True Love? I Think Not! Raymon Carver Essay, Research Paper

In Raymond Carver?s, ?What We Talk About When We Talk About Love,? Mel offers the old couple that is injured in the car accident as an example of true love. Mel says, ??they had these incredible reserves those two ? they both kept plugging away at it for two weeks hitting it better and better on all the scopes?? (p. 413). This statement makes me think the two are struggling to get better for each other. In the end though, one can see that Mel?s example really isn?t as good as he thought.

You hear about it from time to time that a couple that is truly in love will do whatever it takes just to get back in the arms of their partner. This idea was brought up by Mel?s quote, ??the husband was very depressed for the longest while ? after he found out his wife was going to pull through he was still very depressed ? he?d say it wasn?t the accident exactly but it was because he couldn?t see her through his eye holes?? (p. 415). Mel?s example here is that the man was very upset because he could not take one glimpse of the woman he loved. All he wanted to do was look at her, and the fact that he could not set him into a deep depression.

We as readers can infer that true love isn?t the kind where the physical aspects are the only ones missed. This inference is aided when Mel says ??you know that kind of love that I am talking about now, physical love that impulse that drives you to someone special ? and, well, call it sentimental the day to day caring about the person?? (p. 412). Mel believes the combination of these two very different kinds of love is what makes for true love. He believes the most important part is that of the sentimental part with some physical added. We acquire this knowledge from the narrator, ?Mel thought real love was nothing less than spiritual love? (p. 408).

This example of the old couple that became injured is supposed to be an example of the truest of love. Mel puts this idea in our heads from his comment, ??I?ll tell you what real love is, I mean I?ll give you a good example and then you can draw your own conclusions?? (p. 411). When he says this we as readers are automatically made to think that what he is about to say is the best possible illustration of true love. You can tell before Mel starts this story that the other people sitting at the table with him think of him as being drunk. Terri says, ??Are you getting drunk? Honey? Are you drunk?? (p. 412)? We may not be so inclined to make sense of each word he is about to say as we would if he were sober.

Mel really does not expand much more after this point. It takes him a while to catch up with his point since he is drunk. ??Okay,?? Mel says, ??Where was I?? (p. 415)? He is then caught staring at the table before he remembers what he was speaking about. He begins his example again and is explaining the last part of the story how it is killing the man because he cannot lay eyes on his wife. He says, ??it was because he couldn?t see her through his eye-holes, he said that was what was making him feel so bad, can you imagine? I?m telling you, the man?s heart was breaking because he couldn?t turn his goddamn head and see his goddamn wife?? (p. 415).

Mel had said before that for true love there needs to be a ??sentimental, day-to-day caring about the other person?? (p. 412). When Mel calls the story a ??good example?? (p. 411) of love, we expect to see both sides of the love, the physical aspects and the sentimental ones. We in fact only see the physical ones by the time Mel?s story is complete. This is proven by the way the author italicizes all of the verbs, such as; look and see. He says, ??even after [the old man] found out that his wife was going to pull through he was still very depressed?? (p. 415). This quote points out that the sentimental love is not all there. He knows his wife is going to live and still does not change his outlook on life. Mel?s story ends very shortly after this discovery. He is found concluding his story by saying, ??I mean it was killing the old fart just because he couldn?t look at the \*censored\*ing woman?? (p. 416).

At this point everyone at the table looked right at Mel. In an unsure voice he replied, ??Do you see what I?m saying?? (p. 416)? At this point Mel realizes he just contradicted his previous statements. He said earlier that true love contains two distinct kinds of love, the physical kind and the sentimental kind. The old man in this story definitely didn?t have both kinds of needs. The old man only stated the fact that he needed to see her, and not that he needed to talk to her. Therefore, the man only had a physical love for his wife and not a sentimental one. Since the combination of the two is what constitutes true love as we see it in the story. We can conclude the man only has physical love for his wife but not true love. We as readers come away from this story with not a clue deeper into the definition of love. The couples in the story, and the couple in Mel?s story go to show us how mixed up a game love is. Also that it takes quite a bit to amount to the truest of love, and not just the normal love of everyday life.