

Analysis of cathedral essay

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The short story "Cathedral", written by Raymond Carver is a rather simple story with a complex and revealing true meaning. A man, the narrator, is upset or uneasy about the arrival of his wife's long time friend Robert.

The main reason for him feeling upset is because the wife's friend is blind.

The narrator has obviously never experienced a blind person and is full of stereotypical thoughts and beliefs. We learn of his prejudice toward blind people, become aware how his own life lacks any sort of meaning or self security, and we see how the narrator evolves as a direct result of the interactions with the blind man. This short story is told from the selective narrator position, where as we only can see into the mind of the narrator.

The narrator is a dynamic character in this story and there are a few events that help transition the character over the course of the story. Even though the narrator of "Cathedral" is not literally blind, throughout the story he displays an enormous lack of insight and self-awareness, which in many ways makes him blinder than the wife's friend Robert. The fear and dislike for blind people is the main focus of the introduction.

The fear and dislike come from the narrators ignorance toward blind people in general. He goes on to even say "And it bothered me that he was blind". (Carver, Pg. 92) In the introduction, the narrator goes on to describe his stereotypical thoughts of blind people by saying, "they move slowly, use canes, wear dark glasses, never laugh, and use seeing eye dogs". (Carver, Pg. 92) As soon as Robert arrives at the couples house those stereotypes are quickly found to be false. Throughout the story the narrator goes on to notice how the blind man acts, situates himself, eats, talks and has had a fulfilling career and memorable relationships. From the beginning of the story the

narrator only looked at the surface meaning of things, where as Robert has a much deeper way of perceiving life, and other things.

One of the husbands' first preconceptions was that he thought he knew for sure that blind people could never smoke, but Robert did smoke quit often. The three go on to socialize while drinking and enjoying each other's company. When they all gather at the dinner table for a meal is when the narrator begins to realize that Robert is just a normal guy just like him, he just has the inability to see. Raymond Carver makes use of the cathedral on the television as metaphor for the story. The narrator is in need of change at this point in the story. The cathedral is representing Robert in the metaphor with its' strong foundation and how the cathedral inspires people with its design and purpose.

The idea of the cathedral is everything that the narrator is not. Robert asks the narrator to describe the cathedral that he is seeing on the television. After seemingly countless minutes the narrator fails and gives up on describing the cathedral saying " I can't do anymore than I've done".

(Carver, Pg. 100) After that the two men decide to try to draw the cathedral together; this serves as a way to get the narrator to see things in a different way. Even when Robert is told to open his eyes he is compelled to keep them shut because he begins to enjoy seeing something in a different perspective. The narrator of " Cathedral" is a dynamic character that has continuously changed and evolved throughout the short story, while experiencing some sort of epiphany. Robert showed the narrator that stereotypes are not correct and they do not serve a purpose. He also opened the narrators' eyes,

so to say, and showed him not just to look at life at face value, but to have a more meaningful approach to life and the people in it. This short story is full of plot conflicts that develop the characters and keep the story interesting.

Works Cited
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