

# Ground of a Theory: The Language Codes of Roland Barthes and American Critical Structuralism

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## *Abstract*

This paper is an application of Johnathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* from 1975 combined with the language codes of Roland Barthes which he developed in his study of *S/Z* to the close reading of poetry. Culler's main argument is that there must be another strategy combined with all major approaches in Structuralist thought in that time period. His answer to this problem was to develop a set of strategies or concepts to compensate for the reader in the analysis of literary works. I outline in this essay my approach based on the language codes of Roland Barthes: semantic, symbolic, cultural-referential, actional and hermeneutic. After a brief discussion of my understanding and contextualization of Structuralism today for this particular genre application, I apply the concepts to a reading of the famous William Carlos Williams' poem, "The Red Wheelbarrow" as a test-case application of the concepts.

*Keywords: poetry, literary theory, Structuralism, poetics*

## **1. Historical Context**

There was a time in literary history when some scholars complained of a lack of reading approaches. The historical term, "literary multiplicity", is applied to all of literary criticism. The meaning of this term, however, also includes another common connotation of an equally indifferent type: "literary theory". The idea of experimentation and postulating hypotheticals has been a standard trait of literary writing for hundreds of years. When we speak of literary multiplicity, our critical perception sees the field in the broadest possible sense. We live in a time that has

even come to question what we call the views that comprise the literary-critical scholarly landscape. These “views” have also been called trajectories, theories, reading approaches, methods, critical traditions, modes or strategies. The descriptive terms may change, though specific questions are always asked of artist and text. Each of these views seems to have its own unique set of concerns. Each seems to have something different to say about the literary work or its historic constellation of relationships with other texts. Geoffrey Hartman’s classic text, *Literary Criticism in the Wilderness* (1980) was a testament as to how far apart the critical divide had become and was intended in many ways as a polemic to get people to attempt to talk about commonalities again. My goal is to explain to the reader some of the implications in reconstituting a literary idea that was basically abandoned by its creator and left undeveloped in a literary landscape of literary plurality. Any approach in the study or exposition of literary works is subject to question. This essay is an attempt to develop an outline for a foundation of thinking about Structuralism, or at least how certain structuralist ideas are relevant to an approach I have recently attempted to apply in the study of poetry. Central to this attempt is Jonathan Culler’s study from 1975 titled *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*.

My attempt to develop a foundation of thinking begins with the language codes of Roland Barthes. However, there are several disciplines as well as a few literary ideas that influenced what he was doing in this regard, which for me began with his essay, “Style and Its Image”, though also including “The Structuralist Activity”, as well as his textual study, *S/Z*. Roland Barthes was not the first Structuralist thinker; there were others before him doing different things with similar ideas. For example, there is the complex history of the interwoven concepts of Linguistics, Semiotics and Anthropology. I prefer to begin with Ferdinand de Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics* because his understanding of the nature of language is central to much Structuralist thought and literary theory after him. Even though Saussure’s text sets forth the groundwork for Linguistics, the idea that language is a system of signs and referents for objects both within and beyond the self is an important concept which carries over into Structuralist and Post-Structuralist thinkers after him. In *Structuralism and Since: Levi-Strauss to Derrida*, John Sturrock describes Structuralism as “...simply a method of investigation, a particular way of approaching and...of rationalizing the data belonging to a particular field of inquiry”

(p. 2). In researching historical sources for studies in Structuralism, I find mixed results. A few were very useful, though only partially. Many I felt were irrelevant for the kinds of questions I was exploring in applying the language codes of Roland Barthes to poetry. The work of Michael Riffaterre and Robert Scholes seems fertile ground for ideas I disagree with, though also for consideration as I develop applications of Barthes's theory. In certain chapters of his book, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction*, Scholes (1974) seems to be the scholar on most common ground with my own. In reading Riffaterre, I find a similar application of Structuralist ideas to the explication of poetry in his own analysis and refutation of the Linguistic method in his essay, "Describing Poetic Structures: Two Approaches to Baudelaire's 'Les Chats'" from Jaques Ehrmann's edited essay collection *Structuralism* (pp. 188-230). In this refutation, I did not find Riffaterre's Semiotic approach very helpful. Perhaps most importantly, he illustrated that the close reading method could actually be combined with Structural discourse without destroying the ideas at issue. Culler's (1975) text more concisely and systematically addresses the problems of such an endeavor as well as the promise.

## **2. American Developments and Influence**

The Post-Modernist period in American literature is often characterized as a period of history which experienced increased cultural fragmentation and increased emphasis on technological advancement. There is actually no clearer instance of this than the post-war period in the United States. In art, there were numerous types of responses, including and especially the literary arts. One thing most of them had in common was a detached, self-reflexive quality. This attribute was caused by both the cultural impact of war and scientific thinking. Another result in American universities was that a shift in literary thinking seemed to be taking place for literary criticism in terms of a struggle between two dominant ways of reading a text: Historiography and Practical Criticism. The difference between these two ways of reading a literary text was often debated in professional literary journals of the time. This took place roughly from 1940 to 1960. After the Vietnam War, there was an even greater cultural rejection of organized systems; lost trust in government, law, increase in marginal lifestyles and dissolution of the family unit all created another social upheaval of cultural norms and values. One mixed result is that this was the era of human rights, though not without

loss of life and leadership. The two important events which exerted great influence on citizen distrust of government and asserting a general doubt in the common decency of their fellow man were the assassinations of political figures John F. Kennedy in November of 1963, Robert Kennedy in June of 1968 and also the Reverend, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in April of 1968.

During April 1969, the Harvard University community experienced a strike intended as a protest of administrative disciplinary actions imposed on students. Those in question had previously taken over a university building and occupied offices in their own protest of military recruitment on campus. Cultural-political events had a strong influence on how groups reflected and responded to these changes in society. A literary work inspired by the strike was Denise Levertov's collection of poetry titled *Relearning the Alphabet*, published in 1970. An important literary development from the early 1970s through the 1980s was that new reading approaches were seen as fresh, experimental ground. The questioned past became suddenly new; scholars and artists were looking back and questioning history in new or different ways. A semi-scientific, questioning method of discourse turned back on literary ideas came to be seen as something healthy and fruitful, rather than a trait of destruction or cultural revolt. Writers used new ideas with or against older reading approaches to reveal new ideas about past literary subjects or to introduce methods which had never been developed. Stephen Greenblatt's 1982 concept of what was to become termed the "New Historicism", is just one popular example of an academic idea that grew into a new field of scholarly, critical analysis. Structuralism was one of the many reading approaches which truly originated in the early seventies, though the idea is itself an amalgamation of ideas borrowed and influenced by Linguistics, Practical Criticism and Philosophy.

