

THE PRAGMATICS OF READING : A NEW THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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1. Meaning in a literary setting

The importance of literary theory has considerably increased these recent years under the pressure of philosophers in search of a generalized conception of meaning. The necessity of leaving aside once and for all the traditional theories of signification modelled on isolated sentences can be illustrated by the following — and rhetorical — question : To know the meaning of a sentence is to be capable of producing another sentence, but are we ready to say that the understanding of a book, or any literary work, amounts to the capacity of rewriting it ?

The propositional theory of meaning can hardly be systematized into a general conception of understanding, as it has been tempted by so many logicians, philosophers and linguists, as if the analysis of language was principally reducible to that of *ad hoc* isolated sentences, emerging out of the blue, disconnected from one another, or at best related by strictly formal and a priori definable links, exemplifying philosophical quibbles that locutors seldom encounter in real life. In sum, who cares for the present king of France, if it is an empty name or a vacuous description ? I shall come back to that point later, in the substantiation of my criticism of earlier theories. It suffices now to recall to mind, as fastidious as it can be, some of the most famous examples and analyses put forward in the innumerable volumes written on the topic to realize how narrow meaning was conceived by those in charge of explaining it to us within the *general* framework of language use, and as a *general* phenomenon inherent in it. They never drew the damaging

consequences for their theory, as they should have done, which are illustrated by my rhetorical question above, but someone else did it for them. No wonder that the man who took up the challenge proved to be a master in storytelling : Jorge Luis Borges.

In "Pierre Ménard, Author of the *Quixote*", Borges introduces us to a character who devotes himself to rewriting Cervantes' masterpiece. Precisely on account of the fact that we cannot render it by one tautology, by one substitutional statement epitomizing it, the interpreter has to crystallize it into a necessary version, which is a perfect but global substitution. Hence, in order to grasp the intrinsic message of the *Quixote*, Ménard sees no other way than rewriting it, committing himself, in some manner, to the substitutional view of meaning. Absurdity, which pervades many a tale composed by Borges, inevitably emerges, quite unsurprisingly. The project is senseless, but Ménard pursues it with logical consistency, and, once we, the readers, accept to go along with him, Ménard looks to us as reasonable as many a logician or philosopher of language. Like somebody who would decide to write down the mental product of his understanding of one sentence, Ménard sets himself the task of duplicating with an utmost perfection the text he is obsessed with. His total faithfulness to the book requires that its reproduction be unaltered right up to its minutest details. Is not the perfect substitutional version of a piece of language its *identical* reproduction ? "Cervantes's text and Ménard's are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer"¹, as literary project² and as literary product³.

Are philosophers interested in meaning in language compelled to become Pierre Ménards of some sort, when they wish to understand understanding as it presents itself in the process of reading a piece of language countaining more than one phrase ?

2. *The arguments of the defense*

Maybe should we acknowledge some kind of a gap between (at least) two varieties of meaning, due to the size of the units of language taken into consideration : sentence *versus* discourse. Or should we rather seek the difference in that of literature and ordinary language, or in the modality of their expression : spoken *versus* written language ?

Those objections beg the question. Why should we accept all those cleavages, which seem to be made merely for the sake of presenting a restricted (but allegedly valid) view of meaning ? In

other terms, the above distinctions ratify the propositional theory of meaning on the basis of a so-called gap, never proved but always postulated, between clear-cut and divergent areas of meaning. Far from validating those specificities, in order to advocate one of them, those conceptions presuppose them and rely on them as if they were valid or self-evident to everybody. If we force somewhat the argument, we could suspect that they even seem to have been erected, in the distinctions they draw between units or modality, to preserve their basic prejudice: meaning has to be conceptualized into a substitutional theory.

But why should we believe in the fragmentation of understanding? Why would the nature of meaning change according to the way some piece of language is considered or put? Worse, why should we go along with the view that *there is no unity of language* throughout its various manifestations?

3. *More about the substitution-view of meaning.*

It is a consequence of what I called earlier the propositional view of language. Its main thrust is based on the following claim: language should, and can adequately, be studied by focusing on isolated sentences or propositions. They reveal their logical structure and even their meaning by themselves, and do not need, therefore, to be inserted in any context of utterance or in the natural environment of their production, implicit or explicit, subjective or social. They bear alone, by being alone, all the information language-users need to know in order to understand them. This latter consequence can be denied, as linguists did, namely Chomsky in his contextfree approach. But phrases remained studied in isolation, and not discourse in its flow. Understanding did not depend any longer on the inner structure of the phrase, but on some innate capacity of the subject to produce such a structure *a priori*.

I do not really know whether that displacement brought anything clearer to the understanding of understanding, but it always looked *ad hoc* to me. Deep structures can hardly be found if surface structures are not first understood and, if necessary, disambiguated. The result is one deep structure rather than another. Furthermore, I see no scientific reason to accept the supposition that deep-structuring ought to be innate, if it exists at all, because it is to be found outside the phrases.

Each time an analyst of language, linguist, logician or philosopher, considers sentences by themselves as if they were uttered

that way, he is bound to misconceive *natural* language in its actual functioning. Either he will put meaning and the rest that matters in the phrase itself, or, if he rejects that empirical procedure, he will have to impart to some external force to the phrase the responsibility of marking non-empirically those very features he denied to be present in the empirical surface product.

Why, then, has it always be done ? The impulse was given by Frege, a century ago. He wished to eradicate ambiguities of expression, especially in mathematics, where they proved so costly. He therefore designed an ideography, but also showed that sentences, thus language, could and should in themselves convey their intelligibility. When some definite sense and some definite reference are correlated, one precise signification ensues and this holds for names as well as for predicates and sentences, the signification of the latter depending on the former and not on the implicit context or the preceding sentences. Two sentences have the same signification when, though being expressed differently (sense), they say the same thing (reference). Sameness of reference grounds meaning as the common proposition which expresses *what* both sentences declare, namely an identical truth in both cases.

Many difficulties arose from that picture of language :

1) All the sentences we use are not declarative, and many of them do not declare anything but ask, evoke, request, and so forth. Do they have no meaning at all for that reason ?

2) The meaning of a sentence is a proposition which says the same, and, according to Frege, the relation of sameness implies not only possible substitution but, foremost, one identical reference corresponding to two different ways of expressing it (two senses). As far as propositions are concerned, this amounts to two *thoughts* expressed to denote one truth-value : then, "John is tall" means (the same as) "Grass is green", since these two sentences express different thoughts and that they are both true.

3) Maybe should we refrain from the temptation of leaving aside the principle of composition. When judgments are considered as autonomous pieces of language -- for the sake of its study -- no other recourse can be made than to the names it contains. In the above example, "John" refers to something different from "grass", then it has not the same signification (one sense + one reference = one signification). Two judgments involving them both once cannot be substituted to one another. Let us accept this restriction. It commits us nevertheless to untenable consequences, beside the increased stress it lays on the sole components of each sentence even

when sentences are compared as independent wholes. First, names, which cannot have signification by themselves, in independence of sentences wherein they have to take place, receive some isolated signification. Second, vacuous names denoting the same reality, i.e. nothing, express it, though differently, and this makes them substitutable, according to Frege's definition of identity. "Meursault killed an Arab" has then the same meaning as "Roquentin killed an Arab", though you will never find that episode in reading Sartre's *Nausea*.

Frege's views have been so overriding in the analysis of language that all subsequent studies have adopted, if not his conclusions, at least his methodological standpoint of compositionality. Sentences are to be studied in isolation, and can be so, for the simple reason that their components reveal all the secrets which are necessary to be known in order to understand language as a whole. Sentences, when combined, form a discourse whose intelligibility is guaranteed by the connections existing between the respective components of each sentence. Such relationships are merely logical. The intelligibility of a set of sentences is reducible to the intelligibility of each of its sentences: the source of the intelligibility of one separated sentence is of identical nature to that of a text. The combination of sentences is a logical one, by being truth-functional of elementary truth-values; the latter representing the sentences composing the text. The textual truth-function is based, in the last analysis, on the sense and the reference of names and predicates of each individual sentence. A global understanding of any text presupposes mental effectuation, at least as a possible move, of that operation.

Why call that a propositional theory? And especially whence does it derive its credibility? Let us first tackle the second question.

It seems fairly obvious that we should know to what reality the words we use are associated: if they are logical connectives, we should be aware that their function is not to denote but to achieve some other definite task; if they are concepts, we should be conscious that they operate as generic-selecting terms; as to names, grammatical or logical, we should know what they stand for, as shorthand descriptions or as signifiers of a signified that is a real thing. At least, we tacitly know all this when we use language, even if, quite naturally, we do not reflect all those relationships and ask ourselves the related questions raised at a theoretical level by Frege and his successors.

A second ground of credibility arises from the fact that isolated sentences do supply all the information necessary to understand them. Therefore, it is in the isolated sentence, and nowhere else, that the ultimate ingredients of signification must be found, ultimate in the sense that there does not exist a more basic unit of language than one sentence. This model applies above all in mathematics where contextual and subjective of social elements must not come into play. The autonomy of mathematical sentences is close to perfection: nothing out of them can be resorted to in order to establish their truth, and once seen to be true, they are understood, and furthermore, the fact that they are true and understandable as such does not depend in any way to anything as variable as contextual or subjective components. In other words, mathematical propositions give their meaning, and anybody (by opposition to some privileged persons, privileged by their position or previous knowledge) is theoretically capable of having access to it, once he knows the *mathematical* prerequisites.

Let us turn now to the first question raised above. Declarative sentences declare what they say. This "*what*" refers to their meaning, and meaning is a proposition, i.e. an associated declarative sentence. "Is he not dishonest?", for example, may mean, among other things, "He is dishonest", or "I want you to conclude he is dishonest", or "He is dishonest, but I do not want to be responsible for saying it, and I wish you to say it by yourself if you agree", and so on. Whereas in the case of declarative sentences — especially if we assume that they can be considered out of any context, as it is claimed when science is seen as *the* model of any possible language structure — meaning is declared as being the content of those phrases. "John is tall" means John is tall, because that is what it declares. The proposition declared, which is the meaning of the grammatical set of words "John is tall", is identical with this set. The sentence and the proposition are not distinct or distinguishable. Provided, of course, that there is no intended hidden meaning, such as "John is the kind of guy we need in our team", for example; or "be careful (in this context), he will win if you fight with him". In other words, declarative sentences which are unambiguous, and they should be if a context-free approach is valid at all, say *what* the proposition declaring their meaning say: saying the same thing, they are substitutable (the so-called substitution view of meaning comes from this). On this view, propositions and sentences are undifferentiated: propositions are then superfluous, and no wonder that some of its more radical

upholders, like Quine, have denied recognition to meaning = proposition. This distinction can only prevail in a linguistic world where sentences say something else than what they declare, or where they do not say anything but suggest, imply (in a non logical sense), evoke, request, and so on. Such a world is of no interest for those logicians. And when they look down upon it, they do it with the secret hope or avowed theoretical claim that natural language will normally abide by the (context-free) rules of logic, since language is through and through logical, or is not. They call that, quite rightly, I think, in the light of the military connotation of the word, *regimentation*.

4. Can we still hold this view ?

Logicians like Quine would go farther than their predecessors, and on account of what has just been said, would count propositions as superfluous entities with respect to the syntactic or logical unit named sentence. I would still call this view a propositional one because it can be put on the same side as those who, like Quine, take individual sentences as capable of a full logical or linguistic analysis. Even when the upholders of such a view grants some existence and usefulness to the entity called proposition, there is no fundamental change in the difficulties they have to face or in the other basic tenets they defend.

The problem with the propositional view, *pace* Quine, is that they have exerted a strong influence on philosophy of language and much more, on the philosophy of mathematics. Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein I are its most prestigious representatives, and to go against them is a little bit like being an icon-smasher. But let us nonetheless linger on some of the important reservations we can make about the general assumptions of logicism.

1) Sentences, in habitual circumstances, are not isolated. They occur within definite contexts of utterance. And by context, I have something precise in mind, conform to the everyday notion and effective usage, and I refuse to see in it, as many a logician, a rag bag of confused ideas or a contraption invoked in *ad hoc* ways to make up for the already existing and failing explanatory devices of actual use. Context is a relationship between language users and their relevant background knowledge : it contains a locutor, "I", an addressee, "you" and/or "him (her)", *and* the knowledge they share *and* impute to each other. Context is a determining factor to pursue a dialogue, for example. Socially speaking, each new language

use is the continuation of a previous one. The social elements of context can be found playing their role in every language use, as if there had been no break and no silence. A new dialogue is always socially old, to the point of being sometimes totally conventional.

