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Lack of Vision  

So often, people look but do not see. In the story "Cathedral" by Raymond Carver, the author shares a beautiful message that to see the beauty of the world a person does not need twenty by twenty vision. This story gives a reflection of two words: looking and seeing. The word looking refers to a person who has vision, but still feels loneliness and is deprived of seeing the profound meaning of the world. Seeing refers to a person who is not blind but has an ability to see the world through the heart’s eyes. “More than one third of the human brain is devoted to the processes of seeing - vision is after all the main way in which we gather information about the world” (Gilchrist 1). Gilchrist states that even to have information about the world, one needs to see, not look, because seeing will lead to better understanding.

Now, in order to understand lack of vision, one must know the difference between looking and seeing. Looking is defined as to look at a surface without understanding its meaning, and seeing is described as to understand the deep meaning of life, even with the blindness. As the narrator mentioned in the story, "and his being blind bothered me" (para 1). The story states the narrator's wife has an old friend named Robert, who was blind. And, the narrator, who Robert refers to us Bub, does not like Robert because he is full of prejudice. The reason he had this kind of thought about blindness was because he used to watch movies and television shows, which displayed the characteristic of blindness in a way that a blind person does not laugh and was led by seeing eye dogs. But, when Bub met Robert in his house, his opinion about blindness changed
because he was just looking at the surface, not letting his brain think deeply. Moreover, in “Cathedral,” it has been shown that people also are judged by their disabilities, even without knowing the person’s actual behavior and physical infirmity. Despite all these facts, Robert was smarter and much friendlier.

Along with the story and all the facts, there is one television show named “Dare Devil.” As director mentioned in the show, “Can I ask a personal question?/ I haven't always been blind” (Johnson 3). In that show, a person name Matt Murdock is not blind by birth but loses his sight in an accident on the road. In the show, he was trying to save a person. By doing, so a tanker of highly toxic acid fell on the ground and all the chemical went in his eyes. After that incident, he loses his sight but receives an unbelievable power of hearing and feeling another person’s breath, footsteps, and other sounds from a distance. Later, he fights injustice by day as a lawyer and by night as the superhero Daredevil. So, despite all his disability, Matt Murdock managed to save his city from corrupt people. The television series is the perfect example of how a person can be intuitive, even because of loss of sight.

Next, the narrator mentions in the story, "On her last day in the office, the blind man asked if he could touch her face" (para 2). When the narrator’s wife was leaving Robert's office, Robert asked her if he could touch her face, and she agreed. And, Robert felt her face, nose, lips, and neck with his fingers; the narrator’s tone changed when he talks about his wife’s past relationship with Robert. He was jealous and was feeling insecure because Robert was coming to stay for a night, and his wife could not forget that moment of her life. However, that was all in the past, and the narrator was overthinking because his wife was excited to see his old, blind friend after so long. In addition, scholar Roze said, “when you in the open quire, shall draw forth a perfumed embroidered purse — the glorious sight of which will entice many countrymen from
their devotion to wondering” (Roze 6). A Cathedral is not only for worship; in “Cathedral,” children come and play choir and learn about virtue, civility and honest manners of living. With the symbolic help of the cathedral, the narrator’s perspective shifts to seeing Robert who he really was and understanding that not all blind people are ignorant and boring.

Last, when the narrator and Robert were sitting in the living room talking about their lives and enjoying a drink, Robert showed him the real beauty of life, which he was missing. The narrator was watching a shot of a Cathedral on television, and Robert asked him about a Cathedral’s structure and told him to draw on a paper with his eyes closed. After the narrator was done, Robert told him to open his eyes, but the narrator did not open them and was feeling the beauty of a Cathedral from his heart’s eyes. According to Alexander Pulte, “In recognizing the limitations with our vision, the idea of blind justice can be interpreted in a new light” (Pulte 1). Blind justice is not only referring to the law, but also to the varieties of blindness as the hopelessness of loss of passionate control by mythology and to see the truth of a religious message to the blindness in the context of philosophy. Moreover, blindness is an ability to tell good from evil. To tell a difference between good and bad, a person does not have to a perfect vision because, if God has taken their ability to see, he has given them an ability to see from the heart’s eyes.

Moreover, Leslie J. Francis said, “with intuition rather than sensing, with feeling rather than thinking and with perceiving rather than judging” (Francis 1). The judging process between feeling function and thinking function is the same as looking and seeing. As compared to the story, despite the disability of Robert’s blindness, her wife still loved him with all her heart. The author supported his thesis when he mentioned that Robert’s wife loved him even though he was blind. They were married for eight years before his wife died. He held his wife’s hand at the time
of her death. “Cathedral” has a defined pilot, and it shows a true love between husband and wife; even though Robert has not seen his wife, he still loved her and saw her clearly.

In conclusion, the narrator realizes that to see the beauty of the world, a person does not need to rely on physical sight. Despite the fact the narrator has perfect vision, he was still deprived of insight. The act of looking is referring to the real idea, and an act of seeing requires a deeper meaning of engagement to view a person's life or an object. “We see the world the way we do not because that is the way it is, but because we have these ways of seeing” (Pulte 2). In this story, Robert represents the true sight, and the ability to see the world beyond its surface. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, when Robert asked the narrator about the Cathedral, the narrator did explain it, but could not draw the Cathedral on paper. To draw a sacred place, a person needs close his or her eyes and feel that place in their heart. All in all, the short story “Cathedral” shows how two men learned how to see from each other’s perspective.
Work Cited


Gilchrist, Iain. “Active Vision.” *The Psychology of Looking and Seeing*


Johnson, Mark. “Dare Devil” *Netflix*.