So what is Structuralism? In *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction*, Robert Scholes says all Structuralist discourse begins with a "...perception of order or structure where only undifferentiated phenomena had seemed to exist before..." which he calls "...the distinguishing characteristic of structuralist thought" (p. 41). Even linguistic scholars did not define structuralism very differently. For example, Martinet defines structure as the "...manner in which a building or organization or other complete whole is constructed" (Ehrmann, 1970, p. 1). Further, in a more theoretical description, he says that structure "...is a question of the way in which these materials are assembled and combined to obtain an object created for specific purposes and

capable of satisfying well-defined functions” (p. 2). This detached position of distancing oneself as if one were standing outside ideas and were examining them in a way that explains such relations seems to characterize the nature of Structuralism proper. The new idea for our age is very similar to the description given by the *Times Literary Supplement*: “Reacting against ‘modernist’ alienation and fragmentation, [structuralism] is an integrative and holistic way of looking at the world; it seeks reality not in individual things but in the relationships among them” (Scholes, 1974, p. 4). This is a very different type of Structuralist activity than that of Roland Barthes, one that needs other ideas so as to operate this way. One must incorporate and account for the act of reading to discourse in Structuralism today.

Because of the historical condition of Structuralism and its association with the breach of dialectic dispositions, also commonly known among academics in the study of literature as a “breach of thought”, there is no single discourse that developed from its initial awareness in the writing and study of literature. Thus began what is commonly referred to as the beginning of the acceleration of a modernist literary-cultural trait, sometimes described as the illustration of self-consciousness, the authorial tendency to attempt the portrayal of processes of thought and perceptions in the work of art itself. This post-modern idea, for some writers, was characterized as a further fragmentation of the literary work. To discuss this beginning breach of thought, Robert Scholes uses James Joyce’s novel *Finnegan’s Wake* as an example of process-writing, exemplifying the influence of this type of imagination in the modern age. Scholes cites this particular style of writing as an example of a preoccupation with structuralist thought. This division between structural and whatever existed before, is my topic of discussion as it is the beginning point of a particular way of thinking about human experience and the universe, very different than what existed before this division of consciousness expressed in literature.

Various scholars describe the two types of thought associated with the breach using different sets of terms. I think if we look briefly at their usage in the modern and postmodern age, I will prove they are the same concept as the division of thinking which influenced the age described in Northrop Frye’s “Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility”, in the case of those English poets between the Classical and Romantic literary periods, roughly 1714 to 1800. Carl Gustav Jung’s essay, “Psychology and Literature”, first translated into English in 1930, distinguishes between this same division of thinking. However, Jung, like the examples Scholes cites, is very

accessible for those with a general interest in literary ideas. Jung's two main literary types are "psychological" and "visionary" (pp. 88-89). The "psychological" type uses material from conscious life, the visionary type, more so than the first, material from imagination. In the first type, all norms and logic seem to remain consistent with common, human experience. In the second, logic may be reversed; material seems phantasmal, fractured, strange or even daemonic. Jung refers to this second type as an illustration of "...prodigious richness of imaginative material" (pp. 88-89).

Northrop Frye, writing about 33 years later, cites a similar literary phenomenon in the Age of Johnson poets in English history. One type he calls "Aristotelian", after Aristotle's "The Poetics", synonymous with the psychological type, the other he calls, "Longinian", after Longinus and his writing titled "On the Sublime", which is synonymous with the "visionary" type. Frye's essay describes a time in the history of English poetry where many literary works possessed visionary qualities. These works illustrated the process of human or writerly thought-process and so he frequently refers to writers of this age as "process writers".

The previous digression is necessary if one is to understand how Structuralist literary ideas have been applied to literature in recent decades. Donald Hall writes in his introduction to the anthology *Contemporary American Poetry*, second edition, that

"...the movement that seems to me new is subjective..." and "...reveals through images... general subjective life..." and since the "...universal subjective corresponds to the old subjective life of shared experience and knowledge...to read a poem of this sort, you must not try to translate the images into abstractions...you must try to be open to them..." and allow them to "...speak in their own language of feeling. It is the intricate darkness of feeling and instinct which these poems mostly communicate. The poems are best described as expressionist: like the painter, the poet uses fantasy and distortion to express feeling." (Hall, p. 33)

This description is consistent with Jung's visionary type of literature, though also with Frye's notion of process writing. Hall's description of this type of poetry is slightly different than overt process and has more in common with the psychological mode of writing. Hall says the "...vocabulary is mostly colloquial, but the special quality of the lines...is a quality...not to be pigeon-holed according to any sources. This imagination is irrational...and the language simple..." illustrating "...an

inwardness to these images, a profound subjectivity...” though “...not subjective in the autobiographical manner...” (p. 32). This example may seem to complicate the dichotomy, though it is proof that this particular type of shifting in thought or literary change is consistent throughout time.

When Peter Baker writes his 1996 introduction to *Onward: Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*, he makes reference to these same tendencies of thought in craft writing about poetry. His term for the “psychological” (Jung), “Aristotelian” (Frye), is “nominalist” (Baker, 1996, pp. 1-3). His term for the “visionary” (Jung) or Longinian (Frye) is “nominalist” (pp. 1-3). Here we can see a clear line throughout literary history where the same divisions shift and dominate the literary imagination within various periods. Baker cites the origin of this division as far back as the fourteenth century in the writings of William Occam, characterizing this as the separation of word/object relation. In Charles Simic’s 1973 essay, “Negative Capability and Its Children”, he makes reference to this same intellectual split. Simic’s purpose is only to illustrate the contemporary poets of the sixties, seventies and eighties as the inheritors of the post-modernist tradition. Invoking the term “negative capability” of English Romantic poet, John Keats, Simic implies a direct connection of influence in our way of thinking and writing about poetry. One year later Robert Scholes published his text *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* and referred to the same cultural phenomenon in characterizing the split. However, when he assigned a term to the “psychological” (Jung), “Aristotelian” (Frye), “immanent” (Baker), Scholes calls this type “ontological” (p. 177). This is the same term used by John Crowe Ransom in his 1942 study, *The New Criticism*. In assigning the “visionary” (Jung), “Longinian” (Frye), “nominalist” (Baker), Scholes calls this type “structural” (p. 179). He describes this as the ability to hold in mind two generalized modes of writing or artistic creation, and then logically discourse accordingly.

