

GUILLAUMEAN LINGUISTICS: A MODEL FOR LITERARY THEORY

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1. INTRODUCTION

It has long been suspected that Guillaumean linguistics provided suggestions for literary critics or theorists. Gabriel Guillaume (1962, 1967, 1968) was a pioneer. The most useful summary is Wilmet (1980). But what was lacking was a composite, over-all survey of literary theory that examined qualitatively the crucial areas. Such an attempt over some decades has been made through the medium of Welsh. And perhaps an opportunity may be seized now to summarise some conclusions in a *festschrift* honouring someone who is, amongst other matters, one of the most distinguished Guillaumean scholars of our time. The present essay is therefore a brief survey of some of the conclusions reached in four works in particular: Jones (1974, 1984-8, 1997, 1998a).

The first two works analyse with examples the Saussurean and Guillaumean contrast between Tongue and Discourse in so far as this dichotomy is relevant to literary form.

A composite theory of literature, primarily related to literary criticism itself—rather than being simply a psychological or historical or social study—necessarily has to consider Tongue as well as Discourse. Actually, of course, much—although not all by a long way—recent literary criticism up to the 1960s gravitated towards Discourse. That is to say, it studied individual works, foregoing the more general discussion of literary myth (and theme) and form. Sometimes as with New Criticism, Discourse was almost entirely isolated from Tongue; and then in the case of Russian Formalism or French Structuralism, Tongue could be somewhat distanced from Discourse. But a composite theory of literature must not merely discuss Discourse, nor must it even simply add Tongue. These are two dynamic entities individually distinguished, each bearing distinct functions and characteristics, though always linked. The one, Tongue, is potential, internalised, seemingly stable and permanent: the other, Discourse, is actualised, externalised, seemingly 'occasional'. The one, general: the other particular. The two are necessarily related, and composite theory must consider how. The answer for their link is to be found in *seuil* (or threshold), where the Motivation for expression is involved. Motivation must be

seen within an integrated theory including Content, Motivation and Form. (Jones 1977, 1994, 1998a, 1998b).

Thus, if language is primarily a method of organising meaning before it becomes a means of communication, so too in Literary Theory, Tongue is a substructure for organising language and experience before it becomes in Literary Discourse a means for expressing the image of reality. The two distinct dynamic entities must be included in any comprehensive literary examination together with this threshold between them.

Each of the works Jones (1974) and (1984-8) begins with an introduction tracing the dynamic and contrastive relationship within Tongue, outlining the link between Sign/ Significate/ Significant in their Guillaumean sense, a system obviously relevant to literary theory. This is followed by a discussion of various individual systems in Phonology, Morphology and Semantology. The non-linguistic or pre-linguistic bases of linguistic contrast, many of which were identified by Guillaume—such as absence/presence (place:Person), absence/presence (time:Tense), one/many (Number), superiority/inferiority (Comparison of Adjectives), sonorant/obstruent (Vowel/Consonant), sense of support or incidence (Predicative Parts of Speech)—also were perceived as centrally relevant to a post-Guillaumean analysis of literary form, as will be illustrated later in some examples.

These various general aspects of language correspond to formal areas in literature. Phonology has of course an unambiguous relevance in discussing Metre, Rhyme and, (say) the intricate Welsh alliterative patterning known as *Cynghanedd*. Morphology was discussed in so far as it provided a necessary basis for the analysis of Genre, and within Genre for the analysis of individual complete forms such as drama, story, gnomic verse and the proverb, as well as, at the extreme, tradition. Semantology, namely the generative forms of meaning (figures and tropes, such as metaphor, irony and ambiguity) was another field where Guillaumean principles of dynamic contrast were again found helpful.

