Well, I don’t know what you want from me." Such is the situation in the Carbone household, when Eddie discloses to his wife Beatrice, that her two long awaited cousins from Italy have landed. The news of the arrival of

---

5. Ibid., p.381.

6. Ibid.
the cousins is greeted with joy and fear, because of their manner of illegal entry into the country, which the family was knowingly aiding and abetting. Fear of betrayal stalked people clear and stark. The captain, mates, and the people, who supplied them with the false papers were all equally involved in the criminal offence. Beatrice begins to worry about preparing the house for the visitors but Eddie patiently advises her to cease bothering because of the circumstances of their guests arrival. Carbone's relation with his wife appears comfortable and easy. Knowing his wife's soft heart Eddie strives to protect her in his gruff, domineering fashion. But there is an indefinable something in his manner and bearing which riles people, forcing them either on the defensive or offensive as the case might be. He is over cautious, extra sweet, and rather too generous. His very goodness is suspect as it is a mask to control the emotions of people with whom he comes in contact.

Eddie: Listen if everybody keeps his mouth shut, nothin' can happen. They'll pay for their board.

Beatrice: Oh, I told them.

Eddie: Then what the hell. It's an honor, B. I mean it. I was just thinkin' before, comin' home, suppose my father didn't come to 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 honored to lend me a place to sleep.

This was Eddie’s original code of honour picked up from the neighbourhood, inherited from his ancestors in Italy. His philosophy was constituted of helping and protecting the needy and helpless. Breaking the code of silence became tantamount to sinning.

The second significant announcement which results in a minor confrontation between the members of the family relates to Catherine’s desire to accept a job. Eddie who was extremely touchy about Catherine predictably behaves like a predator on the prowl:

Eddie: What’s goin’ on?
Beatrice: She’s got a job.
Eddie: What job? She’s gonna finish school.
Catherine: Eddie, you won’t believe it-
Eddie: No- no you gonna finish school. What kinda job, what do you mean? All of a sudden you_
Catherine: Listen a minute, it’s wonderful.
Eddie: It’s not wonderful. You’ll never get nowheres unless you finish school. You can’t take no job. Why didn’t you ask me before you take a job?^

7. Ibid., p.383.
8. Ibid., p.384.
Very confident and proud of Catherine’s accomplishments at school, Eddie’s reaction is typical of an illiterate who attaches extreme importance to education: “What about all the stuff you wouldn’t learn this year, though?”

In a characteristically mulish dog-in-the-manger attitude Carbone finds fault with the company, atmosphere, and colleagues with whom Catherine would work:

Eddie: I don’t like that neighbourhood over there.

Catherine: It’s a block and a half from the subway, he says.

Eddie: Near the Navy Yard plenty can happen in a block and half. And a plumin’ company! That’s one step over the waterfront. They’re practically longshoremen.

Beatrice: Yeah, but she’ll be in the office, Eddie.

Eddie: I know she’ll be in the office, but that ain’t what I had in mind.

Eddie had entertained high hopes for Catherine, probably aspiring that she would be a lawyer with an office of her own. Carbone wants Catherine to fulfil his own frustrated ambitions achieving all that he had failed to accomplish

10. Ibid.
because of the force of circumstances and lack of opportunity. Carbone wants Catherine’s release from the bondage of their trapped existence.

Eddie: ..I mean if you’re gonna get outa here then get out; don’t go practically in the same neighbourhood.11

He feels sickened at the prospect of the consequences of Kate’s daily trips to the place of work. His wife Beatrice consoles him with:

Beatrice: ...Look, you gotta get used to it, she’s no baby no more...I don’t understand you; she’s seventeen years old, you gonna keep her in the house all her life?

Eddie: What kinda remark is that?

Beatrice: Well, I don’t understand when it ends.12

Eddie Carbone worships Catherine and his refusal is prompted by the insecurity that she would leave them. However, he conforms and accedes to her wishes:

Eddie: And then you’ll move away.

Catherine: No, Eddie!

Eddie: Why not? That’s life. And you’ll come visit on Sundays, then once a month, then Christmas and New Year’s finally.13

11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p.386.
13. Ibid.
Life of a longshoreman has its own pleasures because one enjoys the freedom to "bust a bag of coffee" if the consignment is from Brazil. Similarly, bottles of wine are readily available during unloading. It was all in a day's job. From his own experiences Eddie instructs Catherine "to trust nobody" and the values he includes significantly are "the less you trust, the less you be sorry," which are contrary to the saner, healthier, attitudes which Beatrice hands down to her foster daughter.