### **3. The General Paradigm of a Structuralist Poetics**

One of the good things about literary criticism is that there is no strict way to write in any given discipline. Scholars apply the ideas of our literary past to whatever work they choose to study in different ways. This essay attempts to explain the relevance of two or three essays in the history of a literary idea to the application of Structuralist ideas of Roland Barthes in the study of poetry. The reason why I

am doing so is that in some sense this idea is historical because it has never been done. Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* is the only text I have ever found to take up the problems and potential solutions in the application of those ideas to new areas of literary studies. Primarily, I will be drawing from and discussing Roland Barthes's "The Structuralist Activity", "Style and Its Image" and "From Work to Text". *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* records a type of Structuralist discourse called "American Critical Structuralism". This type of discourse is perhaps closer to what I am trying to achieve. Ironically, writing a Structuralist discourse, even today, is perhaps more systematic than writing in the numerous trajectories of literary criticism.

"Style and Its Image" and "The Structuralist Activity" form the theoretical core of ideas I have attempted to apply to the study of poetry. The first essay outlines the language codes. In that essay Barthes also discusses two common concepts of style: "content/form" and "norm/deviation". These are important tendencies of thought because they disguise the work of art with a more or less mythological concept of language. The language codes further complicate this situation and offer a new way of thinking about the literary work. Barthes claims that the older concepts of form need rethinking because instead of a binary situation, thinking of the text as made of two parts such as "content/form", or inner/outer like an object, he suggests the situation of the literary work is more stereographically complex. Barthes eventually ends his essay with the analogy of the literary work as a layered object, like an onion. One layer gradually gives way to the next. The situation is contrapuntal and not a single voice speaking through the work to an audience of diverse readers. The second essay, "The Structuralist Activity", establishes a means for working through the concepts and applying the Structuralist method to literary works. My method advocates an organization based on the language codes which seem most dominant within the given framework. Often, a foregrounding of the work is necessary to familiarize the reader with the material of the work of art. Also relevant in this respect is the author's background. Sometimes the type of writing is most relevant to analysis and this determines the sequence of commentary. Culler's ideas concerning resistance, recuperation and naturalization on the process of reading are equally informing and important.

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to familiarize the reader with the material of the work of art. Also relevant in this respect is the author's background. Sometimes the style of writing determines the nature of approach and this in turn determines the sequence of code organization in analysis. The assumptions that I most often bring to a reading are neither political nor ideological; they are perhaps closest to what Jung tries to achieve in his concept of "objective Psychology". Using this idea, Jung tries to arrive at a neutral and unbiased understanding of the nature of human thinking and motives for actions otherwise problematic or unexplained. This idea of objectivity is not new to literary scholarship and seems to me consistent with the general notion of the aims of science and technology in the modern and postmodern age. One would most likely describe this as a disposition or stance and not the actual goal I am trying to accomplish.

As a theory with a historical context and fixed origin, I should describe the setting from which these ideas originated and then attempt to explain what literary concepts from that historical setting are most relevant to what I am trying to accomplish through my understanding of American Critical Structuralist thought. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* claims there exist three main divisions of Structuralism: the Prague School, the Moscow-Tartu School and the French/American group (2012, pp. 1361-1366). Being an American, I therefore write as an American who has taken up French ideas, primarily those of Roland Barthes. This aspect of my approach only extends into the areas of Semiotics and Linguistics as discussed in Culler's *Structuralist Poetics*. Saussure's work, *Course in General Linguistics* being the ground of all modern Linguistics, shares a fundamental premise with other disciplines which have gradually grown from Linguistics over time: Semiotics, Stylistics, Cultural Anthropology, Deconstruction, Post-Structuralism, or any variation or combination of each. The fundamental premise of which I write is only that all language is a system of symbols and that as such, the nature of language does not change. Words are signifiers which denote the signified. The word is a referent, a sign which stands for a meaning we attribute from a larger system of thoughts and ideas. Some linguists describe this on a much more basic level beginning with the letter as referent of the sound. The sounds when combined form larger units of combined sounds and words which then form the idea of the referent. This theory then proceeds to the greater conglomerate of grammatical groups of referents, which form sentences as a whole. From its earliest inception, linguistics has had the focus of the sentence as its primary objective. Code analysis applied to poetry would have a very

similar method of discourse, though not anything at all like Linguistics applied to literature.

In its earliest development, Structuralism claimed two fundamental insights; first, that “social and cultural phenomena do not have essences but are defined both by their internal structures and by their place in the structures of the relevant social and cultural systems” (Greene et al., 2012, pp. 1363-1364). This is not a new idea. As early as the New Critics in America, Cleanth Brooks and several other literary scholars were interested in structures of poetic works. The second fundamental insight concerns the notion that “social and cultural phenomena are signs: not physical events only, but events with meaning. The most successful structural analysis isolates those structures that permit phenomena to function as signs” (Greene et al., 2012, p. 1364). In terms of essences, one only needs to understand that objectivity plays a central role. If a text has an essence, a bias would exist which would distort and fail to clarify the grounds of its own discourse. Social and cultural phenomena have internal, that is, linguistic structure and a historical context as well. Language cannot exist outside of culture. Culture cannot exist without language. One cannot study a work or an event using a Structuralist method without treating its phenomena as if it were somehow readable. These two insights have a different meaning and use now than they did when they originated.

Structuralist discourse in literary analysis began as a French revolt against literary historicism and biographical criticism which dominated the universities (Greene et al., 2012). In the United States, this division was centrally part of the development of literary criticism between Historiography and “Practical”, or New Criticism, in the late 1930s through the 1940s. One of the primary complaints against cultural and biographical criticism was that this type of discourse moved too far from the text. Also, that those practitioners often were blinded in their methods because they only focused on these aspects of the work when other aspects were equally valid for discussion. Eventually, some scholars believed the proper way was to begin analysis with the textual elements and move outward toward other relevant ideas expressed in the work, whether they be historical or biographical. With this in mind, one of the main features of any Structuralist discourse was to keep the ideas and opinions of the writer in check. They argued “a return to the text,” and “assumed that one could not study a text without preconceptions and that in order to discover structures, this requires an objective methodological model” (Greene et al., 2012, p. 1364).