2) Sentences are never separable from the previous sentences uttered in the context of the initial production. When one sentence only is uttered, it is situated in a context where the previous sentences have been uttered by someone else, e.g. in a dialogue.

All this renders rather vain the traditional endeavours to pursue meaning, truth, referentiality, empiricalness, and what not in the phrase itself, when the conditions of use enable us to see all that perfectly. Here, I permit myself to be more empirical than those who refer to themselves as empiricists. Why should we decide *in abstracto* (i.e. quite unnaturally) whether a name is vacuous or has a reference, whether an expression is attributive or referential, whether it is true or false, whether "the present king of France is bald" is meaningless or not. In the latter case, if somebody raises the question, it is surely because he believes in the truth of the presupposition in the context of utterance. In fact, we are forced to proceed in such a way if we take sentences as independent wholes: they must contain in themselves referentiality, empiricalness, and so on. But, if sentences are situated within a given context, i.e. considered realistically, all those Russellian-Fregean questions disappear, because, by being uttered by real individuals, they are inserted within the real world. Do names, then, still have to have a denoting function, or do they still have to be constructed as if they had to, when we know that those who use them belong to the real, denoted, empirical world, and that the relationship to it is ensured right from the start? Analysis must start from there, and not from the unrealistic view that the presupposition that there is a present king of France is false, or that the sentence itself is false (why utter it, then? But, who, in which situation, would speak of the present king of France in a philosophically, i.e. problematic, way?)

To put my argument in a nutshell: lonely sentences do not exist. To single them out from any context of usage is a fallacy.

3) They do not exist, but *in abstracto* we can consider, however fallaciously, that they do; fallaciously because we do not speak nor write *in abstracto*. Not even in science are the expressions employed totally context-free. Understanding is not limited to the capacity of recognizing that those expressions are true. Context, there, plays a minimal role. I would say that science is a very special context of utterance: the context in which all reference to context

must be eradicated. Whether contextual elements play a role in the understanding process of scientific statements is a highly debated question. The meaning of $2 + 2$ is fixed once and for all. But understanding, which is correlative of meaning, is dependent upon contextual knowledge: " $2 + 2$ " does not mean anything, if one does not possess the background-knowledge to grasp it is true. In other words, has " $2 + 2 = 4$ " any meaning for a 1-year old child or -- excuse the ethnocentricity of what follows -- for a member of a primitive tribe? Be that as it may, science is not the model of any possible language. It has become customary nowadays to reject science or, in philosophical circles, positivism. But the point at stake here is not that one. We should simply be conscious of an important difference: science is a context of language-use in which one works towards the elimination of contextual interferences, while natural language is only possible on the basis of contextual information, because, in contrast to science, one speaks to somebody in particular, to tell him things which may be of no relevance to someone else, which may be false or ambiguous. One cannot specify everything when one resort to language in everyday situations, while in science, assumptions cannot be left unstipulated.

5. *Why and when should we stick to a substitution - view of meaning?*

We all agree that, in some cases, the substitution - view, originating from Frege, holds. In science, for example, when we face unambiguous expressions. Even in certain cases of everyday speech, Frege's analysis seems valid. If someone says something and that we do not understand what he has just said, we shall naturally ask him what he meant and his reply will consist in putting the content of his speech in other words. He will affirm the *same thing*, but in another way. This explanation of meaning requires a theoretical account that Frege's analyses perfectly provides, hence its strength: one reference, but two senses, guarantee sameness of meaning, i.e. the identity of the referring expressions, hence their substitutability. When phrases are singled out in everyday situation, Frege's framework, which was originally designed for mathematical and, more generally, for univocal (scientific) language, presents an obvious explanatory power. As if, then, meaning of sentences was really a function of their components (principle of composition) and moreover of the referential structure of these (principle of extensionality). And conversely, "John is tall" and "my tailor is rich" in fact express

two senses (two thoughts) and one reference (the truth-value *true*), but "John" has a different reference from "my tailor", and thereby do they differ in their meaning *as names*: they are different expressions and different referential entities, they cannot then be substituted in any way whatsoever. Then the question arises of knowing why precisely. Why do names, for example, have a sense and a reference? Why is language referential, or, how is semantics possible? Is it always referential, for example in literature? If not, *when* exactly is Frege's procedure acceptable, and when is it not? Can we spell out a more general view of which Frege's would be a particular case? At least, could we *suggest* it, or rather, sketch some of its outlines?

But where should we search for a solution to that problem? My impression is that we should carefully examine why people do resort to language in general, before going back to Frege. My answer is that people do what they do, and whatever they do, in order to solve problems. Communicating with people seems so natural that quite often we do not see any problem in it, similar to those we face in the rest of our life. Simply because we have associated the word *problem* with *difficulty*. But a problem is not merely an obstacle to get over. More generally, anything which requires something from us raises a problem for us: a task to accomplish, an action to undertake, an act to perform a difficulty to surmount, are problems. We need to solve them if we wish to achieve what we want. Language, too, is a problem-solving activity, or, more strictly said, recourse to language is. But can we really distinguish language as such from its human function? If our relationship to the other human beings were so transparent that we could get from them what we wanted, that our ideas were immediately known to them once we wished it to be the case, that they were thereby convinced and willing to adopt them, without our having to present them with the clothes of persuasion, language would be useless. But all those problems exist, and humans are not identical: ideas do not tacitly pass from one mind to another, and even if they could, that passage would not imply acquiescence and it would fail its purpose. Language is there to help us to surmount all those difficulties and to enable us to communicate what we think, to persuade our addressee of the correctness of those thoughts, to request cooperation at the level of action in order to see our needs fulfilled. And so on.

If language must enable us to deal with problems, it must also involve their solutions. The two fundamental — and I do not see

what more fundamental could be found about language — functions of language is to deal problems and solutions. But, in contrast with particular problem-solving techniques or activities, language is capable of relating to all the other problems of life. I can speak of what I do with a knife, for example, but I cannot do with a knife what I do with the propositions of language. With my knife, I can accomplish a limited set of tasks, whereas with my language, I can express them along with many others. Language covers a nearly unlimited array of problems and is not confined to some in particular. It is true, however, that the treatment it applies to them is specific as much as the use of a knife is specific. The difference lies in the range of objects to which we can apply them with adequate purposiveness: language can express all the problems of life, and thereby cover them, whereas knives only cover a very narrow range of life-situations. It is in that sense that I understand Wittgenstein's allusions to language as expressing our different *forms of life*.

The duality problems-solutions is the Janus-like reality of language. They are omnipresent, but as an essential difference, language preserves it as such: what is a problem is not a solution, and vice versa. Solutions bring an end to the problem-solving activity and, as a result, the problem vanishes as if it had never arisen at all.

The general difference between problems and solutions is quite known to anyone of us, since we are living beings, and does not need further explanation. The point at stake here is to see how it gets inscribed within the structure of language.

First of all, language as a whole, i.e. as an activity, operates as a response to definite problems. It is in order to deal with them that we resort to language: either do we express them, because we expect a solution from the persons to whom we address ourselves, or we tell them what we think of those problems, because we suppose that those persons share our problems. In both cases, we respond to the problems we have; in the former case, partially, in the latter, totally. We shall call the expression of a problem its *problematological* answer, and its solution the *apocritical* answer (from *apokrisis* which means answer in Greek). A *problematological* answer is nonetheless an answer, for to express to someone else a problem of ours is already a step towards its solution: how could the interlocutor respond to what we want if he did not know what we want? In other words, the couple problem-solution is identified, at the level of the explicit, with the duality *problematological* answer — *apocritical* answer. Language is then made up of two kinds of answers which enable its users to question and respond, or at least, to express

questions and solutions, thereby transferring this essential difference within language itself. It may sound awkward to see answers, though problematological, to function as question-bearers, as problem-indicators. In fact, they are answers with respect to the forms of life, but within language, they import the problems as such. And as such, they are expressions of problems, they are literally problematological (from *logos* and *problema*). Language, as a human attitude, imports the difference between problems and solutions from the human exigencies of everyday life. It can express them all and, at the same time, must functionally respect this difference though being capable of conveying its two poles. In other words, each expression can be seen as problematological as well as apocritical, and the difference only emerges out of the context. If I say "I ask you if you come tomorrow" may be seen as a mere apocritical answer uttered to declare something to somebody else in guise of information ("What do you say?" — "I ask you if you come tomorrow"), or as a problematological answer responding to the locutor's *problem, of knowing, for instance* whether X will do something (= coming) or not. As problematological, this answer is rather a problem-indicator than the declarative sentence of its solution. Declarative sentences are generally used as apocritical indicating devices, though in the above chosen context, it functions as problem-conveying. By itself or in itself, a sentence is therefore apocritical and problematological: this also accounts for rhetorical questions which are disguised assertions. A sentence contains therefore both elements, which are always distinguishable. They should be if somebody else than the locutor must be able to identify the problem he (or she) has to solve for the locutor, or if the addressee must identify what is rendered explicit by the locutor as the latter's opinion on a definite but implicit question which is supposed to be of shared interest.

We should be careful of not amalgamating problems and solutions with, respectively, interrogative sentences and non declarative ones. I will not claim there is no link, as I have shown it elsewhere, but it is looser than one could think at first sight. We should rather see problems as questions, and solutions as answers. A question, when *explicitly* raised, often becomes what people usually call a question: something followed by a question-mark or pronounced with a *sui generis* intonation. The question lies beyond these surface markings, and is in fact the problem raised by and within its explicit manifestation as a phrase.

The problematological difference, as I call it, is essential for

the purpose of identification I mentioned above. It must therefore be respected. It instantiates the double function of language with respect to the forms of life. There are many ways in which questions are marked off from answers. One way is to stipulate apocritically the question solved in the assertion : what the proposition is about, what is in question in what is said is explicit and no more confusion can arise in this case than in the situation where the question answered by the proposition was left implicit. The reason why people use language is because they have a problem in mind, to be expressed or resolved, but, at any rate, they do speak or write in reference to that problem, even when it is left unexpressed and implicit. The problematological difference is respected by *form* (declarative sentences versus non declarative ones) in a given context : declarative sentences assert something about a certain question, and function as its solution. The question is "in" the answer if the answer has a meaning, since the answer says something about the question it deals with (its topic). But the question remains implicit as such in that given context : it is an absent presence. It could be made explicit, but then it should be explicitly identifiable as a question, i.e. as *different* from its solution. *This is the most basic and most essential consequence of the presence of the question-answer complex in language.* A different form does the job : if declarative sentences are used for the assertion of solutions, non declarative sentences will be used (but it is not their sole use) to indicate problems.

The problematological difference can *also* be ensured if the question the proposition is about is stipulated as such. The opposition explicit/implicit, as said earlier, is sufficient : the question, once solved, is not mentioned because it is not the goal of the questioning-process to mention it; its goal being to affirm the solution. So, if a locutor asserts a proposition, no wonder he does not mention to his addressee -- who is supposed to know -- what the question was. The opposition of form is also a good means. A *third* way is to specify the question, so that no confusion can possibly arise. Everything is being made explicit. This explains why any sentence can be substituted for any other sentence where all terms have been replaced by interrogative clauses specifying them, describing them, referring to some reality corresponding to the expanded term. This expansion has the foreseen effect of ascribing a definite reference -- if not some definition -- to the term *in question*.

Let us consider one example.

(1) Napoleon lost at Waterloo.

This sentence means the same as

(2) Napoleon is the individual *who* lost at Waterloo.

And also the same as

(3) Napoleon is he *who* did something *which* is ... at a place *where* ...