The distinction and relationship between the two dynamic states of Literary Tongue and Literary Discourse can be illustrated by taking an example: Rhyme. In Literary Tongue, through repetition and contrast, linguistic sound is organised on the principle sound/silence; opening/closure: different channels or obstructions being utilised around the systems of phonemes. Following a consonantal diversity at the beginning of the syllable block (i.e., a difference in the channel constricting the sound), there is a repetition of the vowel (the open sound) as regards length and vocal position, followed by repetition of the presence of consonant or consonan-

tal cluster (i.e., a second obstruction of sound, but now echoed; possibly negatively as zero). Usually, in English, rhyme occurs both at the end of the word and at the end of the line; but, in Welsh, internal rhyme is more frequent, not only within the line but also within separate words, particularly as in *cynganedd lusc* (a metrical technique) between an ultimate and the penultimate.

In Welsh, the rhyme forms a contrastive system with *proest* on the one hand (Preminger 1974), where the (final) vowel is of the same length but of a different vocal position (or name) followed by a repetition of the consonant; and on the other hand, with *generic rhyme*, where the (final) vowel is of the same length and vocal position but followed by a different consonant though of the same class or quality (in a given case, a continuant as contrasted with a plosive). Having perceived the similarity and the distinction between the dual elements of rhyme, the relevant channels of production physically link with discourse.

There, in short, we have a description of the situation or principles of rhyme in Tongue. It seems rather abstract. But it is elemental and composed of a psycho-mechanic system. It summarises the ways of organising phonemes within a contrastive and combining physical framework moving from open to closed.

In Literary Discourse, however, we obviously have concrete and particularised examples all being used within mental contrast, for example:

rhyme	bad, lad
proest:	bad, wed
generic rhyme:	pal, can.

2. PHONOLOGICAL ORDERING

Phonological—like Semantological theory (e.g. metaphor)—can often be confined to discuss one or two words in a given literary work, forms depending on meaningful contrasts and unity. Morphological theory, on the other hand, discussing inter alia Genre in general or an individual Genre such as the Story, in particular necessarily encompasses a complete work.

In traditional English accentual or accentual-syllabic verse, as in Welsh free metres, the distinction between Tongue and Discourse is evident. We even have well-known separate terms for each, viz., Metre and Rhythm. Prosodists however still tend to confuse the organisation of and locality (Tongue or Discourse) appropriated to metrical feet. In both Metre and Rhythm they are contrastive (sound/silence), but the units in Metre, as

they have to be maintained spontaneously in the sub-conscious response, are either in twos or threes. They are therefore restricted either to forms such as the progressive iamb $x/$ and anapest $xx/$ or to the regressive trochee $/x$ and dactyl $/xx$, or to the combination of both in the amphibrach x/x , always with only one sustaining beat in the unit. All other combinations are unsustainable, i.e., unaccepted as regular instituted, intuitional structures to be measured in the regular line. Spondees $//$ and pyrrhics xx belong simply to Rhythm, and are merely occasional in Discourse, as too are combined units of four such as antispast $x//x$ and choriambus $/xx/$, involving more than one main accent, or units with more than two consecutive unaccented syllables such as paeon $/xxx$; or they are assimilated into the complete sound contrast accented/non-accented within the line as a complete unit (i.e., not necessarily contrasting with the proximate syllable). As in language systems, so too in prosody, the subconscious can only maintain throughout a passage and activate spontaneously units of primitive contrast that involve a simple two, or extend by repetition (though still contrasting beginning with end) up to three. All more intricate units become conscious and deliberately realised: they are not Tongue. Stanzaic combinations of basic feet, i.e., foot with foot, may be perfectly viable at a sustainable level of patterning, just as with major language systems—such as the verb system—twos or threes can form seemingly complex structures, as long as the kernel units contrast elementally one with one or one with two.

Although sound forms in literature, such as metre and rhyme, always come to us in an obviously physical form, they are inevitably preceded by a mental form. There is always behind them a principle which conditions the concrete appearance. And this will be elemental and based on a non-linguistic contrast.

3. SEMANTOLOGICAL CATEGORIES

Turning to Forms of Meaning, we find two ways of organising the process in Figures and Tropes, the former determined by repetition, stability, non-shifting, the latter by a turning, instability, shifting. Figures are patterned according to (a) Similarity, (b) Contrast, i.e., positive and negative repetition. They are to do with ordering or positioning the literal use of words, not abandoning the usual meaning. Tropes turn the meaning: words are slanted away from the literal, representing the destabilising and differentiating dynamics of content. The binarity is related to the necessar-

ily dual mechanics of understanding—recognising difference and similarity.