Roland Barthes then developed a generalized concept as to what happens when one engages in this type of literary analysis. He argues that Structural, literary analysis “studies the conditions of meaning” as well as “the formal structures that organize a text and make possible a range of meanings” (Greene et al., 2012, p. 1364). Barthes called this concept “poetics”, though the term should not be confused with the literary concept of craft writing about the motive and artistic choices of a given writer, also called “poetics” which originated from Aristotle’s treatise on the subject. I am satisfied in my writing to use the term “discourse” to avoid any confusion of terminology; however, I should mention on their terms, Structuralists usually intend poetics to mean “...essentially a theory of reading” (Culler, 1975, p. 128). It will be helpful to keep this second sense of meaning in mind because of the scholarly work which has come before mine.

The two modes of literary Structuralist discourse which developed illustrate, in my opinion, two dominant trajectories of literary analysis. One is characterized as a technique applied directly to the description of the language of texts. This is now primarily known as the area of Structural Linguistics. The works of Jakobson and Levi-Strauss are perhaps the founding progenitors of this method. Second, the one with which I identify in my academic pursuit of practicing Structuralist thought, is Structural discourse as a model that, as Culler says, “would stand to literature as a mode in its own right”, while still remaining close to the language of formal literary analysis. Roland Barthes, Michael Riffaterre, Robert Scholes and especially Jonathan Culler are literary examples of this method.

Much like Scholes, the Russian Formalists were an early example of a group which had similar critical concerns. They were writing at about the same time that T. S. Eliot was publishing his early literary essays on literary subjects. Even though Russian Formalists originated in approximately 1910, they published through the twenties and were not translated in the United States until 1960, some fifty years later. This second mode of literary Structuralist discourse was “founded on the presumption that while literature uses language, it is also itself like a language; its meanings are made possible by systems of convention that serve readers as models for interpretation” (Greene et al., 2012, p. 1364). Fifty years beyond the initial translation of “Style and Its Image”, I have attempted the application of this discourse to the study of poetry. Structuralist approaches to literature never took hold in America and came much later during a time when literary ideas were growing with universities

across the country from 1970 through the 1980s. Since Roland Barthes developed the idea of the language codes and never fully applied them to poetry, I have attempted a kind of literary experiment to see if any fruitful results could be achieved in applying the ideas to a variety of poetry throughout literary history. The following explication of a well-known poem by William Carlos Williams is a first analysis.

#### 4. Applied Structuralist Poetics

“The Red Wheelbarrow” illustrates an actional code through plot description. The poet utilizes a deictic of the *dramatis personae* of a speaker describing objects which sound like what could be the overheard thoughts of anyone. There is no expressed literal action in the poem. In this particular sense we must consider the work itself as an action of mimesis between reader and artist. The numeric title of XXII merely places the small work in a larger context of a sequence poem. Only in this sense does the work seem to engage a larger, actional element; however, due to the apparent random nature of the pieces in *Spring and All*, to conceive of an actional element beyond what Barthes intended would extend the idea into an area he never intended and one which may contradict its actual function in the scheme of the language codes. All literary works share this sense of the actional as they are all communicated from artist to reader.

On the symbolic level, poem XXII is essentially an object poem which characterizes a seemingly random thought on a common theme of utility. The later title of the poem, “The Red Wheelbarrow”, more directly characterizes the work as a symbolization of this utilitarian object. As an object, the wheelbarrow is symbolic of usefulness, self-reliance and ruggedness. The wheelbarrow is a common object associated with rural life. This object, its most common color being red, in working order, represents utility, although it has also been seen in American history as a lawn ornament. As a literary work, the poem illustrates an example of a new structure. A couple of lines appear to be based on Williams’s concept of the triadic line in poetry, which was a new concept of measure that he developed. I will discuss this further much later in the essay when I discuss the metrical aspects of the poem as it is there they have the most meaningful contribution for analysis. In the symbolic sense, three objects take the foreground in poem XXII: the wheelbarrow, water and chickens. Each object is accompanied by a modifier: “red”, “rain” or “white”. Red is a standard color

for farm implements and tools, though usually symbolizes hard work and sacrifice. Traditionally, water is the symbol of life. A white chicken is a Leghorn; though not American, it is still associated with rural, Italian life. They are the most common breed in the United States. The rainwater and chickens suggest fertility. Thus, “The Red Wheelbarrow” illustrates select icons of pastoral fertility.

In the semantic sense, the poem conveys the descriptive connotations of the character of the pastoral image. Williams has presented the object in the objective Romantic sense in that the subject is described, radiates with a natural, reflective quality created by the rain-water and has been placed in proximity to the farm animals. Leghorn chickens are traditionally the most common, economical breed to raise. Structurally, the stanzas mirror the meter created by the poet in his sense of new measure. The first stanza illustrates description, though it is a qualification of value: “So much depends / upon” (L 1-2). The second and third stanzas contain the only physical description: “a red wheel/ barrow // glazed with rain / water” (L 3-6). The last stanza recapitulates the description of objects in proximity: “beside the white / chickens” (L 7-8). The words “depends”, “glazed” and “beside” do not carry strong connotative implications. The careful choice of neutral diction reinforces the seemingly thought-like quality of the poem.

The enjambment, unusual title and metrical aspects of poem XXII constitute enigma, though exist as traits characteristic of literary works of art. These features exist, however, as those most unlike typical Imagist poems of the era. Williams subverts the readerly expectation of the expected Imagist convention of the way the image operates at the conclusion of an imagist poem. Two things are not brought together here to create a third thing. The hermeneutic aspect of “The Red Wheelbarrow” operates in such a way that the artistry of the poem’s structure is disguised. This almost hyper-sense of linguistic crafting creates a shifting of measure which makes the line-breaks difficult to read, uncomfortable and almost unnatural, as if the reader were urged to consider the objects in some different way. The intrinsic structure of the lines virtually obliterates any conventional sense of reading the poem with the idea of natural, spoken rhythm. The words do not flow like logical sentences; they seem like parts of a thought. The thought is logical, though has taken shape in broken lines. The numeric title only adds to the mystery of the poem’s unconventionality.