Carbone's emotions for Catherine were "childish one and a knowing fear." He lives in constant threat of estrangement and some of this intense, complex, and powerful emotion gets communicated to Beatrice who confronts him with hints and subtleties:

Eddie: What are you mad at me lately?
Beatrice: Who's mad? I'm not mad. You're the one is mad.14

This is a highly discerning double entendre, and both husband and wife are aware of the undercurrent of tension. The conversation though straightforward, implies levels of meaning beneath apparently innocent phrases. Miller takes the opportunity of treating human consciousness at a deeper level, dealing with emotions at the level of complexes. Eddie

is conscious of his wife's censure and dispatches Catherine with the figurative and literal injunction of "Don't burn yourself." The earlier seemingly innocent relationship between Carbone and Catherine assumes menacing dimensions with the added flavour of Beatrice's misgivings. Kate the young orphan is deeply attached to Eddie because she considers him her father. But now she too, cannot understand the nature of his demands on her. His strictness to conformity baffles and confuses her because the habitually sheltered and cocooned existence has suddenly collapsed, and the exposure makes her extremely vulnerable. Beatrice constantly instructs her to remember that she is grown up. Her manners are expected to be circumspect, respectable and dignified. No longer is she at liberty to be free and abandoned, leaving her bereft, and withdrawn, from the caring parental umbrella. The answer this counselling elicits from Catherine is a bewildered, "Gee I'm all mixed up."

This family of three join hands to protect the illegal immigrants. Eddie, confident of assured success, educates the two women to behave normally and maintain a studied silence:

Eddie: I don't care who sees them goin' in and out as long as you don't see them goin' in and out. And this goes for you too, B. You don't see
They are instructed to be deliberately casual and careful in their stance in order to keep up with the normalcy of the situation. Fear and all similar emotions have to be courageously blotted out or controlled:

Eddie: You don’t understand; you still think you can talk about this to somebody just a little bit.... I don’t care if somebody comes in the house and sees them sleepin’ on the floor, it never comes out of your mouth who they are or what they’re are doin’ here.  

This was Carbone’s canon of honour and conduct. By way of illustrating his words Eddie makes Beatrice repeat the story of Vinny Bolzano who had betrayed his own uncle. The family had boycotted the boy and beaten him ruthlessly for breaking the rule of silence:

Beatrice: Oh, it was terrible. He had five brothers and the old father. And they grabbed him in the kitchen and pulled him down the stairs-three flights his head was bouncin’ like a coconut. And they spit on him in the street, his own father and his brothers. The whole neighborhood was cryin.’

15. Ibid., p.388.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p.389.
When asked about the boy’s whereabouts Eddie’s answer is:

You’ll never see him no more, a guy do a thing like that? How’s he gonna’ show his face? Just remember, kid, you can quicker get back a million dollar that was stole than a word that you gave away.\(^{18}\)

Eddie’s own words spoken in a fit of self righteousness return to plague him later, when in an emotional quandary he too commits the offence of reneging his promise, becoming a turncoat to the very cause he so vociferously propounds.

Carbone instinctively disliked Rodolpho, even though the family’s manner towards the pair was very effusive and hospitable. While talking, his conversation clearly steered towards Marco who, though very strong and awe inspiring physically, is humble and modest. Marco’s innate simplicity is evident in the happiness he derives from the information that he could send money to his wife. In return he offers whole-hearted appreciation and gratitude. Though uncomfortable with emotions, Eddie recognises a genuineness in Marco, but is inclined to judge the younger cousin. Rodolpho’s demeanour and behaviour had aggravated Carbone, his unmarried status was a threat. Hence his irresponsible, immature queries, the extreme informality

\(^{18}\) Ibid.
of manner, and the song he chooses to entertain them with curry no favour with Eddie. His first cautious criticism comes in the guise of warning to stop singing 'Paper Doll' with full throated ease:

Eddie: Look, kid; you don't want to be picked up, do ya?

Marco: No_ no!