In order to *define* any term (*individual*, *Waterloo*, *to loose*, and so on), I must resort to an interrogative which specifies what is in question, what my words are about. This interrogative introduces a relative clause which functions as the answer to the question so introduced, i.e. as closing it. What is in question ceases to be a question (in "what my wife does ..." is not any longer a question like "what ... ?") but appears rather as a solution, i.e. as a proposition answering the question. The interrogative, on the other hand, refers to some term. That term has a reference because something *answers* to the interrogative which opens the relative-descriptive clause. "Napoleon" means "the man *who* lost at Waterloo", and the fact that we know that this name refers to somebody in particular is due to the fact that something answers the interrogative clause defining it. Several consequences ensue from this fact.

a) The interrogative clause in (2) above gives the meaning of the term "Napoleon". The interrogative refers to Napoleon as that which answers to the description introduced by the interrogative. The latter is used *referentially*, and simultaneously, tells us the meaning of the referring term.

b) According to Frege, meaning (or signification) is closely associated with reference. The ultimate ground for admitting this can hardly be found in Frege's writings, as if it were self-evident that it ought to be so. In fact, the *rationale* for such a link can be seen in the fact that interrogatives are resorted to in the stipulation of meaning. When they are used for that purpose, they are obviously indicating the reference of the term, thereby supplying some definition for it. But the employment of interrogatives in a referential manner is only one mode of introducing questioning into language, aside with many others. The reference-theory of meaning emerges then as a instance of the question-view of language. Because of this, meaning is not restricted to reference, no more than questioning to a referential use attested by the presence of interrogatives. If we wish to understand why some terms have a reference which, when specified, indicates their meaning, we must appeal to a broader conception than Frege's, where referentiality would occur as a special case of questioning. In that broader framework, everything will tend to prove that meaning, as a feature of questioning,

cannot be restricted to reference, because the referential use of questions-indicators through interrogatives is only one of the possible usages. No wonder that meaning, then, will be in many cases something else than an equivalent sentence, and will not be susceptible of a Fregean analysis, as the existence of intelligible literary works suggests it. Frege's views on meaning must be seen as very special cases of the description of what meaning consists in: the substitutional conception has a limited range of validity, unlikely to be extended to all varieties of meaning-phenomena. Meaning must be reinserted within the general theory of questioning.

c) The question arises or explaining how, precisely, questioning functions referentially through the use of interrogatives. My goal here is not to supply such an analysis, for the simple reason that discourse, and not single sentences, is my topic. I will just say that Frege's analysis and terminology are inadequate. The insuperable quandary we have to face has become classical in the literature on Frege. In (2), for example, we are tempted to say that the interrogative clause refers to Napoleon, whom it serves to identify, to define, to know as an individual, to describe, or to refer to. Napoleon is the subject of (2). The interrogative clause refers to the subject of the whole sentence (2). But the referred entity cannot be a name, and the subject of a sentence is a term. This term is, in itself, denoting too. "The man who lost at Waterloo" refers to Napoleon, and not to "Napoleon". But did I write "Napoleon" or Napoleon in (2) above? Why use a name to denote somebody, i.e. "Napoleon", when the referring interrogative clause, i.e. "The man who lost at Waterloo" does the job? If the word Napoleon in (2) is also a referring expression, like "the man who lost at Waterloo", in the sense that they both refer to Napoleon as an individual, then we should write: "Napoleon" is "the man who lost at Waterloo". This is obviously false, since a name does not lose battles. What is then written in the sentence: "*Napoleon* lost at Waterloo"?

My point here is to stress the referential nature of the interrogative clause, and the difficulties springing up from a view of meaning captured in terms of reference, even doubled with sense. To the question "How are judgments possible?", one should answer that subjects and predicates are complementary as selective items and selected ones: the first call for the other, and vice versa. If both have sense *and* reference, one ceases to understand how, by being identical in this respect, they can possibly be different to the point of being necessary to each other. Unless one introduces their diffe-

rences elsewhere, in what they denote for instance, and then, we are trapped into a *petitio principii*.

My question remains to know whether the interrogative clause in (2) gives us some definition of a name, or/and if it does refer to some real (entity) answering it. Does the interrogative refer to a term which answers to what it says, or does it refer us back to some real item of the world? In the latter case, subject-terms are redundant, judgment is unexplainable, individual beings function as answers instead of propositions. In the former case, we never quit language even when we seem to refer to the outside world. We only relate to names, as answering our interrogative clauses, and we remain then at some metalinguistic level where we do not denote some reality but some linguistic one.

My criticism can be summarized as follows : judgments arise from the necessity to answer questions, to deal with them, and this is done by associating a term, which is problematic with respect to what answers to it, with some clause specifying the question answered. One way, however misleading, to interpret this phenomenon is to label the interrogative clause, a description, and what answers to it, a name, or even the reference of the description. A double problem is bound to come up : first, symmetry has to be preserved, names *and* descriptions will be said to have a sense *and* (possibly) a reference, even though the interrogative clause seems to refer to the name it specifies; second, it conceals the fact that some questioning process has taken place, whose description is considered as unessential.

My solution to the Fregean problem amounts to supplying another view of language : sentences are uttered or written in function of definite questions, but the former are generally the visible results of the association, since the questions, once answered, cease to arise as such and disappear, even if once mentioned. It does not mean that there is no trace of them. The fact that (1) means (2) is quite illuminating in this respect. Generally, some question about reality or language arises, and *what* is in question, whatever that is in particular, requires some answer, and the result is a judgment (a statement, a sentence), where the question is marked off through a difference, the difference between subjects and predicates, i.e. between names and their interrogative-definitional clause. The judgment, as answer, refers back to some corresponding question, either by indicating it has solved it (interrogatives are then deleted) or by mentioning which question was at stake (interrogative clauses are then used). This is why the same one individual is taken up as "re-

ference" by both terms : what is in question is *what* is referred to in the question, and, when the question is solved, it appears as answering the description, i.e. as answering some question raised which has disappeared as such. What is *propounded* as an answer refers back to some question (and *what* was in question, the problematic term is indicated as ceasing to be so), as well as indicating itself as having suppressed or resolved it. The whole process contains several moments : 1) some question arises, and *something* is therefore in question, which that question is referring to; 2) the question gives rise to some answer, the answer deals with *what* is in question, but at an answer-level; 3) what is answered refers then to the question as being solved, the duality answer/question manifests itself into, or as, a judgment. An answer is a judgment, and no judgment can possibly arise if not referred back to some question. Therefore, all judgments are answers.

Consequently, it is equally true to say that Napoleon answers the description "the man who lost at Waterloo", and to affirm that "Napoleon" is the problematic term to be suppressed as problematic — unless it is "the man who lost at Waterloo", then "Napoleon" is the answer, but it amounts to the same thing for the reason of complementarity indicated above, i.e. "Napoleon lost at Waterloo" is the answer. Either the subject or the predicate gives the name of the problem, and as such, it requires a solution, i.e. another expression which refers to it in a solution, the combination of both supplying that answer, i.e. the judgment. To some extent, then, we can legitimately affirm that the interrogative clause of (2) refers to the subject, since that which is referred to by the predicate is given by the subject, and that an answer refers back to some question, hence to *what* was questioned.

d) What is striking in the examples given above is the chain of equivalences they reveal : (2) is substitutable for (1), (3) supplies the meaning of (2), and (2), of (1), though the reverse is not true. The principal reason for this is that (1) answers the same questions as (2), for example, but other questions as well, that (2) excludes by specifying, through the interrogative, which question has been explicitly taken care of. (1) and (2), for example, could be uttered in answer to questions like, "What did Napoleon ?" or "Who was Napoleon ?", but (1) could also be proffered to mean "all dictators lose, one day or the other, even apparently successful ones". In other words, (1) could answer a question like "What did happen at Waterloo ?" whereas (2) could not since we have a who-question in the close. The latter being left unspecified in (1), (1) does not ex-

clude *what*-questions.

Interrogatives can be used even when predicates require to be understood. This explains why subjects as well as predicates have a reference, and that their reference indicates us their meaning. In the case of name, the interrogative specifying, for example, who Napoleon was by what he did at Waterloo, tells us at least one possible meaning of the name "Napoleon". Interrogatives are deleted in function of the level of understanding of the addressee : (1) corresponds to an implicit question which is clear enough, or supposed to be known, to be left out, while (2) and (3) refer to some question and narrow the range of possible questions which they can serve as answers to. They reveal some increased level of information : (3), for instance, could be expanded into further interrogative clauses if the addressee proved to fail to understand the words employed.

The equivalence of (1) and (2) and (3) lays at the core of the substitutional view of meaning. This view, however, is only a particular case of a more general phenomenon : meaning as being the link between *a* question and *an* answer. When the answer can be legitimately singled out, it must bear in its own components that relationship, and we have seen how it does, in starting from Frege's classical analysis. A judgment - and it is true of a text as well, since we are here in the presence of a universal feature of language - can express a problem as much as a solution, and if that difference does not clearly appear in a given context, it is always possible to render that link explicitly. This expansion preserves what the first statement affirms by stipulating *that* it affirms it. This equivalent proposition can also be called the *literal meaning* of the first judgment.

6. From substitutions to questions

Answers, once produced, acquire some autonomy with respect to the questions which gave rise to them. Once the questions which were meant to be solved by resorting to language have found their answers, the latter emerge as mere statements or sentences, as if they had never been produced in response, or as responses, to definite problems, as if these problems had never existed. The umbilical cord is then cut off. The answers can fulfill afresh the two fundamental functions of language : to express the problem and give the solution. In other words, any answer is, by itself, apocritical *and* problematological. It pertains as much to the level of solutions as to that of problems. This, of course, grounds the possibility of dialogues. An answer offered as such to an addressee in response to

some question of shared interest may turn into a question for that interlocutor. The addressee does not deem the question answered by the locutor. The answer is, for the former, problematic, is not an answer but requires some answer about the initial question raised by the locutor. The locutor's statement leaves that question open while his answer appears as questionable to the addressee who will initiate a dialogue by *responding* to the locutor's *statement*. The problematological difference between questions and answers is guaranteed by the fact that an answer for some questioner turns out to be a question for another. All answers are apocritical *and* problematological, even if, in virtue of the problematological difference, they are not so with respect to the same questions or questioning processes. The difference must somehow be marked off.

As said earlier, isolated sentences do not exist. Does this mean we never encounter single sentences in our everyday life? Of course, not. What I meant is that we simply cannot analyse language as if such sentences were its overall units, that is, some kind of measure. My argument is the expression of a theoretical standpoint which, if not respected, leads to fallacious generalizations, but it is not the rejection of the undeniable fact that we do sometimes isolate sentences from their original context, especially when the latter does not enable us to understand them. We then wish to get their meaning, which will be the answer given to some "What do you mean by ...?"-question, and which is usually nothing else than some substitution for the original phrase. We ourselves break the speech continuum by creating another one but it would be misleading to take this attitude as a paradigm case of meaning inquiry.

Answers, when questioned about their meaning are expanded problematologically, though they are apocritical. In fact, it is because they are both that they are susceptible of being translated into interrogative clauses which preserve meaning. Since the question of the interpreter of some sentence is not the same as the problem of the locutor — who did not wish to tell the meaning of what he said, but merely to say it — the sentence is problematological with respect to some question-answer link which is contained in the statement but not affirmed as such, a link which is asked by the interlocutor, to be rendered explicit and thematic. If someone does not understand a sentence I have just uttered, for example, he is likely to *ask* me what was in question in what I said. If I answer in an irrelevant way, he will reject my answer by saying that "it" is not the question; if, on the contrary, I want to stress that the meaning of that sentence is such-and-such, I will say this or that was the question, that I have

dealt with this or that question. And so forth. With what I said, I have raised a question, dealt with it in my answer (4), and the meaning of my sentence consists in relating the sentence to the question I had in mind when I uttered it. By exhibiting its answerhood, my statement refers back to some question which makes it *its* answer, and, at the same time, supplies its topic if the latter had remained unknown so far from the part of the intended audience. To the addressee's question of knowing the locutor's question or problem, the right answer is an answer stipulating in which way it serves as an answer. The examples (1), (2) and (3) above illustrate this point.

Meaning is then the question-answer relationship, and it emerges as an answer to some hermeneutic questioning process whose goal is the explicitness of the answerhood of statements. Because of the autonomy of the latter, all answers can be reinserted within new questioning processes, even though they have served as conclusions for previous ones, or rather because of that. They can be turned into questions, as if they were not conclusive answers — apocritical ones — but reformulations of displacements of the problem they were meant to solve. They can be used as stepping stones in some new questioning process to the resolution of which they contribute. In sum, they raise questions even when they solve others. Scientists know that results can feed inquiry, and that a conjecture is also some result. Answers are problematological in the sense that they refer to questions, by answering or suggesting them. But they also repress their answerhood : they do not say, nor affirm, that they are answers, because it would imply some reference to the questions with respect to which they serve as answers. They just say *what* they have to say, and this is what I have called their apocritical feature. In being apocritical, an answer refers to something else (than itself) : world and objects. This explains why language can be defined as being made up of signs, i.e. of intities which *are* what they are by precisely referring (the real roots of reference) to what they are not. Language is forgetful of itself, and therein lies its true function, or at least the ultimate condition for fulfilling it.

Apocritically, an answer is undistinguishable from a statement. And statements are, ultimately, nothing but answers. They crystallize a propositional content, also called a *truth*, as if it were self-sufficient. If an answer does not appear *as* apocritical, it also means that it does not appear as answer. If it did, it would be problematological too, since answers in their very answerhood expressly reveal the presence of some corresponding questions. In suppressing

its own answerhood, a statement emerges as referring back to questions which are suppressed too, being solved or dissolved, as if their resolution had cancelled their previous existence. The dialectic of questioning appears here quite clearly : answers, by referring back to those questions suppress them, but also suppress themselves as answers. Apocritically, they are not answers, but mere statements, referring to questions by not having to solve them any more, by not having anything else to do with them. The claim for truth lies in this process of autonomization of the answers with respect to the originating questions. Referring back to questions which cease to be posed means, for the answers, to stop referring to those questions, by referring to something else. This "forgetfulness" of their origin requires from them to be justified in *what* they say, and truth functions as the ground for affirming what the statement says, if no other statement does (but this displaces the claim for underived truth to some primary statement).