The cultural-referential aspect expresses the American, Christian middle-class,

domestic object through a common diction. This pastoral image harkens back to rural farm culture and takes on the associations of early American farm life. In terms of its material substance, the poem has not been constructed of any material different from other popular American poems. This aspect for Williams remains part of its characteristic uniqueness, for the intent here has been to present the similar material in fact through the same idiom, though in a new way structurally different from the common fare and is in fact part of its genius. The universality of the image has been created through a clever use of diction, though the structure of the work has been subverted through carefully crafted metrical lines. Williams has, in this sense, had it both ways. The poem's true form remains cloaked as it were in the common idiom, reinforced through common images of utilitarian subjects and further complicated through a series of lines that mirror each other as if in a dance or waltz of language.

The title as a numeral indicates the work is one in a series, a unique structure of poetic form commonly referred to as a poetic sequence. With no title as reference, one must keep in mind the previous poem which in such a case would seem to bear greater significance in case of context. "Twenty-two" as a title means nothing when the reading commences as is customary in the conventions of poetry. Ambiguity of not having a title and only two objects mentioned, a farm implement and chickens, could leave the theme open to question, which would be atypical of Williams's motives. However, since the idea of having chickens implies you have your own eggs and the use of the wheelbarrow is both practical and beneficial, the images constitute utility or necessity in the most common aspect. Since there is no title to contextualize the ambiguity and to shape it to an end, we cannot say this with any certainty. The theme holds because it is the subject matter, the very material of the poem. The line-endings of poem XXII operate in such a way that the specific thematic effects of prosodic or phonemic patterns are difficult to discern. Here, I have relied as Culler suggests, upon the conventions of unity and symmetry to justify the formal features that I discuss (pp. 180-182). My discussion of this poem will follow a similar course as I have relied upon his concepts and idea as a developmental model for a structural application of Barthes language codes.

Deictics in this regard are primarily spatial. A context is described like a photographic image. In this sense only is the poem an imagist work: because the images create a scene and seem to be all the poem is really about. As analyzed above, "The Red Wheelbarrow" is an object where the subjects seem like an afterthought,

simply and concisely stated. The illusion of the work as representation of reality is not broken by self-consciousness. If deictics were disengaged, this aspect would have the qualities of a Language poem. The work would have the traits of self-consciousness, questioning its own ground and be prone to a linguistic play characteristic of such works. The formal model of unity demonstrates a series of stanzas united by a common denomination. The poem is grounded by a theme of necessity. The poem's unifying features are its unique stanza structure and enjambed lines. Since the poem has the readerly feel of a thought and a visual image created in such a unique way, necessity of the object is of thematic import. If we call poem XXII an object poem, the subject would be the red wheelbarrow. As in most object poems, the subject can be thought of as the common denominator which unites the series of stanzas. Thematic importance in this regard only concerns the pastoral quality of the image. Williams creates, in essence, one of those iconic American images associated with the rural past.

Resistance in this regard involves the use of enjambment. The line-breaks in poem XXII do not follow any conventional rhythm, certainly not any natural spoken rhythm. The poem does not illustrate any punctuation nor does it utilize capital letters. Those features which despite the fact of being poetry still enable the reader to treat its logic the same as a grammatical sentence. Even though these are traits which signal conventional resistance, they also sever recuperation in the reading process so as to help rationalize such artistic choices. The line operates based on the part to whole structure which moves from object to society.

If one chose to type naturalizing line-endings, one would detect a rhythm most unconventional. Williams utilizes a common diction and detail as plain and spare as if the words were thoughts jotted on paper. Even though the poem has no grammatically correct punctuation, the logic of grammar remains intact. The metrical and phonetic patterns here do not create couplings which by default carry over as parallelism. There seems to be a strange sense of a uniquely structured unity and symmetry of personalized form created in these stanzas. The presence of phonetic or unrhythmical figures stresses or throws into relief the particular form of the poem's stanzas. However, as to how this emphasizes meaning is subject to conjecture. Since the poem operates like jotted notes of thoughts and creates a photographic image much like a snapshot, the meaning to be emphasized may in fact be both the impersonality suggested in merely numbering the work and not giving it a more descriptive title,

countered with the specificity and universal nature of the type of image created.

If “The Red Wheelbarrow” were treated as a painting or a sketch, its composition is formed by the binary opposition of living and non-living subjects. The primary subject would consist of the red wheelbarrow and in the foreground, a few white chickens. The reader’s cultural assumptions form the rest of the image; grassy landscape around a building or barn, maybe the edge of an open field and newly parted clouds that signal the end of the shower that has recently taken place. These binary oppositions, living and non-living, sunshine and rain, utility and contemplation or economy and thrift permeate the scene. Unlike a painting, however, no additional details offer the reader clues as to how to interpret the language of the created image. As such, we must take the image as rendered: a purely objective view of the given subject, an impression much like memory.

In Culler’s *Structuralist Poetics*, he mentions as one of his four interpretive strategies to look for and integrate puns and ambiguities (1975, p. 177). In this poem there are no puns, though the reader finds a structure ripe with ambiguity due to its predominant free-verse quality. This also illustrates Williams’ cleverly disguised concept of measure. In a letter dated June 13, 1956 to poet Denise Levertov, he said, “The art of the poem requires order but in our day a new species of order, a new measure, consonant with our time” (p. 41). These metrical features follow a uniform pattern much like a waltz. The syllable count from line to line scans a count of four, two, three, two, three, two, four and two. Oddly, add the syllables up and they equal the number of the poem’s title, twenty-two. Maybe this is what Williams meant when he dismissed “The Red Wheelbarrow” as a serious work and referred it as a joke. Line one is iambic dimeter with line two only a single iamb. Line three is an amphibrach followed in line four with a trochee, the opposite measure of line two. Line five is composed as an amphimacer, the metrical opposite of line three. Line six is composed as another trochee, keeping the signal for the turn in tact and then lines seven and eight recapitulate the beginning measure from lines one and two of iambic dimeter, though with the closing foot opposite of an iamb with a trochaic foot. All of these metrical qualities demonstrate a formal balance of binary opposition cloaked with ingenious word choice and careful placement of line structure. The work illustrates opposition in its resistance against any poetic convention for 1923, the year of its publication. Equivalence has been achieved in the subtly disguised figures Williams has chosen to utilize in his then-newly created idea of triadic verse. The metrical foot

count of the poem forms another varied pattern of two, one, two, one, one, one and two, one. Williams weaves these ambiguities and complementary aspects as a way of revealing their unnatural, harmonious qualities.