Specifically therefore for the Metaphor, we conclude that the pre-linguistic psycho-mechanic contrast involved is that between stability and instability. Stability, in the form of modes of repetition marks out Figures from Tropes. But the metaphor itself involves stability within sound and instability as between meanings, namely conservation versus change. Whereas figures are organised according to repetition within the basic analysis of space and time, tropes represent a shift from literality. Forms are organised according to similarity/unity together with contrast/differentiation. The tension involved in troping is usually from the less to the more or vice versa according to whether the mode involved is ascending or descending, positive or negative, (praise or satire); or as it were a mixed genre in Discourse. For metaphor, similarity is discovered within dissimilarity. It is the rhyme of meaning.

Metaphor belongs to a whole family of sub-systems, including metonymy, simile, synecdoche, litotes, hyperbole and irony, which although each bears its own individuality within the composite system, nevertheless shares some common psycho-mechanism in system. Tropes such as litotes and hyperbole are contrasted along an axis, not dissimilar to the comparison of adjectives, running along tensions big-small-big. Likewise, synecdoche has a double tension, from whole to part and from part to whole. These, together with irony, deal with a change in degree or status, whereas other tropes such as metonymy, metaphor and ambiguity may change the semantic field itself.

4. MORPHOLOGICAL PARALLELS

Sometimes systems in Tongue can be confused with Discourse whenever like has not been classified with like. This has been the main disability in Genre theory, a field long bogged down by the undisciplined ambiguity of this general term itself. The word Genre has been thrown about and applied to a variety of forms with no strict common criterion for analysis, thus including maybe lyric, elegy, detective novel, soap opera, sonnet, tragedy and so on. Such unorganised diversity makes the term Genre almost unusable from a theoretic point of view.

The word Genre classifies the complete single work. In this classification, one fundamental error made hitherto has been the failure to distinguish between Genre in Literary Tongue and Genre in Literary Discourse, two dynamic states requiring strict discrimination. Literature provides an

image, both spatial and temporal simultaneously, of our experience. The combination space/ time is adopted subconsciously in forming a view of the universe. Each complete work can be classified in Tongue for space (kind-noun) and/or time (mode-verb). The image of space has three dimensions, corresponding to the three persons of the pronoun: Kind I (approximating to the lyric, i.e., the first person present response to an experience), Kind II (approximating to drama, i.e., the opposing or confronting second person or object present now enters the equation), Kind III (approximating to story, i.e., there is a retreat from presence, and the norm is 'past' where the leading subject is experienced normally as if absent). The image of time that brings change into each of these Kinds has two directions, Mode I progressive and ascending (approximating to Comedy in the Dantean sense) and Mode II regressive and descending (approximating to Tragedy). These six classes in all, three Kinds and two Modes, belong to an ancient analysis going back to classical times and Aristotle. Within Kind, there seem to be two further positions, one preceding the consciousness of person, namely the 'gnome' as in gnomic verse, and another seemingly impersonal or subsequent to the consciousness of person (post-personal), namely the 'discussion', 'essay', 'critical article', 'sermon' and so on. The more 'impersonal' position adopted in these Genres takes its standpoint outside the particularised three-person system, in a negation or contrast of non-person, or more properly a universal third person (as found in 'it is raining') (Moignet 1970). Within Mode, a tension set up by combining an ascending movement of the image with a descending movement seems to generate Irony.

That therefore, in brief is the central analysis of Genre within Tongue, and provides a necessary background situation for all literary works. But the contrast with Genre in Discourse is crucial. This varies according to the subject or phonological form. But here the terms for the various Genres, sub-kinds and sub-modes, are profligate. They come and go. Some of the subjects, such as the elegy, seem to be fairly permanent and general in usefulness: others such as the detective novel, the space film or the miracle play belong to a particular period in the history of literature. The potential number of Genres classified according to subject matter is practically limitless. Other Genre terms in Discourse vary according to form, some such as the great division between prose and verse being comparatively stable, whereas a pastoral poem for instance may be comparatively temporal. Another important characteristic of Genre sometimes related to the Romantic period, but certainly not limited to that time, is the mixing of

kinds or/and modes: but combination obviously does not rid us of the mental positions available nor deny the reality of Tongue.