Eddie: Because we never had no singers here...and all of a sudden there's a singer in the house, y'know what I mean?

Marco: Yes, Yes, you'll be quiet, Rodolpho.\(^9\)

He takes out his anger on Catherine and Beatrice as he has to suppress an urge to snub him in front of strangers. But Eddie is unnatural, tense and strained in his behaviour and views Rodolpho with concealed suspicion. His antipathy towards his guest gets fuelled by the knowledge that Catherine was finding him attractive and interesting as companion. Rodolpho openly compliments the girl, escorts her to the movies and on one such occasion, when the couple get delayed, Carbone begins to worry and waits:

Beatrice: What's the matter with you? He's a nice kid, what do you want from him?

Eddie: That's a nice kid? He gives me the heeby-jeebies.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p.396.
Beatrice: Ah, go on, you’re just jealous.

Eddie: Of him? Boy you don’t think much of me. 20

Carbone has been listening to a wide variety of remarks and comments regarding Rodolpho. People call him with various epithets, such as ‘Paper Doll,’ ‘Canary,’ ‘a weird person,’ etc., and Eddie considers it a slight to his dignity to have his guest mockingly referred to. Eddie himself is being appreciated for his benevolence, magnanimity and large heartedness and Marco is praised for his ability to work. But Rodolpho was being snickered at,

Mike: (grinning): That blond one, though (Eddie looks at him) He’s got a sense of humor.

Eddie: (searchingly) Yeah. He’s funny.

Mike: (starting to laugh) Well he ain’t exackly funny, but he’s always like makin’ remarks like, y’know? He comes around, everybody’s laughin’.

Eddie: (uncomfortably grinning) Yeah, well...he’s got a sense of humor. 21

Carbone’s torture is increased two-fold when people analyse and define the sense of humour. They depict him as a "weird being," with the sole intention of appearing a fool for the benefit of other people. Eddie’s initial

20. Ibid., pp.397-398.

21. Ibid., p.400.
opinion of Rodolfo as a waster gets further intensified by the youngman’s unrestrained, unbridled behaviour. No sooner does the couple appear than Carbone begins his catechism. Catherine mortally confused enquires,

Catherine: Why don’t you talk to him Eddie? He blesses you, and you don’t talk to him hardly.

Eddie: (enveloping her with his eyes) I bless you and you don’t talk to me.

There was once a time when,

Eddie: It’s just I used to come home, you was always there. Now, I turn around, you’re a big girl. I don’t know how to talk to you.

Catherine: Why?

Eddie: I don’t know, you’re runnin’, you’re runnin’, Katie. I don’t think you’re listening any more to me.22

Catherine is not the only person who is running due to incomprehension. Eddie himself is equally distraught, as his peace of mind rested on regarding Katie as the tiny girl who required support at every juncture. Carbone, too, is fleeing at the recognition that she has grown, because that gave rise to many more complications. Her childhood was simple, uncomplicated and Eddie insisted on retaining it, mothering her as an overprotective parent.

----------------------

22. Ibid., p.402.
Acceptance of her maturity meant estrangement—an idea which was painfully obsessive with him and often recurred. His salvation lay in the arrest of Catherine's childhood. Hence each time Beatrice accuses him Eddie's answer is a confused, "Boy you don't think much of me."

The verbal battle with Catherine ends with her penetrating query:

Catherine: What're you got against him, Eddie? Please, tell me? What?
Eddie: He don't respect you.  

and Catherine's answer is:

No, Eddie, he's got all kinds of respect for me. And you too! We walk across the street he takes my arm- he almost bows to me! You got him all wrong, Eddie; I mean it, you.  

Carbone is ready with an explanation born of desperation:

Eddie: Katie, he's only bcwin' to his passport.

Catherine: His passport!
Eddie: That's right. He marries you he's got the right to be an American citizen.  

Having found a solid excuse for his hatred of Rodolpho, Eddie elaborated on the young Italian's behaviour to lend

-----------------------------

23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p.403.
25. Ibid.
credence to his theory. He thus emotionally blackmails her by forcing a choice between Rodolpho and himself. Hence his amazement, when Beatrice still approves of the growing friendship between the young ones:

Beatrice: Listen, you ain’t gonna start nothin’ here.