The next general interpretive operation asks the reader to identify metaphor and synecdoche. Having already established the fact that the poem has eschewed formal poetic conventions such as rhyme, metaphor and figurative language or known stanza structures, the idea of synecdoche seems to be a most valid idea because of the poem's unconventional structure. The definition of synecdoche by most literary standards is a "...trope in which the part signifies the whole or the whole signifies the part" (Harmon & Holman, 1996, p. 510). Regardless of the fact that the reader could select an object in any poem and say it represents an idea larger than the thing presented, the language in poem XXII does not operate this way. In this case, we have yet further evidence of a rejection of poetic convention on the artist's part and can only say the poem's image of its subject operates this way, as if the entire poem were an allusion to rural domesticity. The two known objects, wheelbarrow and chickens, along with readerly assumptions, form the basis for a valid reference to the necessity of these objects in rural life, even if they are mentioned in the poem as aspects of life which society was beginning to move away from and were only kept as supplements to living. This is the only way Williams' poem can be said to represent anything beyond its subject.

Finally, what are we to make of the idea when Culler states, "What a poem says can be related to the fact that it is a poem" (1975, p. 177)? Here again we are drawn to the idea that we must remain conscious of the idea of the separation between poetry and prose. The two divisions I discussed earlier can be thought of in this way, but it is more likely that they as well can function as a four-term homology. Prose is mostly psychological as it presents a typical order of the universe and follows a specific set of rules and expectations. Poetry has traditionally been the art which operates on a visionary basis as it speaks in ways both conventional and unconventional. However, each of these types of writing is equally subject to the inclusion of aspects of the other, slightly changing the nature or disposition of the writing in question. At this point in literary history, we must keep in mind that there exist writings which have mixed traits of each type of writing. How are we to treat a poem that does not utilize poetic conventions, or at least a limited range of their substance? Here again we must refer back to the work's unconventionality and think of these unique attributes as an expression of artistic freedom.

Perhaps historically, our recuperation of the work may benefit the context in question as Williams constantly defended himself and his style of writing from attacks by American academic formalists. In *I Wanted to Write a Poem: The Autobiography of the Works of a Poet* Williams states his general concept for presentation of the material in *Spring and All*: “Chapter headings are printed upside down on purpose, the chapter numbers are all out of order, sometimes with a Roman numeral, sometimes with an Arabic, anything that came in handy. The prose is a mixture of philosophy and nonsense” (1977, p. 37). Still, for Williams’ conception of poetic artifice, there remained a sense of the work as a structure separate from prose creations regardless of the degree of their mixture together in the placement of the larger sequence. Williams says, “...the poems were kept pure—no typographical tricks when they appear—set off from the prose. They are numbered consistently, none had titles though they were to have titles later when they were reprinted in *Collected Poems*” (p. 37). Williams though, was not a typical literary figure. A Pediatrician by trade, his interests in American literary movements were varied and changed almost as quickly as the ideas were themselves introduced to the minds of the public. Often however, only an educated elite were aware of such changes. In his 1954 *Selected Essays*, Williams writes of the “new” measure. He says: “We have no measure by which to guide ourselves except a purely intuitive one which we feel but do not name. I am not speaking of verse which has long since been frozen into a rigid mold signifying its death, but of verse which shows that it has been touched with some dissatisfaction with its present state” (1969, p. 339). In this particular literary example the reader must look deeper so as to find the literary qualities which typically guide naturalization in the first place. Williams has stripped away most of what is conventional.

The poet emphasizes the fact of immediacy in “Yours, O Youth” as early as 1921. His concept of contact is where contemporary American poetry learned of the idea of immediacy, or his term, “contact” with life experience. This was very different for the age as the dominant poetry of the time maintained a deictic of formal artifice expressly as a defining feature of its poetics. Throughout his career he was associated with movements such as Imagist 1912-1917, Vorticist 1914-1915, Objectivist 1931-1936 and Black Mountain College during the 1950s (Greene et al., 2012). William Carlos Williams is in fact the father of American inwardness for our time and all American poets, for it is not evidenced in his poetry only where we see such freedom, though it

is precisely in the thinking through his literary justification for why he has written the way he has written that remains important to us today.

The last set of concepts drawn from *Structuralist Poetics* concern plot, theme and character. Typically applied to the study of prose fiction, these ideas can also be applied to the study of poetry. Since the deictics of poetry involve an imagined speaker and creation of the work of art based on the mimetic aspect of utterance, every poem can be said to emulate a dramatic situation which has a plot or conflict just as any narrative. Equally so, any poem can be thought to illustrate a theme and to accrue the qualities of character or to depict characters just as prose fiction. Every poem, therefore, can be said to illustrate or communicate a dramatic conflict. This conflict is not always a problem in the sense of a challenge to the speaker and can take the form of attention the writer has given to certain thoughts. These thoughts also have assumed categories the reader is already aware of which often form clusters of tendencies in expression—a central idea or set of controlling ideas, a theme. Poetry also portrays a quality that takes on the substance of an individual consciousness and can often involve characters just as narrative fiction.

In the context of poem XXII, “The Red Wheelbarrow”, character and theme remain closely aligned with the individual contemplating life and the power of human imagination. None of the writings in *Spring and All* are arranged in numeric sequence. Williams has arranged his works as poems with Roman numerals instead of titles and has interrupted the poetry with brief prose writings, also untitled, which bear the quality of notes on poetic process. Placement of works in collection sequence often supports the interpretive direction for discussion, though Williams has prevented this from happening with such uncharacteristic arrangement as poem XXII has been placed between “Quietness” and “Rigmarole”, poems XXI and XXIII respectively. If the theme is human imagination and its creative force, the character we must contemplate does not reside in the work in the same way as a character in prose fiction. Here, we must consider the poet as the central character who has taken the larger structure of the work of which poem XXII is but a small part. The poet uses this larger structure to work out the problem of the barrier between human consciousness and imagination. If this is the case, our theme is the endless creative potential of human imagination and its transcendence of the barrier.