One of the major Kinds in Tongue, namely Kind III (approximating to the Story) can be examined in more detail. We find that the macrocosm of the Story has a correspondence with the microcosm of the sentence. Just as the word carries within itself the possibilities of the sentence (Guillaume 1971: 30) through its nature as a part of speech, so the sentence carries within itself the conditions of the literary Genre. The principle of incidence encountered in the relationship of predicative parts of speech is to be found in the Story between the narrative parts of speech—Character, Action, Environment.

The 'Story' is structured by three parallel, necessary and regular elements. Every Story has to have a Character, a Noun (or pronoun) which usually is a person (Kind), but can be an animal (such as a whale) or a thing, even such a natural force as a storm. This is the internal prop that supports the whole Story, as it were the centre of gravity for the narrative. But no Story exists without an Action, a happening, a movement or change. This is the Verb element (Mode), that also develops the time dimension. It may on occasion seem rather minimal, but unless it exists and is supported by Character, there is no Story. The third 'Adverbial' element is related to the Environment, the temporal or spatial background or milieu, and the mood that modify the Verb element. This again may be minimal, but even in its negative (almost zero) form is contrastive and therefore significant.

In other words, the complete minimal expression in language, namely the sentence, which is structured essentially from the system of the Predicative Parts of Speech (Jones 1971), corresponds exactly to a complete minimal expression in literary Genre, namely the Story, from the Predicative Parts of Narrative Character, Action and Environment.

5. PSYCHOMECHANICS AND LITERARY CREATION

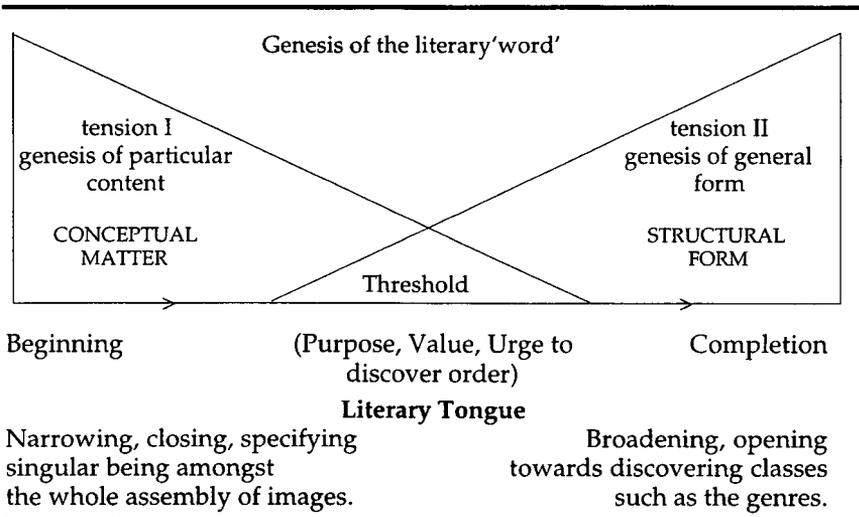
Like Saussure, Guillaume talks of two states, Tongue and Discourse. He also frequently mentions what he calls a *seuil* (threshold) between the two. This is a crucial position in the dynamics of literary composition. If we accept that Tongue is a system of organising sound and meaning and formal composition of the elements of genre (such as fiction) and so on, then questions that must be faced are why and how does that generalised state which is a 'potential' in Tongue turn into something particularised and quite different in Discourse, namely the actualised expression on paper.

This process has to possess an element that is strong enough to actuate the dynamic change from one to the other: a link, a threshold. This I term Motivation.