The dialectic of questioning indicates that answers are fully so by not referring back to the questions they are referring to in their very answerhood. There is no contradiction if we consider that a *process* of autonomization takes place and time in all this.

I would like to conclude this paragraph in harking back to its title.

Meaning is substitution when sentences are isolated within an interrogative context which gives them a new framework while cutting them off from their initial one. Even in that case, meaning is given when the answerhood of the single sentence has been brought to light. In virtue of the dual nature of language, answers can always been expressed in functions of problems, even though they appear as mere solutions or statements, i.e. as having nothing to do with problem-solution couples. This, in fact, exemplifies a more general view on meaning. The signification of what is explicit is supplied by some question-answer complex, due to the apocritical nature of explicitness.

Meaning, then, is substitution because a statement is an answer, though in a repressed way so to speak. The passage to explicitness preserves the content, but simply highlights some relationship prevailing between that content and its formation. It can be seen, in a traditional outlook, as a pragmatic procedure, consisting in the insertion of a sentence within some setting of occurrence. Basically, it substitutes to what is said (or written) something which still says the same but from another standpoint which has the effect of supplementing the information conveyed

by explicitly specifying *it*. The hermeneutical (explicit) answer which is that of reception, differs from the original one it interprets by resulting from another outlook : a locutor or an author does not specify what he means by *what* he says, he just says *it*. But the interpreter, if he is right, cannot say something *else*, however.

The question that the questionier-interpreter wishes to discover in his hermeneutical process is the locutor's — or the author's — problem which gave rise to the statements whose meaning is in question. When some sentence is taken in isolation, that procedure can only reduce itself to mentioning the very question embodied within the assertion, the question solved by it and which, therefore, does not appear if only but as an absent presence. Hence, the expansion of the assertion through some interrogative clause specifying explicitly what was implicitly presupposed, i.e. what is at stake in the sentence and which is dealt with in it. In other words, the substitution view of meaning is the only possible conception we can have if the model of language taken into consideration is the isolated and free-floating sentence. Meaning as substitution is in reality the sole possible way of relating an assertion to the question it deals with, when no other element can be considered or has to be considered. But we should be attentive to the function of those substitutions : they are simply the result of a more general attitude which consists in relating the explicit to the questions they treat, and which, in definite situations, leads the interpreter to one (equivalent) assertion stipulating what, in the first assertion, is in question. It is equivalent to the extent that the implicit of the first assertion is merely rendered explicit in the second, adding nothing new to it. By telling what is *contained* in that assertion, it is analytic with respect to it.

7. *Textual meaning is rhetorical*

Most of the time, sentences are understood by those who are supposed to get their meaning. This implies that they can infer from what is said the question(s) raised. Now, is the meaning of a text, or of any speech flow, the sum or the product of the meaning of each individual sentence ? Put in other terms, my question amounts to the following one : is a text an entity or not ? The answer is not so simple as we would like it to be.

In many cases we do grasp the meaning of a text in discovering the sense of the statements contained in it. On the other hand, in as numerous cases, we do not proceed in that manner, for the

obvious reason that the text says something else. Something which is neither a mere juxtaposition of statements, nor *one* global and precise proposition summing all other which compose the text. Literature, and literary works in general, fall within this second category. Obviously, *A la recherche du temps perdu* cannot be reduced to one single proposition, which would tell us its deep sense, nor can it be equated with the succession of pictures, anecdotes or little events narrated that we find in Proust's book. Its meaning seems to lie beyond the written words, like a kind of secret intention, of which we are not even sure it is unique or decipherable. Hence, the question which has been raised by some literary critics, like Barthes : does it make sense to speak of meaning in literature ? On the one hand, we find several compatible interpretations in any literary text, and they do not even seem to depend, in their very existence, upon the linguistic features of the text. On the other hand, we can grant to the latter some unity, materialized by its physical presence — but it displaces the problem of the unity of *meaning* — or by the author. In the latter case, the meaning of what the author said is not a function of *what* he said but rather of what he was. The significance of this last question also displaces the difficulty, namely that of discovering why the work is not by itself the bearer of its own meaning, and why it is essential to get outside the text to look for what is supposed to be a feature of the text.

Many literary critics have then opted for abandoning the fuzzy-murky concept of meaning because they are confronted with the opposition of a plurality of possible interpretations versus the unity of a text outside the text, a vacuous unity filled in only by the author's name or guaranteed by the mere physical boundaries of the text. Meaning would then rest upon these two factors. Needless to say that it has seemed hardly credible to most theorists.

In order to see a little more clearly in those matters, we should return, I think, to the problem of meaning. The already provided information will help us surmount this apparent antinomy.

a) A literary text is not different, at first sight anyway, from the others. Ordinary sentences are seldom isolated in real-life situations, and they are produced in a continuum which constitutes their unity, a physical as well as an intentional one. Hence the revealing role, from the viewpoint of psychoanalysis for instance, of *non sequitur* in discourse. A text, as much as spoken sentences, is not made up of unrelated components.

b) A substitutional answer to a question of meaning *can* be made only if *one* sentence is in question, and *should* be, if that

question is directed upon the *words* composing the phrase and what they mean, as it is illustrated by the example (1) above. But meaning is always some piece of language which stands for another -- substitution *lato sensu* -- but is not, most of the time, a mere logical or semantical substitution. If, I say, for example :

(4) "it is 1 o'clock"

I also may say that I have said, in special circumstances, "I am hungry", or "it is time, now, to sit down at the table": to say "it is 1 o'clock" *is* to say that, and the word *is* indicates not an identity but a substitution authorized because of the context. In sum, the statement that it is 1 o'clock *is* -- quite unlogically, but pragmatically⁵ -- the affirmation, in that context, of a desire to satisfy my hunger. Meaning makes a statement an answer by contextualizing with reference to some question. The substitutional view of meaning is false when substitutions are conceived on the sole basis of logic (Quine), or of constituted and sedimented (context-free) markers of (lexical or free-existing) meaning (Katz). The *being* of the copula marking the substitution, in *A is B* for instance, must be understood as *variable*, as context-dependent: it depends on context that "it is 2 o'clock" means⁶ "I'm hungry, let's have lunch" rather than "can you drive me to the station now?". In short, the hermeneutical process substitutes answers for statements without modifying what they state, because their answerhood is not in what they state, though contained in their very possibility of stating (it) at all.

So, when I was affirming that I respected the substitution view, I was not claiming that, through the hermeneutical inquiry, a statement was not becoming (afresh) an answer, quite the contrary. In fact, in the process of understanding, there is a process of substitution at work, even when meaning is "evident" and that the whole hermeneutical process remains therefore mental, implicit. The words "substitution view of meaning" represent a label for identifying a particular view of substitution, which neglects questioning and which is thereby very narrow in the kind of substitutions it allows for. It is a certain view of substitution, of language as based on the paradigm of isolated sentences, of compositional meaning, of the role of the word *be*, which is that of a *logical constant* (I insist on these *two* words).

Now, as I said earlier, people, most of the time, do understand the sentences they face in ordinary speech, as well as those they find in the books and the literary texts they read. Therefore, if we ask what an author or a locutor meant by what he said or wrote, if we ask for the meaning of a text -- whatever that means --,

we surely do not wish answers about the meaning of the already understood particular sentences. In other words, the meaning of the *Quixote* can perfectly well remain hidden to someone who knows Spanish and gets the sense of all the phrases of all the chapters. The same holds for a discourse proffered orally.

Should we, then, see that kind of meaning as some (locutor's or author's) *intention*, some or deeper affirmation, situated at a second-level, outside the text, in the reader for example ?

c) In being unable of conceiving meaning on another basis that the substitution view we would inevitably be led to seek meaning in some (author's or locutor's) *intention*. Meaning would be elsewhere than in the text, and it would become meaningless to speak of textual meanings. On the other hand, we would implicitly grant validity to the substitutionalists' claim that meaning only applies to *sentences*, creating an unbridgeable gap of nature between textuality and sentential meaning instead of proving that, beyond the difference, there is some unity and why.

d) If meaning is a question-answer relationship, the unity of text or the speech continuum must be that too. What is in question in a text is not made of the questions answered by the sentences of the text, since those questions, though debated by it, cease to arise by being solved in and by the text. When we understand its sentences, we know those particular questions. Hence, if we speak of grasping what is said by the text as a whole, some *other* question(s) is (or are) at stake, different from those dealt with explicitly and literally.

There is, then, no gap of nature between textual meaning and sentential meaning as codified by the substitutionalists of the propositional theory. One could object that I have given existence to notions whose existence is indeed cast in doubt by some critics, i.e. the notion of unicity of texts, of sentential (oral or written) continuum, and henceforth, of *its* meaning as an independent reality, though not *sui generis*.

In fact, as shown in a) and b) above, texts exist and speech continua do too. They present themselves as interrelated sentences, and the question of the meaning of that interconnectedness is bound to arise each time we face a text or a speech. My point here is to draw the attention on the unity of *what* is said or written : a single sentence or a whole book, they each present themselves as an entity to their respective addressees. When one asks the meaning of what is said, one presupposes such a unity by addressing its "whatness". If sentences are textually structured, then there must be a reason for

that arrangement - call it the author's (or locutor's) intention - otherwise, one phrase would have been sufficient to do the job.

This, of course, does not imply that to the unity of the text corresponds the unicity of meaning. Since meaning is a question-answer relationship, we could translate our query in asking how we can possibly know that there is only one single problem from which a *text qua* answer originates. Indeed, nothing prevents us from admitting that a whole *problematic* underlies some text, a problematic consisting of several questions. For the time being, it suffices to keep in mind that the interpreter's attitude towards a text is the same, that a text be referred to one or rather to several questions. We should solely be attentive to the distinction between the questions debated *in* the text by the phrases and the question dealt with *by* the text. The example (4) illustrates this difference quite clearly : what is in question *in* the text is time, but the question with which the interlocutors are confronted bears upon the locutor's wish to have lunch. The latter question is harder to formulate with precision because it is left unspecified : the guess of the guest.

The meaning of a text transcends the literal sense attached to each of its sentences. Even if the answer refers to a plurality because meaning is plural, this fact remains. The meaning of a text is like the implied question of (4). An implied question naturally implies an implied questioner, as a reader or a listener. We can surely affirm that, though a text is composed sentences which are understood literally, as soon as encountered, the whole text or speech behaves as a non literal piece of language : the text as such has no literal meaning with respect to the various sentences composing it. The question at stake in the text, dealt with *by* it, is (or are) not literally the question(s) solved in it through the various sentences. When we ask the meaning of the *Quixote*, for instance, we do not mean that we do not understand the written words and the whole sentences contained in the book, we simply mean, that beyond that understanding *and on the basis of it* (i.e. suggested by it), we require a residual but capital information, the key to the whole book as unity. Therefore, we do not require the literal reformulation of the sentences of the text, but, in asking the meaning of the latter, we are requesting their non literal reformulation. Meaning appears in this situation as a non literal answer with respect to the various propositions embodied in the text. The text means literally what it does not say, or, in other words, does not say literally what it means. A non literal meaning is an implied one, implied by the literal ones. Textual meaning is rhetorical. A text behaves as the non literal

version of its literally interpreted components, a behavior which is, as we shall see, essential problematological.

What I have said about textual meaning reminds us of the definition of literature once given by Northrop Frye :

“The literary structure is ironic because ‘what it says’ is always different in kind or degree from ‘what it means’. In discursive writing, what is said tends to approximate ideally to become identified with, what is meant”⁷.

If we follow Freye in his definition of literature, all texts ought to be considered as literary ones. The question of the meaning of a text being equivalent to the non literal meaning of the question of the text, all texts should also be conceived as rhetorical as well, according to the standard acceptation to which the term rhetoric has been associated.

All this raises several questions. What is rhetoric ? Is it different from argumentation ? What do we mean by the question(s) dealt with *by* a text, and, consequently, how do we discover it ? Are all non literal meanings the result of a literary enterprise ? How can we spell out the difference between meaning in literature and meaning in general, or, to put it other terms, what is the specificity of literary texts ?

