
Analysis Of Raymond Carver's Style In The Short Story Cathedral

The stories of the American writer Raymond Carver at first glance seem to be devoted to purely everyday topics, but in fact they reveal serious social problems.” Something like that is written everywhere in the net. Firstly, I did not believe that fact (simple short story, a few characters, everything is clear, no metaphors and personification etc.) But behind this really unremarkable base a huge number of questions and issues are hidden: theme of light and darkness, pure love and relationships between people, sight and blindness, faith and its projection in real life.

Minimalism or dirty (rude) realism?

Raymond Carver's style is minimalism. He uses simple language, ordinary situation and characters describing their real empty lives. Nothing special. Carver does not describe characters in the story and does not even mention where the story takes place. Actually, we do not know even the name of the narrator who is one of the principle characters.

The purpose of writing in such style is to give the readers chance to guess what might characters feel and have, to develop understanding the emotions and impressions of the characters through short exclamation and phrases.

Raymond Carver's style is dirty realism (writing style in America of the 70-80s of the 20th century). Carver requires such a saving of words that every description is subjected to a basic minimum. The rest is given to the dialogues of outstanding, non-complicated, unremarkable characters. As a representative of dirty realism, he focused on middle-class characters depicts the harsh realities of their ordinary lives full of sad memories and problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, divorce and death of the nearest and dearest. And with such minimalism, Carver story (several pages in size) contains serious drama, or even tragedy, of his 'outstanding' characters.

Language and narration

Simple story. Simple people. Simple language. These are rules for Carver's short story "Cathedral". There is absence of wide descriptions, beautiful adjectives and adverbs, extended metaphors and monologues that give some shades of meaning. In contradiction, he allows facts, actions and events dictate the core of proceeding. For instance, the opening of the stories is too simple: "This blind man, an old friend of my wife's, he was on his way to spend the

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

night.” Carver focuses on the simple events, routine of everyday life.

The story is written in 1st type of narration. The narrator, whose name is actually we do not know, drinks too much and has misunderstanding with his wife. Paradoxically, he tells us story but during the conversation between blind man, narrator and his wife the second one takes the passive position (he said some words to show that he was present in the room). It seems he could not understand not only his wife but also himself until Robert opens his eyes on his real problems to show how can he live in a kind of communion with the world and what connections he could have with it.

Pure Love in story

Is there any love in the story? On the first glance there is any. The couple has so much misunderstanding and unwillingness to hear each other that it seems they live in different worlds.

The wife wants to speak, she needs this communication. I think that is why she records letters to the blind man and tries to compose poetry. Her husband does not realize importance of support her. He listens her poems but without any pleasure and even emotions.

On contrast here is another couple in the story - Robert and his wife. We do not know a lot about their relationships but this short description about death of the Robert's wife says a lot. To the very death Robert does not leave his beloved and he saves a half of the coin (another half he put into the hearse) which reminds him about his love.

Meaning of “blindness”

I imagine an ordinary person living with primitive instincts, limited in his mind. His life is like a sticky liquid sucking in, from day to day. One day, in such a stable world, someone invades him that does not fit into it at all. From the very beginning we know about the blind man. We easily recognize that the narrator does not like the blind man and the blind in general. Blind. Vision is the most important organ of perception and 'such' existence in the dark terrifies the protagonist. There is disgust, misunderstanding, but only until the moment when this someone opens up for him another world, a world without borders and frames, where the main thing is what the soul feels, and not the body. How can a blind person explain to a blind man what it looks like that he had never seen in his life? That is why Robert asks to draw a cathedral, buttress arches, but the narrator shows him only the walls and the cold stone. Then he asks to close his eyes and allow the blind draw people with his hand in the cathedral, put the soul in the line of walls and stone. He shows a world that can only be seen by one who closes his eyes. The spiritual world and it is

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

much more beautiful than the visual. To believe and feel, eyes are not needed at all.

The theme of light and dark is also interpretation of theme of sight and blindness. This is shown through the character of Robert, who is literally blind. Literally! But he is not considered the one who lives in the dark but, paradoxically, in light. However, we could understand that the narrator, who actually could see, is 'blind' metaphorically in a number of ways. Indeed, Robert teaches the husband to close his eyes, feel and see with his senses and, draw. At the end of the story they both draw a cathedral with closed eyes laying on the floor. There is a hope for boosting light in narrator's soul through the cathedral as a symbol of the light.

This is shown through his selfishness and also his inability to see how his actions are impacting his relationship with his wife, who is increasingly annoyed by his insensitivity and rudeness.

Other paradoxical thing is that Robert has two TV (one colorful and one black and white) and could understand what TV he is watching (or listening). This is another provement that Robert is not blind and powerless. He tries to get new information through other perceptions of the body.

Meaning of “cathedral”

A cathedral is a symbol of faith, religion and the process of drawing it becomes the climax of the story.

The sighted hero is trying to explain to the blind man what a cathedral is. He talks about stones, architectural details, sizes. But for a blind person, these are not characterizing signs, for him the idea of objects is built on the basis of other categories: a cathedral has been built for centuries, people begin to build it, knowing that only grandchildren or even great-grandchildren can see the result.

“Do you believe in God?” he asks the man, when he finds it difficult to choose words that are understandable for the blind to describe another architectural detail. During description of the cathedral, husband thinks about the house: “I drew a box that looked like my house”. Here is a very strong image of transforming house into a cathedral, because cathedral is made, is built for people. That is why the blind man asks to draw people near the building.

The essence becomes visible through the form, the sighted person closes his eyes and feels the walls disappearing, for the Cathedral is something that cannot be perceived by the eyes, but only by something else, free from the fetters of a given shape.

Conclusion

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

To sum up, it should be mentioned that it's impossible to ignore Carver's immense talent.

A short story about the first meeting with the blind. It was written professionally, but not dry - it was easy for me to feel the whole situation and especially the climax. This is because a short story shows how easy it is to go from a world where you, like the main character, do not want to meet someone who is also blind, or even have any problems, to the world where you understand that you yourself were blind, and all that you have been doing lately you could do, feel, think on a completely different, better level. I am sure that everyone had such moments in their lives, but the problem is that they are, firstly, rare, and secondly, it is very easy to forget about them and continue to get stuck in the gray world, forgetting about other possibilities.

So, the author is faced with the task: to show how an unpleasant, limited, prejudiced subject from the beginning of the story becomes a person who holds a blind hand at the end of the story.

Thus, the narrator has finally "opened his eyes" in the sense that he can push beyond the limits and broke all frames of being blind. There is something rare and beautiful that we can only access through our minds.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)