The simple act of putting pen to paper or opening one's mouth demands a sense of purpose, meaning and value: it is one of the unavoidable. Whatever may be the theological presuppositions of our times or of the individual, they have to encompass a sub-conscious sense of purpose and value, and also what Guillaume further seems to suggest, an inherent urge to organise and reduce the whole impression of reality to manageable understanding.

Despite Post-Modernism and a fairly widely proposed lack of purpose and value, the presupposition that literary theory can be nihilistic in its approach is unrealistic and fails to account for the act involved. There is no choice other than to presuppose some sense of purpose and value, as of meaning; otherwise there is no literary act. Any integrated literary theory that seeks to be composite has to bid farewell to the usual pursuits of the linguist and include within its brief a consideration of literary aims and values together with the urge to organise (Jones 1977). The point I am trying to make here, however, is simply that if we recognise identifiable dynamic states such as Tongue and Discourse, then there is a compulsory need for a link, which has to be identified in Literary Theory.

Figure 1



This *seuil* is of basic importance not only in tracing the relationship between Tongue and Discourse but also (within Tongue and Discourse) in the more traditional link between Content and Form. This has been amply studied by Guillaume for language. But once again, when we turn to Literary Theory, although this particular contrast has been made for many centuries, the threshold or Motivation (purpose, value, and urge to organise and objectify), despite being discussed in an isolated manner, has not hitherto been recognised nor its function located in the literary system.

Guillaume's interest was fundamentally anchored in Form. The organisation of Content does not seem to have had a great appeal to him. But in the study of literature, and if we are trying to realise the parameters of literary theory and the most significant factors within such a theory, Content obviously has to take a foremost position. It is not enough for a theorist simply to note the dynamic relationship of Content to Form and ignore the nature of that Content.

In considering what sort of Content we are dealing with within Tongue, obviously we are confronted not only with the Lexicon (with its own particular organisation) but also with the question of Myth. Myth (or Theme) involves a general pattern of imagery and non-verbal concepts that eventually in microcosm may reach down to the level of *motif*. These images correspond in Content to the pre-linguistic intuitional contrasts in Form (e.g. presence/absence). If we are attempting to trace the parameters of Literary Criticism (as distinct from literary Psychology, History or Sociology) and the relationship within it of the main contrasting factors, then the archetypal images of both the *Visible*—Self, Fellow-man, the Environment (i.e., the Material Universe) on the one hand, and the *Supernatural/Unseen* on the other also have general patterns. Their organisation is linked to the linguistic System of Person (Jones 1995, 1997).

In Jones (1998a) a book-length attempt was made at isolating one group of literary works in order to realise this composite theory in practice. The subject of the exercise was the Three Arthurian Romances of Medieval Welsh—*The Lady of the Fountain*, *Peredur Fab Efrog* and *Geraint and Enid*. Having established a framework with clear parameters, composite theory of literature is here adopted to describe 'comprehensively', that is to say in broad though limited survey, the significant characteristics perceived in these particular tales. The division has already been clearly made between Tongue and Discourse; and in each of these two levels, three positions were examined, each illustrated from these three romances, namely Content, Motivation and Form.

Romances are obviously a sub-genre of the Kind 'Story' and the Mode 'Comedy': sub-genres are produced in Discourse by formed variation or by content variation. The Tongue Myth in all three was seen to be Sovereignty (possession of territory), but there is also a regular conflict between the Old Heroic Ideal and the New Ideal of Chivalry. Jung's concept of Archetypes such as the *animus* and *anima*, together with the (Old) wise king and the (Old) wise queen also proved a useful tool. The whole Content was then organised by the storyteller along an axis of 'journey' or 'search', together with 'love encounter'.

Motivation in Tongue was possibly linked primitively to the didactic or praise ideal, being presented in the court as an ideal pattern or way of life to be followed both by the prince/nobleman and the princess/lady. Also the tales (possibly recited in the Caerllion area where Arthur's Court was now located) were probably an inspiration for maintaining identity in the border region with an encroaching England: sovereignty was a practical stimulation.

Story and Comedy provided the Genre in Tongue. But, of course, in Discourse this generalised form was made more specific by the manners of the aristocratic Norman background and fashion: the combination therefore developed the Welsh 'Romance' itself as a sub-genre in Discourse.