Eddie: I ain’t startin’ nothin’, but I ain’t gonna stand around lookin’ at that. For that character I didn’t bring her up. I swear, B., I’m surprised at you; I sit there waitin’ for you to wake up but everything is great with you.  

Beatrice’s worries are different from those of Eddie. She is bothered about why Eddie is not sharing a fruitful relationship with her, and why her husband constantly pleads ill health. In Beatrice’s mind the subconscious reason for Carbone’s apathy towards her lies in his preoccupation with Catherine. Wife-like Beatrice loses her composure many a time, and scolds him for his unreasonably overprotective leanings towards the young girl. She struggles to convince him that Catherine had grown up, and was now capable of looking after herself. Personally Beatrice feels that Rodolpho is an ideal companion for her foster daughter. She realises that they had kept her captive far too long in the cage of love. Catherine had to be 

released to share experiences with companions of her own age. Moreover Beatrice also wishes to wean Catherine from Eddie’s obsessive interest, for it has started to scare her. Bound tightly to both, she understands them and can look through the veneer and mask of Eddie too. However she cannot nag and force him from fear of violent reaction:

Beatrice: (inwardly angered at his flowing emotion, which in itself alarms her) When are you going to leave her alone?

Eddie: B., The guy is no good!

Beatrice: (suddenly, with open fright and fury) You going to leave her alone? Or you gonna drive me crazy? 27

Frightened and angry with her husband, she tries to drill some sense into Catherine, who is also confused and fails to fathom the reason behind Eddie’s aversion and hatred of Rodolpho. Beatrice’s job is cut out, because she has to deliver the beginning of the final lesson which could teach Catherine to reorganise her thinking, make her aware, gain insight, and come to terms with her new found maturity:

Beatrice: Listen, Catherine. What are you going to do with yourself?

Catherine: I don’t know.

-----------------------

27. Ibid., p.404.
Beatrice: Don’t tell me you don’t know; You’re not a baby any more, what are you going to with yourself?

Catherine: He won’t listen to me.

Beatrice: I don’t understand this. He’s not your father, Catherine. I don’t understand what’s goin on here.28

Later,

Beatrice: Sit down, honey, I want to tell you something. Here, sit down. Was there ever any fella he liked for you? There wasn’t, was there?

Catherine: But he says Rodolpho’s just after his papers.

Beatrice: Look, he’ll say anything. What does he care what he says? If it was a prince came here for you it would be no different. You know that, don’t you.

Catherine: Yeah, I guess.

Beatrice: So what does that mean?

Catherine: (slowly turns her head to Beatrice) What?

Beatrice: It means you gotta be your own self more. You still think you’re a little girl, honey. But nobody else can make up your mind for you any more, you understand? You gotta give him to understand that he can’t give you orders no more.29

She is happy with Catherine and Rodolpho’s friendship, because it could slowly wean her away from Carbone’s

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., pp.404-405.
influence. However, Beatrice also realises the need for equal emotional contribution from each one of them, in order to reorganise and readjust, the normal balance of the family.

Comprehending the futility of entirely blaming Eddie, his wife tries to make Catherine perceive that Carbone was not her real father, and she, as his wife, could be expected to be jealous of Catherine’s youth and closeness to her husband. All this catechism appears strange to the girl but she manages to discern the essence of the message subtly conveyed. In return Beatrice herself is genuinely miserable at forcing the disillusion on a child she so lovingly nurtured and brought up. But Catherine’s education was essential:

Beatrice: You think I’m jealous of you, honey?

Catherine: No! It’s the first I thought of it.

Beatrice: Well you should have thought of it before...but I’m not. We’ll be all right. Just give him to understand; you don’t have to fight, you’re just_ You’re a woman, that’s all, and you got a nice boy, and now the time came when you said good-by. All right?

Catherine: All right?...If I can.

Beatrice: Honey...you gotta.30

Eddie’s reactions to Beatrice’s outbursts are not fury or anger but guilt with some semblance of dignity. One of the reasons why their marriage is going through this rough patch, rests with Beatrice. Catherine had also noticed it, grimly observing that the relationship between husband and wife depends upon sharing, anticipating the wishes of the partner and providing mental and physical comfort. This Beatrice did not do and Eddie had at one point complained:

Eddie: You used to be different, Beatrice. You had a whole different way.

Beatrice: I’m no different.