8. *Rhetoric and argumentation*

An answer is problematological as much as apocritical : though produced as if it had nothing to do with questions, it is nonetheless an answer, though, for the purpose of its answerhood, it represses it self and refers to something else *that it says*. Its meaning is given by the question it is associated with, and in the case of single sentences, it amounts to expanding the answer as an answer, i.e. to specifying, through an interrogative clause, what is in question which solved by the proposition. But, most of the time, texts present themselves as a unity, and what is said, and need be considered as such, consists in a group of interrelated sentences. The question (4) associated cannot be found through the mere expansion of the composing sentences into interrogatives clauses. The problem of unity would be left aside, unsolved; the relationship between all those questions solved would still remain to be considered with respect to the question *to be* solved, which is that of the unity of the whole as being *its* meaning. We have seen that the relationship between those partial questions and the one which is to be solved can be particularized as the non literal meaning implied by them. This relationship

ought now to be studied in the light of its the so-called rhetorical nature.

An answer has an argumentative and rhetorical impact in virtue of its problematological nature. It can express afresh questions, while it was meant to solve one specific problem. It can then duplicate that problem again if someone objects to the solution, and respects the answer *as an answer* to it, it can also raise and suggest other questions, and lead to possible dialogues. Argumentation comes in if we consider that an argument is an opinion on some question which gives a reason to think in one direction rather than in another with respect to that question. If my problem is, for example, to go out for walk, an answer affirming that weather is fine serves as an argument in favor of the decision to go out. On the other hand, this answer is not an argument *pro or contra* the wish to know what the weather is like : it simply gives the information on that question but does not argue in favor of anything. It is an argument only insofar as some other question is implied, with respect to which it serves as a solution. An argument is a reason to opt for a certain answer or solution if some other question or problem is at stake than the direct question to which the answer is an answer. In other words, argumentation is a problematological notion, which deals with implied questions : the answer "John has stopped beating his wife" gives a reason to believe he has a wife and that he used to beat her, it also gives an information on the question of the present relationship between the husband and the wife, though it is not an argument in favor of the way they now behave. It just states that behaviour. That is why an answer to some question, to which it directly answers, does not justify itself as an answer, and, as an isolated statement, it is groundless. Its affirmation is not an argument for its validity, nor a justification for its being *the* answer to that question. The request for a ground — known as the principle of sufficient reason — amounts in reality to knowing that a given answer is the answer to the question with respect ot which it serves as an answer. This knowledge is itself an answer, whose specificity consists in showing that no other answer could be *the* answer, i.e. that to the question considered the statement offered as answer was the answer and that its negation is not, or could not be, the answer. On the other hand, a direct answer to some question is a reason to believe something about what is in question, rather than the contrary statement. But is that still an argumentation ? Do we face the same question when we consider beliefs ?

Therefore, "John stopped beating his wife" is the ground for

(asserting) "John has a wife", as much as "the weather is fine" is a reason to say the opposite; It is even a reason to *make* that walk rather than not make it. By themselves, all these statements are no arguments, they just answer some definite questions, and *with respect to them*, they are either no arguments to think in some way rather than in some other, including the opposite one.

Argumentation arises, then, when some question being raised, some answer to that question is given indirectly, i.e. is *implied* by the answer to another question. The former answer is the *implicit* or *implied* conclusion of the latter. In (4) above, for example, there "it is 1 o'clock" is an argument for having lunch. The latter statement is also the (non literal) meaning, in that context, of (4). Is meaning discovery an argumentative process, or is it not rather than non literal presentation of some meaning — (4) is as much non literal with respect to "let's have lunch" as the latter with respect to the former — which is an argumentation, an incitation to conclude something which is not said ?

In sum, we shall speak of argumentation when there is some relationship between something explicit and some implicit conclusion.

When does argumentation become rhetorical ? Rhetoric has been variously characterized as a method of persuasion, as a set of tricks resorted to for the purpose of manipulating people, and as the set of stylistic devices inherent in the production of narratives. The adjective rhetorical is also employed to qualify what is merely formal, ornamental, and it more appropriate to say that the word *rhetorical* disqualifies rather than qualifies. Rhetoric is all that, but differs from argumentation *stricto sensu* in the following respect : rhetoric aims at *persuading* someone, argumentation functions independently of the possible persuasive effects the relationship of the explicit and the implicit can have upon the audience. The link between both is due to the fact that, if someone says anything, he does it with the intention of convincing the addressee of something. Something that the addressee is led to infer, and not necessarily something ready-made for direct assent or dissent.

It has become a matter of fact to conflate both notions, to the benefit of rhetoric, which as a result, appears as a very imprecise concept. It is important to note, with C. Perelman, that rhetoric as manipulation (Plato) or as a bundle of tropes are in fact *derived* and particular *uses* of rhetoric, which he defines primarily, and more widely as : "the study of the discursive techniques allowing us *to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the theses presented*

for its assent" (8).

Literature has been associated with rhetoric, a rhetoric conceived in a derived use of the term, due, probably, to historical reasons: the French aristocratic legacy, itself originating, at least theoretically, from the Roman conceptualization of eloquence.

If we consider style as an ornamental procedure — to the variety of ornaments corresponds an equivalent multiplicity of stylistic figures — adopted to convey to some underlying and hidden truth, which *could* be put in plain terms but should not for reasons of aristocratic *bienséance* or political prudence, then it is fairly obvious that literature is rhetorical. Stylistic figures, inherent in the writing of literary texts, make it rhetorical in essence: they are used to please or persuade.

Unfortunately for that view of literary language and its correlative forms, the same could be legitimately affirmed of any discourse. The choice of a form of expression, in real-life situations, is also guided by similar rhetorical considerations. Who, after all, does not want to persuade or please one's audience?

Rhetoric, then, gained an extension of meaning, with which aristocratic considerations had nothing left to do. Rhetoric was used to attest to the presence, in some piece of language, of a figurative, non literal meaning, implied for not, according to Paul de Man) by literal or grammatical structures. The literary tropes play a rhetorical role, in that sense they refer to some implicit message that they *formulate* each in its own way. This, quite evidently, modifies the purpose of tropes, which have nothing more to do with courtly usages, though not their modes of functioning. They still are conceived as literal substitutes for something which is intended figuratively or reversely (from the critic's point of view), as figurative substitutes for something which can be translated into plain language.

Now, thanks to theorists like Paul de Man and Paul Ricoeur, among others, we know that they are no substitutes. In the case of metaphors, for example, we cannot oppose a literal meaning and a figurative meaning as the latter being the substitute for the former. We are *asked* to pass from one to the other, but they do not stand for each other as if we could do without either one of them: metaphors *create* their meaning, and it is only when some definite interpretation has been ascribed to them, that they *die* as metaphors, to become a figure for some already constituted translation (9). In the case of questions, the same reasoning applies: the grammatical structure, in a poetry for instance, does not enable us

to tell whether it is a rhetorical question or an epistemic one, leaving room for different, if not contradictory, interpretations of what the reader is asked to conclude (10). Where, then, should we find the literal, grammatical, underlying message which can be formulated, by interpreted namely, in plain, ordinary, non literary speech ?

Rhetoric was a term coined for the purpose of differentiating literary language from other types of discourse, but, unfortunately, it failed to explain the difference since 1) everybody wants to persuade or please, 2) the opposition of literal versus non literal meaning entertains a mysterious relationship, mysterious, at least, for our so-called rhetoricians of literature. The reason is that they did not analyze the mechanisms of that relationship which is precisely what I call an argumentative link. We shall see that, if we keep alive the distinction of fiction versus realistic language -- and the theory of literary tropes could suggest such a duality -- as a linguistic one, we incur the risk of not understanding how language *and literature* function.

Rhetoric is clearly the counterpart of argumentation. The rhetorical dimension can be defined as the impact exerted by a discourse on the beliefs some audience. To influence others, to manipulate them, to seduce them, to suggest them to conclude something by themselves, all this has to do with rhetoric. How does it happen ? Argumentation tells us : a discourse is argumentative if it *implies* some conclusion (on a question or to another question); that the audience believes it or not, there is a mechanism by which language conveys that implicature. The rhetorical impact is, of course, the other side of the coin, and we can reasonably suppose that the purpose of an argumentation is of rhetorical nature : it is put forward in order to affect the addressee in some way or other.

Because of the tradition which pervades literary theory consisting in conflating argumentation and rhetoric, to the point of failing to understand how the former functions and of enlarging abusively the field of rhetoric, we shall from now on speak indifferently of rhetoric for argumentation. Our reservations have been made, and the reader will make the differentiation if, and when, he thinks it useful.

9. Why should rhetoric (argumentation) be problematologically conceptualized ?

Argumentation is non formal reasoning, that is, it provides an answer to some question *and thereby* suggests an answer on another.

A formal reasoning would exclude the possibility of alternative answers; a non-formal one does not exclude the implication (or implicature) of that alternative, on the basis of the first answer given. The question answered argumentatively (rhetorically) could be answered in another way, and it is rhetorical too by not putting bluntly the conclusions on the table to avoid direct adverse reactions from the part of the audience (11). Argumentation, then, suggests a conclusion, which could possibly be called into question, and that explains why it is evoked as called for by the first answer. Evoked or implied as to be inferred by the addressee himself in order to increase the credibility of the conclusion : the addressee, inferring by himself that conclusion, would perhaps have the impression of having reached that answer from his own problematic, as if it were a personal conclusion to which he could then only assent.

My point here is to show that argumentation gives a ground for one answer among others *to* a question which can always be raised afresh by lack of a *necessary* (i.e. *one*) answer to it (12). Argumentation (rhetoric) has to be conceptualized within the framework of the question-view of language. Even if arguments are rhetorically laden, we should nonetheless keep in mind our theoretical distinction between argumentation and rhetoric, in order to acquire a more precise understanding of the nature of language, let alone the literary one.

Argumentation is non-formal reasoning, that is, provides an answer *to* some question and thereby suggests an answer *on* another one. The link is non formal in the sense that the question answered argumentatively could be answered in another way. The negation of the answer suggested is therefore also possible, and it is the fact of argumentation to ground a choice. Language serves as much to solve problems as to express them, to tell what some solution is as to tell what the problem was. Therefore, what is said or written raises questions as much as it answers them. Question-raising can occur in two ways : formally or contextually. In the first case, the answer is explicitly proffered as a question for the addressee, though not necessarily with an interrogative form.

Language serves as much to solve problems as to express them, to tell solutions as to tell what the problem was. Therefore, what is said or written raises questions even when it was meant to solve one.

Question-raising can occur in two ways : formally or *contextually*. In the first case, the answer contains explicit markers which are introduced to require a response from the addressee. Those *rhetorical intensifiers* (13) belong to the "surface structure" of what

is said or written, they do not have to be put as question-marks, but they can. It is obvious that

(5) Is he not dishonest ?

is put by the locutor in terms which requires the interlocutor to answer, to conclude that the person in question is dishonest. The locutor does want to be *responsible* for such an accusation and he does not say it explicitly and bluntly. Maybe the proposition "he is dishonest" would be too much debatable to be directly affirmed, so, the locutor suggests a choice, an answer, to the question raised in (5) by posing another question which is meant to lead the addressee to infer that the person in question is really dishonest. The *question is rhetorical* in the sense that it suggests its answer, though, literally, it could be taken as a real epistemic request. In fact, the question *implies* a statement, a conclusion which is imparted to the interlocutor to draw by himself. The advantages of such a method is that a) it *requests* the addressee to take a stand on the question put to him, b) it enables the locutor to elude the *responsibility* of having said something which could have (negative) consequences for him, c) it leaves room for the denial of the implied conclusion. The question-mark is here the rhetorical intensifier.

What is the mechanism embodied in that formal technique ? This question is of importance because we shall find it in all the other types of argumentation (rhetoric).

We have an answer -- in (5) above, a problematological one -- which literally answers a question. It has therefore a definite propositional content, and says something quite literally, though in (5), implicitly, namely that the locutor wishes his interlocutor to let him know whether X is honest or not, as he believes so. *But*, by doing so, another question is raised, which is figuratively implied by what is literally said, embedded in it, so to speak. In other words, a statement by answering a definite question or problem, raises another one to which, in fact, *it also answers*. Two *meanings* are then associated with that very same piece of language, since two question-answer relationships arise. We then say that the first meaning is the *literal* one, and that the second, its correlate, is the *figurative* one, or vice versa if you prefer to say that there is a hidden preexistent assertion "behind" the discourse. What matters here is the "behind", the way both meanings are imbricated (or embedded) with one another. We can call that an implicature if we want to insist on the non formal aspect of the link, an *inference* if we do not want to

restrict ourselves to conversational analysis. Or also an implication, if we are not afraid of leaving to the reader the task of going beyond the preestablished jargon to look for a common reality.