In this way the dynamic basic and general relationships were established in Tongue.

Subsequently in Discourse, we become more particularised. The Content of each of the three Romances is linked (for patriotic reasons) to specific and often quasi-historical personages as well as to some specific places. The Sovereignty myth is linked not merely to the winning of a particular maiden, who represents the territory, but also (in *Geraint and Enid*) to the symbolic hunting of a stag. The three Romances in different ways follow a pattern of Gain, Loss and Regain, marriage itself often occurring comparatively near the beginning, and the climax really being reached in the final establishment of honour.

Discourse Motivation, as the early 'primitive' myth consciousness recedes, has now become more related to entertainment. And the presence of physical wonders and supernatural marvels is central to the author's incentive even regarding the verbal style of the romances.

Form in Discourse means Stylistics as well as Structuralism. Rhetorical runs, repetitive fugue, lists, compounding of words, 'musical' contrast, luxurious imagery as well as the grotesque, and a multitude of decoration—these build up numerous effects that vary from story to story.

There in brief we have the six aspects or fields of literary significance that would be included in Composite Theory, which would exclude all other matters that are not necessarily included within these specific areas of a complete system:

Tongue	1. Content	2. Motivation	3. Form
Discourse	4. Content	5. Motivation	6. Form

In other words, we have attempted to name the parameters.

6. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

In exploring Guillaumean linguistics, in so far as it provides assistance in constructing composite literary theory, a contribution from that quarter may certainly be useful in the definition and analysis of Literary Tongue in its relationship to Discourse, particularly regarding Form. But if we are seeking a balanced and universal critical theory, including a description of the Content and Motivation (including Evaluation) of literature, obviously those do not come particularly within the Guillaumean remit. In other words, an attempt has been made to identify in what ways Guillaumean linguistics has been significant in the development of composite literary theory, and in what ways it ignores vital issues from this point of view. And we find its contribution is significant in the field of Form. Nevertheless, as with other humanities such as Sociology, Literary Criticism will find in the works of Gustave Guillaume the inspiration of someone whose parallel studies provide a fund of suggestible materials that can enrich our understanding of some of the subconscious workings of literature.

I have no leeway at this point to suggest adequately the literary organisation of either Content or of Motivation to balance Form. But as much as this may be noted.

Tongue Content (the lexicon aspect) is organised according to relationships between general and particular, part and whole, physical and mental, negative and positive, nature and culture, similar and dissimilar, stable and unstable, high and low, and incidence (or mutual dependence) (cf. the medieval 'Chain of Being' or Dooyeweerd's Sphere Sovereignty), as well as according to established Myths (Jones 1998a).

Tongue Motivation in literature is however more difficult and has to be sought knowing that we are always dealing with a necessary, general potentiality. Behind any actual or occasional motivation that stimulates the

individual literary act, we seek a different order of Motivation in Tongue. In other words, we need to recognise that there is, at the threshold between Tongue and Discourse, always a subconscious mental process, not directly observable, that is related to the transformation of the dynamic state of Tongue into the state of Discourse. Such is, primarily, the inherent drive to discover or place order in or on the Universe, and the inevitable realisation of purpose and value that has to precede any language act if such an act is to exist at all. There is too a basic need or intent to particularise (and eventually to generalise), as well as to use one's intelligence and imagination. Examination of the movement between literary Tongue and Discourse leads us to recognise Motivation as a third position between Content and Form, a compulsory threshold, and to clarify its specificity in the literary process. Any examination of evaluation in any individual literary Discourse, such as for instance, Leavis's consistent quest for vitality and the presence of 'felt life' and moral maturity in Discourse, is basically linked, in the teeth of all nihilism, to this inevitable predisposition towards ordered movement.

Although Guillaume has not dealt specifically with either Content or Motivation, his discussion of Form is fundamental, because we are concerned in Literary Theory with the very Form of Literary Theory itself, as in Linguistics with the Form of Linguistics proper. Psycho-mechanics in this integrated process provides a method of analysis.

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