Eddie: You didn’t use to jump me all the time about everything. The last year or two I come in the house, I don’t know what’s gonna hit me. It’s a shootin’ gallery in here and I’m the pigeon. 31

It is about this time that Carbone visits Alfieri, which enables the playwright to have an opportunity to provide more information about Eddie. Its significance lies in the entirely detached stance of Alfieri’s observation. Carbone appears to him a good man, working hard at the piers, bringing home whatever salary he earns. This is how "he lived"_ as though breathing was sufficient for an individual to live. Such an ordinary person was not expected to have a destiny as he had done nothing remarkable in his

31. Ibid., p.426.
entire existence. As the weeks pass by Alfieri notices a change in this person as though some fate seemed to await him in the future. There was "trouble that would not go away." In a choric fashion Alfieri predicts the onset of danger as he could foresee the figure of darkness creeping insidiously towards a "certain door." This dark figure symbolised desires, jealousies, envy, designs. Alfieri confesses his powerlessness against these overwhelming, overpowerfully potent forces. These designs were fostered inside the human psyche. They need necessarily not be evil but were human and complex enough, being magnified to a size that completely enveloped the human personality. Others, like Alfieri, helplessly watched the total disintegration of the individual before their very eyes. The wisest comment in such circumstances comes from the old lady, "Pray for him".

When Eddie Carbone reaches Alfieri's office his eyes "were like tunnels," "my first thought was that he had committed a crime" was the lawyer's observation. However the intensity in Eddie was on account of the strange passion that held him captive and which he could not fathom. He only felt it. His antipathy and hatred of Rodolpho takes the shape of vague arguments with accompanying insistence that Alfieri also believes in his suspicions. But though his arguments begin strongly they peter out in a weak, miserable and shallow manner:
Eddie: I’m talkin’ to you confidential, ain’t I?
Alfieri: Certainly.
Eddie: I mean it don’t go no place but here. Because I don’t like to say this about anybody. Even my wife I didn’t exactly say this.
Alfieri: What is it?
Eddie: (takes a breath and glances briefly over each shoulder) The guy ain’t right, Mr Alfieri.

......

Alfieri: I don’t get you.32

Eddie is incoherent because the emotion and accusation are ill-defined, and he himself does not recognise their reality:

I’m tellin’ you sump’m, wait a minute. Please, Mr Alfieri. I’m tryin’ to bring out my thoughts here.33

But Alfieri’s law is very legal and specific and Eddie is unspecific, unintelligible about facts that incriminated Rodolpho. Alfieri’s advise is:

...these things have to end, Eddie, that’s all. The child has to grow up and go away, and the man has to learn to forget. Because after all, Eddie what other way can it end? Let her go. That’s my advice. You did your job, now it’s her life; wish her luck, and let her go. Will you do that? Because there’s no law Eddie, make up your mind to it; The law is not interested in this.34

32. Ibid., p.407.
33. Ibid., p.408.
34. Ibid., p.409.
There is no existent law to stop the growth of a child and halt its movement from the parent. The law of nature has destined it thus and the parents have to reconcile themselves to it. The man-made rules do not recognise this process but destiny, mutability and behaviour dictate otherwise, and the human law cannot stop the march of time. Eddie cannot resolve this difference and refuses to comprehend it. He fails to come to terms with absolute truth and reality, shifting the blame squarely on the shoulder of Rodolfo:

Alfieri: But Eddie she’s a woman now.

Eddie: He’s stealing from me!

Alfieri: She wants to get married, Eddie. She can’t marry you, can she?

Eddie: (furiously) What’re you talkin’ about, marry me! (Pause) I don’t know what the hell you’re talkin’ about!

Alfieri: I gave you my advice, Eddie. That’s all. (Eddie gathers himself. A pause).

