

Carver / New Criticism Discussion Question

Using Raymond Carver's *Cathedral* as your starting place, try out some of the theoretical principals you're learning from your study of New Criticism. Is the story a unified organic whole? In what way? Is it filled with specific tensions and ambiguities (of speaker, tone, point of view, or metaphor) that mysteriously resolve into a perfect conclusion by the end, one that allows the story to somehow transcend itself and become a larger, more universal story? If you think the ending is ironic, does that ending serve to illuminate a transcendent truth that only becomes evident in the closing moments of the work? How does exactly does the end of the story relate to the rest of the story, it at all? Use the vocabulary terms at the end of Chapter 3 in *Texts and Contexts* to help you with this discussion response.

Reference specific passages to help you address these questions, and be specific in your answers.