The particular feature of argumentation is that it contains a request addressed to the audience to make a move, which the author does not want or cannot make directly, for himself. Hence, he leaves that move to his audience, and the result is then implicit, though implied in the explicit. Since the supplied answer presents itself as a question, it is not taken as *the* answer to the question supposed to be answered by it, and the addressee is then explicitly *asked* to look for another answer which answers to what is said. This second answer refers back to a second question which is not what is literally in question in the first answer. This question is not the real expression of the locutor's problem, since his answer, though dealing with that former question *by answering it*, is not a final answer, but a step towards. What is then the real question corresponding to the implied answer? In other words, once the implied answer has been found, the addressee knows the correlated question, hence the real (figurative, intended) meaning of what was said. And reversely: once the real problem that has given rise to the assertion has been discovered, the interpreter knows exactly what the author meant, i.e. what the meaning of what he said or wrote was. That is where *intentions* come in.

The first answer conditions the arousal of the second, and the intentions of the locutor do not have to be interrogated independently in order to be discovered. Literal meaning is *explicitly* produced to evoke the non literal one, and for that reason, what the statement really means is what it does not say, but suggests.

The second manner in which arguments are put forward does not widely differ from the first, at least as far as the question-answer mechanism described above is concerned.

The literal meaning of a sentence is given by the question dealt with in it: it relates that sentence to the one single question it answers. But that sentence, once it has been produced to bring a solution to that question, acquires autonomy with respect to it. It can become a question again, it *is* in fact one, but for some other person than the one who has *answered* with it. As a result, even if an answer is not *literally* a question, it is contextually so. Intentionally or not. In (4), a non literal answer is suggested intentionally. Intention, here as elsewhere, does not explain nor provides meaning, though the reverse is true. It is through the contextual — hence objective — information that the addressee is able to discover, behind

(4), the unavowed meaning "let's have lunch", and the intention of conveying it. The context enables the addressee to pass from (4) to "let's have lunch". With the discovery of meaning, one gets the intention, but it sometimes goes the other way around.

In general, a sentence, or rather any discourse, generates questions, independently of its form, which was not necessarily meant to have such an effect. The content in which those sentences take place indicate which questions are asked, and by context, we mean situation of encounter between a recipient and those sentences.

10. *Literary versus non literary discourse*

Basically, the two argumentative procedures are the same, to the extent that they serve to indicate, through answers, that the questions asked do not provide the meaning of those answers, but imply more fundamental questions at stake in the discourse held. The two techniques differ in the way they provoke the addressee's reaction : by context or by form, or even by a combination of both. Tropes, for instance, function in that manner; not that they are *substitutes* for a figurative meaning, but they literally *call for* such a meaning by literally figuring it. Metaphors provide a more striking example : literally, they mean nothing but something recondite, so they *must* mean something else. Literal meaning cannot be the true one, the valid one, the ultimate one -- you name it -- for metaphors have none. They are literally enigmes (Aristotle), they are questions or problematological answers *ab initio*, *formally* so, and they call for an understanding. No wonder, then, if we cannot associate with metaphors a *second* meaning giving sense of the first, substitutable for the first, since there is no such first meaning. In the case of metaphors, as Ricoeur pointed out (14), we see the substitution-view completely at loss. However, there is a substitutional process *in understanding*, and there is no wonder either, that any interpretation of metaphors suppress them, or rather, resolve them. Ricoeur failed to see that point because he did not describe the process of interpretation, which is a questioning process, leading, as such, to *some* answer. Metaphors are formally interrogative : due to their very literal formulation they call for an answer, and the striking point in all this is that the same is true of all arguments and of rhetorical discourse in general. The question-answer relationship is not defined by a substitution of the latter to the former. The problematological difference, which defines the very existence of questioning, precludes to see in an answer to some question its apocritical duplication, as

if to give the solution to some problem consisted merely in telling what the problem was. On the other hand, there is some substitution process which takes place in interpretation, and Ricoeur's partners in his debate on metaphor have surely made a point in stressing the role of substitution in metaphorical discourse.

Metaphors, being literally meaningless, are formally rhetorical, or rather argumentative. But most of the time, there is no such thing as rhetorical discourse *per se*. If there were, it would be wonderful because we would have a sharp line to draw between literature and non literary discourse, the latter being non rhetorical (of course !), in the sense given to rhetoric by the French theorists. First, they beg the question by restricting rhetorical effects to the literary ones. Second, they assume that there are specific figures of style which do the job and -- this relates to the first objection -- that those figures are used in literature only. The example I have given above shows it clearly. After all, (5) is not in itself -- but can we consider (4) in itself? -- a rhetorical question. It may turn out to be a real epistemic one, though manifesting a certain prejudice from the part of the questioner. Paul de Man, in a paper already quoted (10), has developed that theme much better than I could ever do. But I would conclude that any discourse can be rhetorical, and not that its being rhetorical makes it literary.

"And although it would perhaps be somewhat remote from common usage, I would not hesitate to equate the rhetorical potentiality of language with literature itself" (15).

Unless, of course, one agrees to say that the difference between literature and non literature is not a matter of language : anything can be subject to literary appropriation, everything that can be expressed with plain terms can be also literary. Literature can speak of everything and of anything. And it does in fact.

Now, having said how argumentation functions according to the question-view, we have to see how -- since we told why in a previous paragraph -- texts are rhetorical in virtue of their textuality.

A reader or a listener can always see a figurative and derived (or implied) meaning where the author or the locutor has not meant it, simply because language lends itself to such a possibility.

The case of texts is much more characteristic : *a text asks for its meaning*, it calls for some understanding of itself *as a whole, as a unity*. Just like all that which is said or written, that being a sentence, a discourse, a speech, a book. But texts are specific by

being texts *and not single sentences*. In fact, it is not true that each sentence requires a non literal interpretation, they may even be all quite literally meaningful, and nothing more, i.e. simply meaningful. But the text that comprises them all transcends its components by the unity of their presentation. The question the text addresses is not to be read in some particular constituent, in those sentences, but in the textual unity which relates them to one another. The context of each sentences is ensured by all others. This entail sthat the text forms a circle (Heidegger), where the whole can only be grasped through a *to-and-fro movement* (Spitzer). Sentences form a sequence which must be discovered successively, and only then can the problem dealt with *by* the text be grasped as such. The so-called *Erzählzeit* is the one of resolution of that problem. The text, or the speech continuum must get completely unfolded in order to face the problem dealt with *by* it, provided that the various questions dealt *within* the text are understood, though, of course, they relate to the textual unity.

One possible objection could be levelled against this view, namely that texts do not necessarily have to be understood globally as an answer raised by their unity. Cannot textual entities be understood by adding partial meanings, in a progressive succession without circle ? We do, in fact, proceed in that manner, at least in a first time, by relying pragmatically — in all the senses of the word — on what we know and believe, on what the sentences literally and individually say without looking for a global implied meaning. But what have we understood thereby ? What was literally said : we have seen a problem resolving itself into a story, with a conclusion closing it, bringing about a final point to the story. *Erzählzeit* also means the presence of a beginning and an end. This first level of understanding is, as said earlier, necessary to reach the level of some global comprehension, though the reader or listener can always stop there, without going, as to speak, “back on his steps”. This is, beyond doubt, in that way that a story, a fictional text, a narrative, encapsulates the reader in its network of belief and references. Would the reader *reflect* upon these, he would renounce to his “willing suspension of disbelief”, by getting out of that network, by going “behind” or “beyond” the story. Remaining at that first level is always possible due to the immanent coherence that this reading provides : secondary meaning is not sought “behind” what is literally said, unless what is literally said proves *formally* to call for a non literal reinterpretation. My contention is that, even in this case, he grasps some global understanding, implied in the piece-by-piece discovery

of the text. He gets at least an idea of the textual meaning, because, as I will show later, there is an *ideological causality* at work in reading or listening. Ideological is to be understood in the two senses of the word : the one according Destutt de Tracy's (*une idée*) and the modern sense relating to *norms*. The second level of understanding consists in rendering explicit the idea(s), i.e. to provide an *interpretation*, which by being fully articulated, tackles the text in its unity. To put all this in a nutshell, there is, under all circumstances, a *rhetorical* effect of texts — rhetorical in the sense of conveying implicitly some belief —, perceived or not, but which is nonetheless at work in the alleged precemeal discovery of the text. "Bad" literature is ideologically functional too.

The truth of the matter, as far as literary discourse is concerned, is that there is no linguistic difference of nature between literary texts and non literary ones *when we consider their rhetorical effect*. As a result, fictional discourse can generate the illusion of being veridical, i.e. the illusion of mimesis.

11. *What is literature ?*

Literary works are textually rhetorical, but so are the others. We have seen why : though we know what is in question in what we hear or read, there is something else at stake in the very fact it is said or written the way it is. When we speak of discovering the meaning of a text, we do not have in mind all the particular sentences of the text, which we already understand, but their textual arrangement, i.e. the manner in which those sentences are presented and which raises the question of their being organized the way they are. This question is literally implied by the others dealt with in the text, as the key of their arranged literality. We could also say that the text is figuratively asking that question : we can figure out what is literally at stake though, and thanks to, what is said which a non literal with respect to what is to be figured out.

In that sense, there is no rhetorical textuality which, to be so, does not rely on presentation to imply what it means. The difference between literature and non literary texts does not rest upon the existence of some rhetorical effect, to be found with all texts, but on the manner by means of which such a goal is achieved. Hence the temptation of erecting a classification of literary genres, to categorize the variety of rhetorical impacts. We have several competing catalogues at our disposal, which all proved defective. The common feature prevailing between the various literary modes of speech is

style (16). It is through style that literary works are literary, and convey the sought rhetorical effect. We could say that style is necessary to give pleasure to the reader for instance, or to encapsulate him in the problematic of the discourse, thereby exerting the much sought-after fascination upon him which lays at the core of the credibility of fiction. All this is undoubtedly true, but not fundamentally so. Style is the means by which literary discourse comes into being for the essential reason that the text must supply the information that is normally left unsaid in the habitual context of speech production and reception. Literary works are literary because they have to furnish their own context of information to their unknown readers, whereas administrative reports, for example, or oral conversations generally rely on some specific tacit knowledge inherent in the context of interaction between author and audience. That is why literary discourse is *fictional*: it is unrealistic with respect to those usual situations where we resort to language. It is fictional in the sense that it must provide elements which are ordinarily found in the implicit context of language use. By being unrealistic, literary discourse endangers the credibility of the information it gives, i.e. its own credibility. With the possible effect of arousing in the reader reactions of distantiation. Literary texts must then create some illusion, at least if they contain a narration of usually implicit and untold elements. Maybe poetry does not have to proceed that way, but novels often do. But even poetry speaks of what is ordinarily kept to oneself, and to that extent, it has to create an environment of explicitness, for example by formally provoking the reader. The reader finds himself suddenly in question thereby; accepting (or not), liking (or not), the answer so submitted to his spheres of explicit attention. At any rate, style is needed to render that information plausible, and even pleasurable, to avoid reactions of avoidances which could otherwise occur. The famous contemporary debate about author-and-narrator originates from that necessity of letting the reader know what he must know and how he knows it. And this is also linked to the problem of fiction and illusion.

The rhetorical effect inherent in textual entities can be conveyed through auto-contextualization, as just described. But texts can also be formally rhetorical: they are explicitly produced as enigmatic to the reader, by mere form. The text is formulated throughout in such a specific way that it presents itself literarily, since ordinary textual arrangements are presented, not to raise enigmas left to the reader to solve, but as sharable solutions. In that

case, the literary text does not have to create illusion or generate credibility. Versified poetry or esoteric prose are good examples. The question of the meaning of such works inevitably arises, and it is in order to provoke it that they are formulated the way they are, leaving to the reader to supply or project his vision (17).

In sum, when rhetorical effects are not formalized explicitly, then texts must auto-contextualize those effects, and in both cases, we speak of literary discourse. In both cases, there is a closure of the text upon itself, and as a corollary, a capture of the reader by the text becomes an absolute necessity. Even when the text is quite enigmatic, it requires the reader's forgetfulness of his own problems, which enables him to get totally involved in his reading. Though continuing to look for their solution in it, but implicitly, i.e. unconsciously. Hence, the pleasure taken in reading. The non-reflexive level of reading is precisely a questioning process in which one parenthesizes one's own problems, while still on the track of their solution. Texts can only bring it on some imaginary plan.

