

Catedral

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



CATHEDRAL Cathedral Raymond Carver Weekend Short Story CATHEDRAL 2

This is a story of a blind man's visit which by chance affects an unsuspecting person who suffers from loneliness and poor communication with others and tries to combat these with excessive use of alcohol and drugs. The man realizes that there are much more pragmatic experiences than clouding one's mind by drugs for relief.

CATHEDRAL3

Raymond Carver's short story, Cathedral, is about a man who meets his wife's blind friend. The story revolves around this meeting among the three. During this meeting the narrator is deeply affected by the blind man, Robert. The narrator realizes his loneliness, his lack of communication, and his use of alcohol and drugs to overcome these shortcomings through this meeting and thus the story ends on a positive note that there is still hope.

The first hint of the narrator's loneliness is when his wife says to him " You don't have any friends," (Carver, 2009, para 10). His constant use of alcohol also bears testimony that he wishes to drown these feelings by consuming more and more alcohol. Also at one point in the story when the wife goes to sleep and Robert wishes to stay and chat with the narrator, the narrator seems surprised and is glad to have company in his daily ritual of staying up late and drinking.

Another important issue that the narrator realizes is his lack of communication. He is not able to communicate properly with his wife. He is surprised to see his wife smiling when she comes home with Robert thus hinting that he does not know what pleases his wife and what does not. He is not even mentioned in the conversation between his wife and Robert. When

he, bored of the conversation, switches on the television, his wife looked at him with irritation. (Carver, 2009, para 47).

Likewise from the beginning he was uncomfortable with the notion that a blind man was coming to visit and would stay in his house. He had not been around any blind person to have any fore-hand knowledge of how to treat a blind person. Eventually he ends up asking tactless questions for instance the side of the train that Robert sat on while coming as it would not have mattered to

CATHEDRAL⁴

Robert whichever side he sat on because he could not take in any view of the outside world. The earlier part of the meeting is dominated by the conversation of Robert and the narrator's wife, and even when he is addressed to by Robert, he replies in monosyllables and phrases. He also changes some preconceived notions about blind people as he is surprised by the presence of a beard and absence of dark glasses on a blind man as well as his skill with the fork and fingers during dinner. Then he also faces immense difficulty in describing a cathedral to Robert. When Robert makes the narrator draw the cathedral, then finally making him draw blindly, the narrator is able to feel like the blind person and this awakens empathy in him. He is able to think of Robert as more than just a blind man. The story also compares the use of alcohol and drugs, used to mellow a person and put a temporary end to pain by simply moving out of consciousness, with friendship and companionship. The narrator also awakens to the notion that there are experiences available that are much more tangible than the soporific qualities of alcohol and drugs. The story

ends on a positive note and a feeling of hope regarding his lack of communication, as well as his loneliness, as he is able to empathize with Robert, and understands the need for good companionship. He also understands the potential of experiencing much more than the fake relief that alcohol gives.

Citations

Carver, R., (2009, March 21), Cathedral. Retrieved from <http://www.misanthropytoday.com/cathedral-by-raymond-carver-weekend-short-story/>