

DOUBLE VISIONS—SEPARATING GORDON LISH'S  
EDITS FROM RAYMOND CARVER'S  
ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP IN THREE STORIES

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate the following essay to the life, work, and death of Raymond Carver (1938-1988). His life inspires perseverance and redemption. His work inspires determination for original self-expression. His death evokes a fully realized tragedy of the death of an author.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following essay is my eviction notice. I know full well that everything I have learned at IUPUI I owe a great deal to the three gentlemen who have worked with me on this essay. If I were to remain any longer under their tutelage, I imagine we would all lose a little bit of what is left of our minds. They have certainly done all they could do for rearing me under the umbrella of education. They have not only changed me personally, but they have made me who I am professionally. I am a better editor and writer today.

The fellows I show my sincerest thanks and appreciation: Robert Rebein, Jon Eller, and Prof. Touponce. Each of whom have contributed to my knowledge and know-how for producing this work before you. I am continually grateful for their support and for imparting their unique understanding of the fields of study in which I have accomplished some degree of success.

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I would sincerely wish to thank the hard workers of The Lilly Library at Indiana University for carrying heavy boxes of manuscripts back and forth and up and down so I might try to complete the never-ending tasks involved with scholarly research.

I would of course also like to thank all my family and friends, but especially Derrick Daily whose friendship has inspired me in more ways than I can relate and whose hospitality gave me shelter when I had none.

Most importantly, I want to thank Carolyn E. Leeman for helping me believe in my abilities and myself. Her much needed encouragement is like nothing I have ever known. Her tireless concern for my mental wellbeing has been nothing short of a miracle.

## ABSTRACT

Michael A. Powers

### DOUBLE VISIONS—SEPARATING GORDON LISH'S EDITS FROM RAYMOND CARVER'S ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP IN THREE STORIES

In 1998, D.T. Max wrote his article, “The Carver Chronicles,” about the manuscripts Gordon Lish sold to the Lilly Library at Indiana University. The public was made aware of Lish’s heavy editing of Raymond Carver’s short stories—both in early story form and, later, in book collection form. His heaviest editing was during Carver’s first two major story collections, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* (1976), and *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981). I discuss three stories, “What’s in Alaska?” and “Fat,” from the first major collection, and “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” from the second major collection. For this last story, we will separate Lish’s editorial vision from Carver’s original authorship by comparing the published book text with Carver’s original story, “Beginners”—two versions, one story.

The stories were examined to understand Lish’s editorial motives. To generate a deeper understanding of their textual visions, a critical analysis will evaluate their differences. The stories will first be analyzed in the state they existed before Lish’s changes, and then a second analysis will pinpoint Lish’s major editorial changes and show how they affected Carver’s original vision. The analysis will provide a foundation

for discovering a final product understood as a combination of two visions, Carver's original authorial vision and Lish's editorial vision.

The basis for future Carver studies is to separate these men's work. Carver's authorial intent becomes paramount in the investigation for finding the true Carver through critical and textual analysis. Their two distinct and separate visions affect how contemporary Carver studies critically examine his work. To understand Carver textually is to get at his original intent, to illuminate his true vision, separate from Lish's edits, in order to open up a new perspective and understanding of Carver's emotional depth and expansiveness.

Robert Rebein, Ph.D. (Chair)

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