Eddie: Well, thanks. Thanks very much. It’s just—it’s breakin’ my heart, y’know I_35

Thus Eddie is being sucked into the unrelenting vortex of darkness. The first real confrontation between the

35. Ibid., p.410.
Italians and Eddie occurs when he complains to Marco about Rodolfo and, despite his "I have respect for her" keeps plunging deeper into the quagmire, by mentioning the late hours kept by the young couple. He starts feeling guilty when Beatrice intervenes and Marco tamely agrees, indulgently warning Rodolfo not to repeat the late entries. Discovering the need to make his argument more forceful he elaborates:

"Look kid, I’m not only talkin’ about her. The more you run around like that the more chance you’re takin’ (To Beatrice) I mean suppose he gets hit by a car or something. (To Marco) Where’s his papers? who is he? Know what I mean? 36"

Seeking to prove that it was Rodolfo he was worried about, Eddie knows that slowly and steadily, he is antagonising everybody. Catherine who till now had been too bewildered to hurt him appears openly hostile and Beatrice supports her. Eddie’s anger starts to mount on sensing their antipathy. He invites his guests to the bouts feeling weirdly elated, and follows it by his offer to teach Rodolfo pugilism. The mock charade scares Catherine, though Beatrice views it as a friendly camaraderie. But Marco understands it. At the moment when Rodolfo staggers on being hit by Eddie, Marco retaliates with an implicitly veiled threat. He picks up the chair, stands face to face

----------------------
36. Ibid., p.413.
with Eddie, a strained tension gripping his eyes, his jaws and neck become stiff. Marco holds the chair over Eddie's head as a weapon. The glare of warning exchanged between the two becomes a smile of triumph. Marco perceives the message conveyed by Eddie, and transmits a suitable reply, with an added warning for future reference. Eddie's grin vanishes at its sight.

The last straw on the camel's back in this highly charged emotional drama is provided by an occurrence when Eddie returns home drunk, and discovers that Beatrice has gone visiting, Catherine and Rodolpho all alone in the house. Infuriated, he orders Rodolpho to leave the house at once, and hears in shocked disbelief Catherine's intention to leave with Rodolpho. Driven by the dark forces of his psyche Eddie not only manhandles Catherine but challenges Rodolpho also. He concludes the insult by kissing him with the intention of sealing his fate as a punk. Laughing mockingly at this proof of his conjecture, he and Rodolpho face each other like brutes who have not fought their battle to decision. It had been Eddie's desire to downgrade Rodolpho, in Catherine's estimate to prove that, "he ain't right" because he "didn't give the right kind of fight."

About this time Carbone visits Alfieri a second time. Again the lawyer catches the glimpses of nocturnal
forces in his eyes which were like virtual tunnels. Yet once more, Alfieri pleads inability and loss of strength to restrain Eddie. He reasons against calling the police because nothing was actually happening. The battleground in this instance is the mind and soul of Eddie. What is witnessed outside is its external manifestation. Emotionally all the characters are growing in dimensions. The lawyer repeats that morally and legally Eddie has no right over Catherine:

I’m not telling you now, I’m warning you— the law is nature. The law is only a word for what has a right to happen. When the law is wrong it’s because it’s unnatural, but in this case it is natural...Let her go. And bless her.\(^{37}\)

But Eddie is past all care. In a fit of demented anger he starts to walk towards the telephone with the intention of doing what Vinny Bolzano had done— He too wants to break the canon of silence and betray his own relatives. Alfieri warns him:

You won’t have a friend in the world, Eddie! Even those who understand will turn against you, even the ones who feel the same will despise you? Put it out of your mind! Eddie!\(^{38}\)

----------------------

37. Ibid., p.424.

38. Ibid.
Motivated by complex emotions beyond his control, Eddie closes his mind against all positive advice. However, with the betrayal, one emotional chapter in the life of Eddie concludes.

On his return home Eddie discovers that the men have been shifted upstairs. This further infuriates him. Eddie had been unconsciously withdrawing himself from his wife's jaded company, and subsequently doubling his attention on Catherine. Fresh shocks await him when it is disclosed that Rodolpho and Catherine intend to marry in a week's time, for the very same reason he had warned Catherine with. Feeling irremediably guilty Eddie agrees to free her from his bondage by permitting her to meet other boys. In despair he tells her:

Suppose he gets picked up.

and later:

Will you stop arguin' with me and get them out. You think I'm always tryin' to fool you or sumpin'? What's the matter with you, don't you believe I could think of your good? Did I ever ask sump'm for myself? You think I got no feelin's? I never told you nothin' in my life that wasn't for your good. Nothin'! And look at the way you talk to me! Like I was an enemy! (knock) Go up the fire escape, get them out over the back fence.