The capture of the reader takes place by the presentation of some problematic, and, of course, the secret of success lies in that presentation. One way of achieving it is by unfolding that problematic. Problems can be explicitly, and non rhetorically, posed as such, as in detective stories. The so-called "willing suspension of disbelief" occurs there due to a particular literary (i.e. linguistic arrangement) setting which creates the wish in the reader to see the problem solved. Novels create their own environment by presenting a definite problematic, and one good autocontextualizing means is the setting up of a mystery. The effect of staging that problematic, which encapsulates the reader, is the parenthesization of one's own problems. They remain off the stage, but like spectators: the play can only take place if there are some. Literature brings a fictional, i.e. imaginary, resolution. Fiction is, then, from the author's viewpoint, the textual presentation of that which is contextual in *real*-life situations. From the reader's point of view, fiction is the discursive solution of non discursive problems. This does not imply that literature provides answers to preexistent questions of the readers, but simply that it raises questions requesting the reader to forget his problems, to ask *himself* questions he would not have asked otherwise, and so on. In other words, the reader is asked to answer, at least mentally, and this establishes a relationship between his problems, which define him, and his answers to the text. In the psychology of the reading process, we should note the symbolic nature of literature with respect to those personal problems, which

enables the reader to face those problems in a non destructive way for his ego.

Because of the presence of a problematic, identified with the rhetorical nature of textuality, we often find, in literature, especially in novels, an unfolding of the resolution as well. Narration has a beginning and an end, in relationship with the problem to be solved and the conclusion which occurs as ending the process. The latter is necessarily temporal, even when the natural order of events narrated is not in adequation with the time of narration (*Erzählzeit* versus *erzählte Zeit*). Such a possible dissonance aims at reinforcing the rhetorical effect, i.e. the problematological impact of the text which calls for a second-level interpretation. The discrepancy between those two time-forms creates the unexpected and is problem-raising as to what is going on (18). This is a stylistic device, i.e. a literary procedure, we find in many novels of this century. But the case of popular novels is very interesting too, and their examination is linked to what I have just called *second-level reading* (or interpretation). Popular novels are generally associated with what is called "easy" or even "bad" literature, maybe on the grounds that the unfolding of the resolution coincides with that of the problematic, as if they were one and the same. The problematic is obviously and explicitly advertised, rendering any second-level reading superfluous. Once read, those books seem transparent. The problems to be solved are not rhetorically put, i.e. suggested or implied by a first (-level) reading. They are obvious that no reflexive process, constitutive of the second-level reading called interpretation, must take place in order to grasp what is meant. The problematic resolves itself into a mere *progressive* reading, and ends itself with the ultimate line of the text : there and then, you have understood the book. In fact there was nothing to understand, perhaps. It is simply a question of following the author on the path of the story which makes it valuable to read. The text as a whole does not raise further questions about itself, whereas second-level reading requires a regressive procedure to grasp the whole *as a whole*, i.e. an *hermeneutical circle*, a to-and-fro movement to which I was alluding before. This can only happen if one is led to go back on one's steps. It means that there is something in the text which renders the sole progressive reading insufficient for its comprehension : it is contextually or formally problematic, because the problems involved in the textuality of the text are not all there, but are implied. The problems which are explicitly presented to be explicitly solved in the narration do not raise the question of the meaning of that narration,

which is entirely unfolded to present such a resolution. The text means that, and nothing more. There is no idea beyond the narrative, unless it is *that* the idea beyond it : do not ask questions because they are all there, and beyond there, there are none. A whole philosophy of life, after all, which makes it simple, nice and easy. The capture of the reader is achieved through inducing him to follow the resolution, as if it were his own problem. Detective stories are typical in this respect. The secret of popular literature resides in its being entirely and explicitly closed in the progressive reading they make for its readers. A circular procedure, i.e. a reflective process upon the text, is then totally superfluous : comprehension is successive, with reading, the final point of the text is literally the conclusive answer to get from its reading. From a temporal point of view, those texts cannot survive that final point in the mind of their readers. The unfolding of the problems being in total coincidence with their progressive resolution, no wonder that there is not any further question to be asked and solved *by its* very textuality. They are solved progressively in the text, by the text, rendering a global view of it quite senseless, by adding nothing to the information previously gained.

I would like, now, to stress one point concerning referentiality. Here too, logic and the philosophy of language of the past have left their marks on our way of describing literature. That was one of the reasons to begin my contribution with speaking of Frege. The weight of tradition is sometimes quite heavy. For example, we speak of implicature (Grice) where we should use the term "implication", because we — wrongly — think that implication is a logico-formal inference, where all the premisses are stipulated for deductive purposes. It is not strange to see our philosophers of natural language so obnubilated by that quite particular form of language called logic, that they see our natural language in terms of deviations with respect to logical concepts, such as that of implication? It is even paradoxical when we consider the primacy they give to natural language, without which formal ones are hardly intelligible, and when we consider that they forge their terms with reference to the latter. For me, an "implicature" is an implication, like the logical one : the manner in which we proceed, in both cases, to derive a conclusion differs, but the goal, which is to reach that conclusion, is common.

The same holds for referentiality. But the consequences are more damaging. One often reads that the difference between fictional and non fictional discourse is a question of referentiality.

This legacy of the Fregean analysis has led several authors to coin terms like “pseudo-referentiality” or “auto-referential”, and what not (19). They seem to think that some sentences refer, or that terms do, while others, pertaining to the so-called fictional mode of speech, would not. This begs the question of fictionality, and besides, it does not make sense. We have here a clear-cut case of philosophical ignorance. Referentiality falls *a priori* within language (Wittgenstein) : it is an essential feature of language that it refers to something else than itself. Signs are not mere spots on the paper, which would be but that. They do mean something by indicating it. The whole question is how, but the fact itself is not in question. References, on the other hand, are *a priori* what falls outside language, they make the “real world” real, i.e. non linguistic. As a result, if someone writes about somebody else’s action it is not less referential in a fiction than in a police report, for example. All discourses are referential, hence the illusion of fictional discourse which consists in speaking of things, events and persons when nothing in reality corresponds to those descriptions. What should be quite clear is that the denoted entities, i.e. reference, are never to be found in discourse, fictional or not, in virtue of what they *are*. That is why it is extremely misleading to speak of referential discourse. It suggests that there is some other, and this is contrary to the very nature of language. Reference cannot be found within language itself, whereas referentiality is inscribed within its texture. If some discourse is imaginary, it does not cease to be referential, and this even makes fictional illusion possible, along with the mode of presentation.

The question “what is literature ?”, leads to a deeper one, i.e. “why literature ?”. We have seen how literature functions literarily, but it does not explain to us the reasons to arrange our discourse in such a manner, In other words, why does one resort to the specific rhetorical procedure called literature ? Why do some rhetorical effects have to be produced literarily ?

The answer to those questions lies in the nature of ideology.

12. *Ideas and ideology*

More and more, literature has been viewed as an ideological reaction. But the relationship between ideology and literature is far from clear. It requires a better understanding of ideology. Ideology is a corpus of ideas erected for a specific, and often political, purpose. More generally, we think of ideology as a world-view,

designed or not, for the purpose of legitimating some social or political order. But where do those ideas come from? And more deeply, what are ideas in general? The ideological nature of our mind seems to get rooted in its intrinsic nature. What modern thinkers associate ideology with is rather a derived use. In what sense is textuality ideological? We can *see* an *idea* at work in any discourse, and generally more than one. There is a second level in the so-called "bad" or "easy" literature, which, if it were taken up by some readers, would lead them to conclude to the absence of a second-level reading. This one of the ideas suggested by that kind of literature. Denegation is, in itself, a second-level idea. In everything, then, we find some idea(s) implied, even on the self-defeating mode. Why? We have taken the case of popular literature as an example, for we have invoked it already, but the process of ideological inference or causality is quite general. Ideas, *idées*, as the etymology tells us, enable us to *see*, i.e. to have a theoretical grasp conveyed through sensible means. An idea is something general which in question in something related to sensibility, i.e. a particular. The relationship is that of subsumption, and this, as most Aristotle's and Kant's readers know, is the basis of inference. Ideas are what is seen in what is seen, the difference between both "visions" is that of principle and consequence, to put it in terms of logical relations, in terms of judgment. A principle is something beyond which our mind does not go, it is a stopping point. Even if it is in question in something particular, it is not questioned *by* it. It even serves to shed light on the particularity of what is seen *as* being particular. Far from being itself called into question and doubt by the particular, it enables us to solve the questions raised in or by it. The fact there is always an idea behind everything is of logical nature. Kant would say transcendental, because the use of sensibility which relates us to individual entities, involves understanding. When we speak of human faculties to describe knowledge, we resort to a *transcendental analysis*. I am not so sure that this is the correct analysis to make. The relationship between a particular and an idea is simply logical: there is always some general conceptualization of which what is considered is a particular case. The latter *a priori* falls under some idea, not necessarily intentional suggested or known, but logically, it must be so, for reasons I shall not expound here. What I am pretty sure of is the following: the particular refers back to the universal, to some entities beyond which nothing can be found since they are universal. Being so, they function as principles. The striking fact is that the relation of involvement is quite *a priori*: something particular is

always so with respect to something else that is not, which is implicitly instantiated thereby and which can be "seen" through (or in) that instantiation. We often see an ideological causality at work in human activities, for the reason just explained : we cannot prevent ideas to arise from what we do in particular, let alone from what we say *hic et nunc*. Hence the necessity of taking those ideas into account when we act, let alone when we speak or write. Ideological causality is that process which consists in conveying some ideas by means of what we do in particular. It is always at work, in human affairs, even when we do not do anything with that intention. Ideological manipulation, for instance, requires a good dose of blindness from the part of th manipulated. And this is only possible on the basis of some ideological causality which makes everything we do and say an instantiation of some idea, wittingly or not. The rhetorical impact of literature is ideological in that sense : it aims at suggesting ideas through particular cases. A story represents such a particular case, a poem does too, a novella is that also, and so forth. They *illustrate* something that the rhetorical effect embodied in their textuality implies, and if the implication becomes explicit, we have an interpretation of the text. The idea(s) attained at are of universal nature, they are *values*. The moral of the story is, after all, explicitly or not, of such an ideological texture.

Our mind is, as said earlier, of ideological nature in the sense that we always relate what we see or touch, or feel in general, to some underlying idea or principle, which generalizes our information. We imperceptibly and indirectly obtain such ideas. Children, for example, learn and behave ideologically. That is why the old saying "do what I say, but not what I do" is self-defeating in pedagogical matters. The maxim is an inconsistent idea, and as a result, it cannot pretend to represent an idea for the child, a principle guiding his (or her) action. Parents will meet serious difficulties in gaining respect from their children if they despise or simply neglect their own parents. The idea "one should respect one's parents" does not force itself, as *idea*, upon the child's mind when he can *see* it contradicted by his own parents' acts and attitudes. Despite what they say, the child is bound *to see* that the saying above is not an idea, a principle, but an interested and *ad hoc* discourse.

No wonder that we also need ideas for guiding our political attitudes and beliefs, i.e. some ideology.

Let us go now a step further in our analysis of ideology, in order to know when an ideology gets a political color, as people usually employing the word "ideology" understands it nowadays.

Ewamples will illustrate my ideas in this respect :

1) Once upon a time, there was a scholar accused of plagiarism by colleagues from another university. The facts were well established, but, instead of firing him, they gave him tenure. One can only understand that behaviour if one resorts to the principle of ideological causality : his colleagues had primarily appointed him for his merits; when the facts became known to them, though it was still legally possible to get ride him. If they had done so, they should have had to recognize that they had been wrong, badly informed, that they had not done their job correctly. But how could *they* have been wrong, since their functions and their titles denoted quite the contrary, i.e. that they had the necessary and required competence corresponding to those titles, which enabled them to tell whether someone's works in their field was good or bad ? By firing their colleague, they would have shown and suggested what they did not have that competence. That idea would not have been mentioned, but it would have raised the question of their titled ability to judge.

2) A reverse case. Why was Galileo, or Socrates, condemned ? After all, Galileo -- to begin with him -- was not the first thinker to spread theories which were not in conformity with those advocated by the Church. After all, the Church survived and assimilated science, as it developed. Why, then, did she react so intensely ? As an hypothesis, it could have been reconciled with the Holy Scriptures, and if Galileo had admitted that, he probably would have had less trouble -- at least if we believe Bertolt Brecht. But to claim that Copernicus' theory was *true* suggested that those who defended the opposite views were *wrong*. How could they admit being wrong when they were claiming to know God's message and to implement His teachings on earth ? It was not so much the theoretical and abstract content of those cosmological doctrines which really embarrassed the Church at that time -- who cared for those doctrines in one's everyday life ? -- that the fact that the priests could be wrong. If they were wrong on the nature of the universe, why not on the prescriptions they imposed on the running of everyday life ? The idea suggested by the amplification of Galileo's spreading views was not cosmological, but political. The Church could be wrong, and the question of their being right in other matters was thereby raised.