In the context of the single work, “The Red Wheelbarrow”, the poet contemplates the given subject as a random thought from consciousness, though only in shaping

the seeming impression from memory into poetic form can imagination exercise its power over the barrier. Resolution of the conflict in this case is the work itself existing by its own standard as presented by the writer. This historical internalization of the problem of what professionals in literary studies of poetry call “form”, is the same as that which concerns this essay when I say “structure”. In one sense, it is as if the poet projects all internalized conflict regarding form into the artwork which contains the poem in question. Williams characterizes immediacy in his essay “Against the Weather: A Study of the Artist”, when he says, “In the structure of their works will stand revealed that they, as artists, conceived of their material. In the structure the artist speaks as an artist purely. There he cannot lie. The artist as a man of action perpetuates his deed and records himself as a reality in the structure of his work—for which the content is merely useful” (1969, p. 204). Plot in this sense would more centrally concern the speaker’s resolution in creating the work, though in a larger context, the “war”, as Williams often called such scholarly disagreements, concerned matters of aesthetic style. American universities from 1920 through 1940 were still predominantly conservative. Not until after World War II were such changes normalized in the subculture of academic society.

Williams often characterized himself as the victim of attack on his aesthetic freedom. “The Poem as a Field of Action” (1948) was delivered as a speech at the University of Washington. In this essay Williams deplores the publishing status quo as nothing but copyists. He says this trait “...is characteristic...where they will *copy* ‘the new’—but the tiresome repetition of this ‘new’, now twenty years old disfigures every journal” (1969, p. 280). Samuel Taylor Coleridge himself had written of the dichotomy between organic and mechanical form in his *Biographia Literaria*. There was perhaps no class warfare implied in such a discussion for English poets, though a distinction of types of poetic character was clearly set forth. This difference of character is the same I mentioned earlier when speaking of the two divisions of types of writing traced back to Aristotle and Longinus. Possibly, Williams understood himself as a process writer and thoroughly understood the general tendencies of literary history and the rationale of their existence.

One of the most interesting and confusing aspects of Williams’s poem XXII is its sense of rhythm. All lines in the poem are enjambed; they carry over from one to the next with no beginning and no end. The common diction of the poem permits the reader to identify with the material, though its rhythm is broken and unnatural.

Williams characterizes his poetic process as a type of writing at the speed of the emotions in such a way that ideas are "...touched but not held..." or even "...broken by the contact" (1920, p. 9). In a later writing from 1939, he takes up the issue of rhythm and seems to have developed a more constructive rather than intuitive concept of poetic process. In "Against the Weather" he writes that "...the poet...builds a structure...using for this the materials of his verse. His objective is an order. It is through this structure that the artist's permanence and effectiveness are proven" (1969, p. 213).

Further along in his development, Williams uses language in contradictory ways in describing his sense of rhythm. In "The Poem as a Field of Action" (1948), he says, "the only reality that we can know is MEASURE" (1969, p. 283). Still, rhythm isn't substance. Rhythm isn't material, like a thought or an image or a thing, or even like life experience. The rhythm of the work provides a sense of movement that is also part of structure, creating this structure as it takes its logical, phonetic course. Williams seems to suggest that there is another common aspect of language that any words written in any form will have their own, unique metrical measures. Structure, in fact, has been and is the proverbial conflict for Williams. He claims, "...our poems are not subtly enough made, the structure, the staid manner of the poem cannot let our feelings through" (1969, p. 284). For Williams, resolving this issue through the work, more intrinsic than the poetry of the past is the solution. He says, "...in order to liberate the possibilities of depicting reality in a modern world that has seen more if not felt more than in the past—in order to be able to feel more..." (1969, p. 284). Still, how does knowing the poet's poetics change how the reader resolves the conflicting rhythm of poem XXII?

If the problem is consciousness as a barrier to experience and the resolution is direct contact with experience, then the poem succeeds in its transcendence of the plot conflict I have created for the sake of this particular type of reading. One could argue in fact that it is the appearance of the lack of structure, what we notice being absent through the poet's own conception of structure, that the poem becomes successful. This highly structured work only appears to take on the qualities of an afterthought. If one were to rewrite the poem with natural, spoken rhythm, in grammatically correct sentences, the poem would look as follows:

So much depends upon  
a red wheelbarrow,  
glazed with rain-water,  
beside the white chickens.

This type of restructuring would not achieve anything different as a stanza or as single-lined stanzas with added punctuation and an end-stopped last line. The poem still communicates a complete thought. Utilitarian value is expressed as the subject remains vividly described in a concrete environment at once imaginary, though realistic. As we have the rhythm from the writer, its natural flow is pre-empted. In fact, do we know at all how to read what we see? Does the enjambed line pause at all? Even after line two, there is white space signaling the division of stanzas. How is the reader supposed to interpret this? Is the end of a line a half pause and the space between stanzas a full pause? These questions coerce a conclusion back toward the initial idea of the poem as musing thought, seemingly as random as any other thought about anything.

The language codes of Roland Barthes may best be applied to the larger text of *Spring and All* as a complete work with the background properly sketched for the reader. If we keep in mind that this larger sequence of poems is a tour de force of process-writing and that Williams was a proponent of poetic imagination, these facts will aid our understanding this small part of the larger whole. Since poetry often makes use of compression, one of the important features of code analysis is a seeming overlapping of certain codes. Because of this quality, a reader may attempt to say that certain codes are absent, though this is not the case. Being a part in a larger sequence helps better contextualize features such as actional, semantic and symbolic codes.

In the case of poem XXII, no actional code can be detected. However, if we step back and look at the work in context, we may consider the work itself as the action, regardless of the fact that we could say this about any poem given a language code reading, in this particular situation it is justified because the only word in the work which even remotely resembles an action is the preposition “beside.” The action of subjects in this sense is implied and aligned to their given natures of common purpose. I have already commented on how such a view was a part of Williams’s poetics. I do not think it is a stretch to say that in this particular reading, the actional code can be characterized through the tone and character of the work itself as a tool of

deictics wherein the speaker has a thought about a red wheelbarrow and that there is not expressed or described action in the poem other than the work.

