

Society can't exist
without love, common
theme to patch
adams and do you
love me

[People](#), [Patch Adams](#)



“ We need each other, deeper than anyone ever dares to admit even to themselves.” - Patch Adams. Peter Carey’s story “ Do You Love Me?” expresses how by default humans need each others’ love. The story follows the narrator and his father in a time where places and people begin to disappear if they are not loved. Through pithy characterization and unstable setting Carey expresses how humans need to love each other.

Throughout the short story, the father plays a critical role. He is seen as an authority figure because “ the role of the Cartographers is perhaps the most important.” (1) When a person is given a position of great importance, they tend to carry themselves with a distinguished air, and are often seen as “ overproud” (2) for their pride in having such importance. Such is the case with the father, as he sees himself as indispensable to society. “ The world needs Cartographers,’ my father said, ‘ it fucking well needs Cartographers.” (9) His high self importance impacts the way he sees others, and therefore is considered arrogant. He often says that the people around him “ were born fools and they’ll die fools.” (3) The father is “ imprisoned in his own arrogance.” (Hassall, 3) He essentially is a victim of his own lovelessness (Bliss, 2). His arrogance makes him unable to love other people, and therefore he himself is unloved, which is what causes his disappearance. When the father is in the final stages dematerialization, he begins to laugh and tells his son and wife that “ I wish you could see the looks on your bloody silly faces.” (10) This cynical action proves that the father is “ proud and cruel” (3), and shows that he is only concerned with himself and how he feels. He constantly laughs in the face of suffering, which is cold and heartless. This is because he as a cartographer has had to spend time away

from people who are unlike him and because he feels that he has the ability to control events, such as with the census report every year (Peter Carey Short Fiction Analysis). Since he is used to being in control of the situation, when he is watching the general populous lose control, he laughs about them not realizing that they can be in control. (Peter Carey Short Fiction Analysis) He is indifferent about the fate of others around him and is indifferent to their suffering, which creates an emphasis on how people must love one another.

While his father is more intense, the narrator is more unassertive. The narrator describes himself as “slightly built” unlike his father who had “muscles still firm.”(3) This suggests that he is inferior to his father in both build and character. Which is further confirmed when the narrator expresses that “Beside him I always felt as if I had betrayed him.” (3) In turn this also suggests that the narrator is ashamed of not being more like his father. His feelings of inferiority create a rift between him and his father. Much like the rift that was created between Carey and his father life due to being sent away to boarding school at such a young age. (Jones, 2) Although both fathers care for their sons in different ways, their sons feel alienated. This alienation from their father often times creates resentment. In regards to love, this makes the sons feel unloved by their fathers and in turn makes it hard for them to love their father. “I try to love my father, I try very, very hard.”(10) They don't have many positive memories with or about their fathers, which enables them to feel unloved and alienated. In the end when the father disappears, the son feels guilty for not being able to love him, but

in reality he could not help himself. This shows how much people need to love each other.

Carey express the extreme state of lovelessness the world is currently in through the general populous of the story. Instead of helping each other and spreading love and support when buildings and people start to dematerialize, people begin to get angry and attack one another. They act “ as if hey were victims of a shocking betrayal” (5). This is due to the fact that not loving each other is betraying each other. The act of being unloved is unnerving and it makes a person feel worthless, which in turn fuels their rage. When confronted with dematerialization, the people react with an “ intensity of emotion” (4) and they feel like the dematerialization was “ some monstrous theft for which punishment must be meted out.” (4) The loss of an object or person is often met with great disappointment, however how it is described in the quote is not common. This shows how people have become more attached to the notion and presence of people and places than actually being attached to them. It shows how much they cling to the idea of having more of something, which is greed. This display of greed shows how people have become addicted to having more rather than loving what they have. Among the general populous there is a man who “ made some name for himself as a mystic” (4) after witnessing dematerialization. He claims that he can “ see other worlds, layer upon layer, through the fabric of here and now.” (4) The mystic represents how people can react in different ways to certain events. While his reaction was odd, it contrasts with the general reaction and shows that people do not need to react in negative, unhealthy

ways to extreme events. Overall the general populous shows how much people need each other's love.

Carey creates an “ image on an improperly fixed photograph” (2) of the world in which the story takes place. He creates an unstable base for the world they are living in, almost as if it could be erased completely. There are the nether regions to consider. They are regarded as “ symbols of alienation, lovelessness, loneliness, uselessness and so on.” (7) While there is a certain eerie beauty to these things because in turn they allow for love to exist, they are “ merely possessions”(7). This shows that people only regard people and places as possessions. When a person is regarded as a possession it ultimately dehumanizes them. When a person is dehumanized, they lose their value in the eyes of others. The disappearance of the nether regions also is a reminder of how the human spirit needs to be kept alive. “ Poetry, beauty, romance, these are what we stay alive for.” – John Keating. The nether regions feed the human soul and as these sources begin to disappear people become more materialistic and detached from each other. One could say that the disappearance of the nether regions is the cause of other places beginning to dematerialize. The nether regions also symbolise how people take the necessities they have for granted. Another cause of people and places disappearing is that they were taken for granted and people began to forget how much they truly needed that person or place.

Carey emphasises how much people truly need to love each other in order to live. People must remember to love and care for each other. His short story is a reminder of how love and only love can save us in the end.