39. Ibid., pp.429-430.
Eddie studiedly maintains an innocent mask when the officers from the Immigration enter and demand that the culprits be surrendered. However, both Beatrice and Catherine penetrate through his defences. Turning to look at him they gauge his terror:

Beatrice: (weakened with fear) Oh, Jesus, Eddie.

Eddie: What's the matter with you?
Beatrice: Oh, my God, my God.
Eddie: What're you, accusin' me?
Beatrice: My God, what did you do?  

Carbone's treachery and culpability lie exposed. As they walk by, Marco breaks free of the group and spits on Eddie's face in full view of the waiting crowd. Carbone is outraged and lunging towards him, threatens murder. Contrasted with this is the scene where Lipari- the butcher and his wife kneel before their guests. In angry frustration Eddie keeps on repeating:

That's the thanks I get? Which I took the blankets off my bed for yiz? You gonna apologize to me, Marco! Marco.

Carbone's history changes from this point of time. No longer is Catherine his raison d'être. He has subtly

40. Ibid., p.431.
41. Ibid., p.432.
moved from the regions of familial emotions to public and private passions. Having nailed his coffin by his final improbity, Eddie realizes that he has lost his private and public respect. Carbone emerges out of this conflict a total loser. His misfortune lay in the fact that he waged battles on too many fronts, his last clash being with the forces of destiny. The members of the community, his erstwhile friends and mates shun his company. They become total strangers socially boycotting him. Like his peers Joe Keller, Willy Loman and Proctor, he too searches desperately for moorings. Catherine his cherished foster daughter becomes his bitterest critic:

Catherine: How can you listen to him? This rat!

Beatrice: Don’t you call him that!

Catherine: What’re you scared of? He’s a rat. He belongs to the sewer!

Beatrice: Stop it!

Catherine: He bites people when they sleep! He comes when nobody’s lookin’ and poisons decent people. In the garbage he belongs!

Beatrice: Then we all belong in the garbage. You, and me too. Don’t say that. Whatever happened we all done it, and don’t you forget it, Catherine.42

42. Ibid., p.436.
This idea of collective responsibility has been employed by Miller for the first time in *A View*. His previous plays probed the mental processes with the single individual as its subject. Guilt motif was also restricted to a person rather than a group of characters. Treatment of group consciousness began with *A Memory*, but it was disjointed on account of the diversification inside the unit itself. People in *A Memory* were tied together by the nature of the work done by them. In *A View* Miller distributes the guilt and awareness among all the members of the family, as well as those people who have encroached upon their privacy and forced the guilt situation into the open. None of the characters in *A View* remain the same. Each individual undergoes a subtle change growing in awareness maturing in outlook. Beatrice, Catherine, Rodolpho and finally Eddie whose cry of,

I want my name! He didn’t take my name; he’s only a punk. Marco’s got my name.  

is a direct echo of ‘I am Willy Loman’ ‘I am John Proctor’ and,

Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life!...How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name! *The Crucible*

---------------------

43. Ibid., p.437.
Carbone had also willed his soul to the murky forces in his mental make up. His surrender like John Proctor’s remains incomplete because the realization of its extreme staggers him. The emergent denial rises like a tortured cry from a soul pleading to everybody to give him back his integrity and self-respect. Proctor had stopped just short of betrayal, but Eddie Carbone is an explosive combination of all his predecessors. His previous licences and indiscretions have faded into the past. The centre stage becomes occupied by a demented man in despair pleading for redemption. All that Carbone wanted was the esteem of a respected name when Marco calls him "Animal."

"Yeah Marco, Eddie Carbone, Eddie Carbone Eddie Carbone." The thrice repeated chant before his demise gives it a ritualistic touch. Eddie could never settle for half, never make compromises, and was thus extremely harsh on himself, and everyone close to him. Nothing short of death could redeem such an individual. He sacrificed himself at the altar of esteem and self identity. In the person of Eddie Carbone, Miller has drawn a being whose tragedy had parallels in the ancient Greek tales where characters were relentlessly pursued by Fate. They became pawns, instrumental in their own deaths. Eddie is a prime example of Miller’s concept of tragedy of the common man. The human image comes through very powerfully in A View. It is also an
exquisite illustration of the individual trapped biologically, emotionally and psychologically, powerless at the altar of the shadowy forces inside himself, seeking release and getting it at the cost of his own life.