The symbolic and semantic codes have been the most challenging to distinguish in past applications. Here, I have relied upon the subject and expressed thoughts of the speaker to help characterize each code as so that some contrast may be discerned. The wheelbarrow as a utilitarian object symbolizes usefulness and self-reliance. The opening line suggests this where the speaker says, “so much depends” (L 1). As a common implement associated with rural life, the idea of necessity can be isolated as the theme. The symbolic import of the subject of this poem is not ornamentation. Williams detested this trait in poetry. The image presented to the reader here is objective, realistic and not the diction of decoration. The only thing that problematizes this singular summation of theme is the fact that the reader knows other metrical features are present beneath the common guise of the work. Maybe this is the joke that Williams was referring to; that his work appears domestic on one level, rather plain, and yet arty and metrically intellectual on another level. How can we say that the artist intends one theme, therefore, when there are clearly two senses at play in poem XXII? If utility is the theme of the poem, then the fact that Williams embodies the poetics of a process-writer characterizes the theme of this work as the transcendence of the artist’s imagination over the barrier of consciousness.

The semantic code established a developed set of connotations around the subject and communicates the pastoral tone of the work. The wheelbarrow is “red”, a common, almost traditional color for this particular implement. The white chickens depicted here are the Leghorn breed, the most common for commercial or common farm stock (L 7-8). Relying on the object as a utilitarian tool is another connotation which fits the description of the setting of the work. Williams presents almost a vignette of domestic, rural life. The wheelbarrow is placed either sitting in the yard or up against a building as it may normally be when not in use. The chickens are grazing before the subject as it has just rained, “glazed with rain / water” (L 5-6). All such connotations illustrate an image of common life as would be found anywhere in America.

Since the hermeneutic code vitiates all aspects of enigma and puzzle, poem XXII illustrates the complexity of form disguised as a series of brief thought impressions. Both because the poem is a work in a sequence of process-writing and especially because it is a poem that achieves something uniquely different than other poetry, “The

Red Wheelbarrow” represents cloaked language in a greater language-game. *Spring and All* as a whole represents artistic play in one of its greatest literary examples, published at a time at the beginning of American Modernism. Every formal aspect that I have discussed earlier validates this claim. The primary enigma here is the form that Williams is creating which was something new for the historical context of the 1920s. Through use of the sequence title and enjambment that throws off rhythm, though creating a formal metrical pattern and the depiction of a rural, domestic image rather than the imagist image that performs another revealing of an image at its conclusion, Williams creates the classic example of the triadic line.

The cultural-referential aspect of the poem illustrates a rural, middle-class subject, though at the same time, an innovative, experimental literary object. This pastoral scene bears the common connotations of farm life. The history of the image harkens back to rural farm culture and presents a domesticity which was created in the history of nineteenth century, Christian America and is perhaps as old as the founding of Jamestown itself in 1607. The connotations of the subject convey the themes of utility and necessity. However, the fact of their presence also signals self-reliance and independence. The wheelbarrow symbolizes work and the willingness to labor for one’s sustainment. The chickens represent an independence that does not wholly rely on the market and also represent a commodity, eggs that can be sold for personal gain. In a greater literary context, poem XXII represents the new culture of American Modernism.

Williams claims this type of writing is the same as any other past group that chose to do something different in their art. He says all past modes of writing represent a necessary human function as they became a way for the collective to focus on a psychic or spiritual need. On a much smaller scale, these types of process-writings are a natural aspect of the human psyche which evolves and forms the work to a psychological end. Williams writes:

These things seem unrelated to any sort of sense UNTIL we look for the NEED of human beings. Examining that we find that these apparently irrelevant movements of art represent mind saving, even at moments of genius, soul saving, continents of security for the pestered and bedeviled by the deadly, lying repetitiousness of doctrinaire formula worship which is the standard work of the day. (1969, p. 179)

Such is the worldview implicit in Williams's work. As an image, the poem represents a single culture, though as a work of art, the poem and sequence of poems comprising *Spring and All* represent an entirely new way of thinking about art which undercuts the image and counters it with its own individuality and artistic genius.

## 5. Conclusion

The implications of using the language codes of Roland Barthes combined with Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* are important for many reasons beyond the analysis of the given work. First, Roland Barthes never attempted to apply these concepts to the study of poetry because they were initially developed in the study of literary narrative. In the broader context of all literary writing from professional, academic communities, many topics seem to be written about too much. *Structuralist Poetics* as I have applied the concepts is an unexplored area of literary analysis and provides the scholar with an opportunity to apply literary concepts to material that has never been studied in this way. This is the very reason I chose the popular poem by Williams in this essay. No one has ever applied these ideas to that work. It does not matter whether the poem under discussion is new or old, from one culture or another. These concepts can be tested in a fairly universal way exploring the dimensions they outline. Also important, especially in the study of poetry, is the fusion of standard, literary close reading with the two sets of concepts provided by Barthes and Culler. Combining ideas from these three types of discourse creates a way of mediating previously unresolved problems encountered in the reading process of literary texts. Lastly, Robert Scholes outlines in *Structuralism in Literature* five indirect ways Structuralism can play an educational role. One way is to have a clear sense of poetic discourse and its relations to other forms of discourse (1974, p. 40). This essay and the two other applications of *Structuralist Poetics* I have published are direct examples of this. Readers should consult the bibliography of this essay for those sources of additional applications of these ideas.

Scholes also says *Structuralist Poetics* can also refine our descriptive terminology and our sense of linguistic process (1974, p. 40). Through the practice of application we learn aspects that may not have been known to us. "The Red Wheelbarrow" is a classic example of this because *Structuralist Poetics* can reveal them, making them most apparent in discussion beyond the given limits of conventional, academic

explication. Scholes also says that Structuralist Poetics provides us with the best framework available to aid in the perception of an actual poetic text (1974, p. 40). While this is a qualitative statement, hopefully these essays will help clear a path for the literary pioneer who seeks new territory. Structuralist Poetics therefore gives new life to the oldest aspect of our discipline by aiding in the creation of a new philology and a new literary history. I have only briefly mentioned these aspects in my other essays because they are themselves a topic of literary-historical writing.

Finally, structuralist Poetics makes us keenly aware of the communicative aspects of the entire poetic process (1974, p. 40). This is one important dimension I have added in the writing on the Williams poem. Since poetic process also involves the writer's disposition toward writing, those previously published writings which communicate that disposition are important insights into how that writer should be understood. This aspect goes beyond the given context of the work being explicated and includes prior writings of literary-historical import and also carries implications of the fact of literary influence. In our own time, this last aspect is a discipline in literary studies as well, though what this contributes through Structuralist Poetics is a discussion of the qualities and possible motives for literary writing that were not previously known to the reader.

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