The same with Socrates. Was he put to death because he had some particular ideas about virtues he shared with the youth ? Or was he not rather condemned for having shown, quite undirectly,

that those who claimed to be virtuous were unable to define what virtue was, virtue which was the legitimation of their rule over the rest of the City ? By revealing their contradictions, i.e. their inability of justifying what they pretended to be and to have, Socrates undermined the power of the notables of his City, thereby suggesting they should not have been entrusted with responsibilities for which they could not provide a consistent foundation. In fact, those elderly citizens felt threatened by Socrates who asked them to account for what should have remained unquestioned and evident. Their legitimacy to hold power and to be what they were was itself beyond all possible justification. They did not care much for virtue and justice, which, in all societies, receive a defined *social* content, however implicit and ungeneralizable by being so specific. Those elders did not feel it necessary — but who does ? — to give precise and explicit definitions of those imprecise, social and always particularized notions. So much the better if someone emerges to do so, *provided that the idea conveyed by such a conceptualization is not indirectly suggesting their own ignorance*. In fact, as we all know, Socrates' attitude was not aiming at reaching such definitions — to Plato's despair, who did not see the point in raising questions if it were not to get answers (20) — but at unveiling the rulers' ungrounded claims to rule, at unconcealing them in their being questionable. But, of course, those notables could not say all this without raising that very question they wanted to avoid being put. They did not want to condemn Socrates for the literal content of his discourse but only for the ideas it suggested; on the other hand, they could not condemn him for the latter, so they did non the basis of the former.

What do those examples reveal about the specific nature of the ideas composing political ideologies ? Essentially this : those ideas should never be in question, directly or indirectly, without leading to open confrontation. The purpose of ideology is then to avoid that confrontation, even if it is in order to preserve some particular interests. But that is not the problem here. Why must not they be in question at all ? Political ideas, like all ideas, function as groundless grounds, as principles, they have a legitimizing role though being, as principles, deprived of that same legitimacy they bestow. If one would speak of them, even in a positive way, they would appear in question in what is said by being rendered explicit. They must remain in the background of the explicit, where they can fulfill their mission. They play the role of unquestionable assumptions by being unquestioned in any way. In other words, those ideas are them-

selves unlegitimated, and essentially bound to remain so, being the source of legitimation. They are out of any question since they have been adopted to answer them all. They must remain implicit *as such*, otherwise they would appear in their nakedness, i.e. as purely ideological. What Socrates and Galileo did, for instance, was to question the dominant ideology of their time, by suggesting it was merely so. Ideologies, taken as political realities, must remain hidden in their ideological nature; ideological being here understood in its original sense explained above. A political ideology being groundless and deprived of the legitimacy it bestows upon everything else destroys its own validity. Ideas can be suggested and rhetorically implied, but politically, it may bring them to some unwanted foreground where they would appear unhidden as being what they are, i.e. groundless. It is then essential that ideology, political ideology to be more precise, did not reveal itself *as ideological*. Suspicion could only arise as to the ultimate reasons of its being put forward. The ideas of those ideologies cannot be directly stipulated, but they cannot even appear *as such* in discourse, they must be put forth under some mask, i.e. as particularized, under the form of illustration. The question of their validity must not be tackled, nor mentioned, and they must not be even indirectly debated, they simply must be *transformed*. I insist on the word *form* in *transformed*. The ideas we find gathered into some political ideology are susceptible of conceptual detachment, and it is usually the way an ideology presents itself: looming in the background of some idea through various connections the latter entertains with the former. The sole requirement is that the ideas composing the concerned political ideology should remain implicit, i.e. always out of the question. They must not be directly stipulated, since, thereby, they would be in question and susceptible of being rejected. The ideas of ideology cannot appear *as such* in discourse, best they should prove out of the question, i.e. objectionable. An idea pertaining to some ideology must remain covert to be operational, should avoid being questioned, since it cannot prove itself as valid, i.e. as unquestionable in its theoretical validity. After all, Socrates, Galileo and the foreign colleagues above did not directly question any ideology. They suggested ideas. Why were they deemed "dangerous"? Simply because they were putting the ideas of some dominant ideology literally *into question*. They were not suggesting that the ideas composing those ideas were wrong or false, but they were implying that they could be since they were problematic. It was this very idea their opponents could not stand, and they reacted accordingly, i.e.

ideologically.

13. Literature and ideology

What has literature to do with ideology? Several answers have been given to this question²¹. According to Iser, literature should be seen as a reaction *vis-à-vis* ideological deficiencies. The literary repertoire is based on the norms prevailing at the time of composition, norms which provides a ground (i.e. a *Wirklichkeitsmodell*) common to reader and author. To summarize Iser's view on this subject in a few words, one could say that literature is the discursive answer to problems arising in ideologies. Ideologies embody deficiencies that literature tackles, holes that it fills in, virtualities that it brings to actuality, negated and excluded standpoints that it takes up. Besides, literature draws its resources from its own tradition, i.e. from previous literary repertoires.

The difficulties that such a conception immediately suggest, and that an alternative theory will have to face, are the following :

1) Why is literature the mode of speech appropriate to face ideological deficiencies ?

2) How is the survival of literary works in totally different ideological contexts possible, if it is a reaction to a certain, historically dated, world-view ?

3) Let us suppose the first question above solved. Why should the opposition against some ideology be achieved by literature ?

4) Or why should the ideological reinforcement or stabilization be left to literature ? In other words, why would an ideology defend itself literarily ?

5) The purpose of an ideology, in being general, is precisely to provide grounds of explanation for new particular cases. It is closed upon itself to the point of being unfalsifiable, according to Popper. It can explain everything, and nothing falls outside its sphere of justification. Where are those "virtualities and negated possibilities" (*virtualisierten und negierten Möglichkeiten*) literature has to deal with ? After all, ideology is like a whale, that is, a huge swallowing system, leaving no argument *out* or *against* as being valuably so.

"The function of literary allusions is to assist in producing an answer to the problem set by the deficiencies (...). They also 'quote' earlier answers to the problems/answers which no longer constitute a valid meaning for the present work, but which offer a form of orientation by means of which a new meaning may perhaps be found"²².

The last sentences are undoubtedly true, but Iser's framework does not enable us to tell why. As to the first sentences of the text above, appearing before the bracketed punctuation, we have seen which problems they implied. The fundamental reason to all that lies in Iser's attitude which consists in assuming some theory of questions and answers, when deemed useful, it appears in the foreground, but which is, by and large, not often invoked in his analyses. Questioning is therefore not conceived as providing the unifying structure of literary discourse, or even, of reading. But when it really becomes necessary to introduce questioning, it seems so self-evident to Iser that he never feels it deserves to be fully articulated. His "theory" of questioning is even more skinny than Collingwood's programmatic sayings of the *Autobiography*. Now, why would old answers provoke new readers by evoking new questions, and thereby new meanings? Is there a theoretical, a philosophical or linguistic reason to that? In fact, all answers are, beyond being apocritical, problematological too. The *possibility* of their being questioned, or transformed into (new) questions, or associated with other questioning processes, is inscribed in their very answerhood, as shown earlier. What does it mean, for an answer, to be problematological, to have such an intrinsic feature of relating to questions, while *propounded* as solving one? The emphasis laid upon the word *propounded* suggests that the answer is, in fact, offered as a proposition or a judgment on some question. In that sense, it presents itself as the final point of some inquiry, where, the question being solved, the answer is no more seen in terms of that question, since the latter disappears as such, i.e. as something *to be* solved. The answer autonomizes itself into what we usually call a proposition: it is what it declares that counts, and upon which the attention of the audience is drawn, and not its past relationship with a problem which does not exist anymore *as such*, i.e. as requiring a solution. In my opinion, we should see in this autonomization the origin of the notion of truth of its necessity, and of its use to qualify statements as to their independent validity, and, finally, the subsequent study of truth-values as embodying the new focusing on the proposition in itself. Nonetheless, propositions are answers, and in spite of their relative autonomy with respect to the questions which initially gave birth to them, they should not be considered from the exclusive standpoint of their truth-value. It appears as quite obvious when we take the example of negative propositions. They presuppose some question which, for being left unmentioned, is somehow underlying the proposition, by referring explicitly to some implicit alternative.

To label it a deceived expectation is maybe too much of a psychological language, but it helps to see that there was, at the outset, a problem at stake. How could we understand a phrase like "Peter is not there", if we were not mentally relating it to the locutor's question of knowing whether Peter was there.

Quite generally, an answer, in the final point it brings to a question, is apocritical. But an answer can always be rejected as such, and the question deemed unsolved; an answer can also be used with other questions in mind, to which it brings partial answer (i.e. a basis for new results), or as a conclusive one (an answer, after all, may be so with respect to many questions, hence the famous fallacy of the same name). Finally, an answer is problematological by the question it raises, alone or in a new context. In this last sense, an answer *is* a question too -- so much for all the dogmatisms -- though, quite evidently, it remains an answer to some *other* question (the problematological difference), otherwise it would not be an answer at all. All this implies that a question is never totally solved for all times, but that it can be reformulated in new ways. It also implies that answers are *intrinsically* related to questions, even when one would be tempted to think they rid us of them by asserting this or that, that they would mean without more ado.

Textuality is a typical case where answers are meant to question the reader. They raise questions, whereas one would have thought them to be *solely* assertions, descriptions, expressions, and what not. Ideology has something to do with that, but not merely political ideology. Textuality is ideological in a very wide sense of the term. How could it be otherwise? Texts *illustrate* ideas, they *embody* them: they *represent* them. Hence, the use of symbols. Literary discourse is symbolic, but all texts, literary or not, are so. They enable the reader to *see* something general in the particular. The idea is really *seen* in the particularity expressed by the discourse in question, under the form of a particular story or personal feelings for instance. The text offers *something* which is *perceived* as particular and *thought* (determined) as being universal or general. It is that thought which is rhetorically conveyed by the textuality of the text. The literary mode of discourse is but one manner among others to stage ideas. The question(s) raised by texts as texts is precisely concerned with such ideas: they ask the interpreter and the reader to grasp them, possibly in their interrelatedness. Textual interpretation then relates the particularity of some definite message to its universal bearing, i.e. to the general view it embodies, and which it entails too. Even when such a view is denied by the nature

of the text, there is some idea lurking in the background of that textuality which ensures its ideological character. The idea that no interpretation is required to understand some text is already an idea. Being the answer to what is called for by the text, the idea is itself out-of-the-question. It is not even spoken of by the text, otherwise, the idea would necessarily be in question, according to my question-view. On the other hand, it is treated by the text, but through some instantiation which enables the author to conceal that idea as principle, which, *as such*, does not appear in the foreground where it would be revealed for what it is. It is, after all, the best way to have it taken for granted.

Does it entail that ideas are never subject to open discussion? Quite clearly, the answer is negative. Ideas, political or not, can be put forth, maybe not *as such*, i.e. as embodying particular interests or conceptions. But they surely can be expressed without having to be put in the literary mode. What occurs in this case is even the reverse of what happens in literature: the ideas which are explicitly put forward are the embodiments of particular viewpoints or interests, but, since they could not be accepted if they were simply propounded as particular, they are put in general terms. Who is not in favor of liberty or Justice, for instance? It is only when some definite content is given to those notions that disagreement is susceptible of taking place. Hence, the use of concealing that content into general formulations, i.e. into some non fictional discourse where they are advocated as universal, and where the particular viewpoints can be treated as presuppositions that can be dispensed with being considered afresh. In other words, what is here at work is a justification process of some specific and particular conceptions which takes place by having recourse to some ideas of which they are supposed to be the embodiment. The very nature of those ideas, even when explicitly and non fictionally upheld, is to be questionable, though they are meant to appear as evident, as out-of-the question, as being devoid of any debatable content.

The paradox of an open ideological debate is then the following: on the one hand, ideas, like Justice or Virtue for instance, are useless if devoid of content; on the other hand, such ideas, to be useful, must receive a specific determination. But once they have it, they become necessarily questionable, precisely in virtue of their particularization which is likely to appear objectionable from another possible, and equally particular point of view. That is why ideas that are explicitly objects of discussion are materialized through arguments whose aim is to justify the interpretation or the

choice made. Once put into question, the possibility of their rejection in their particularization must argued out and in doing so, eliminated. The questions being raised, they must be solved, i.e. choices must be made.

Now, why would an ideology unveil its presuppositions, if only to justify them, thereby incurring the risk of challenge and defeat? My point, here, is not to give an answer to that question, but simply to underline why the proponents of political ideologies are reluctant to make that kind of plea, an as a consequence, prefer to resort to a specific mode of language which would enable them to leave the essentials out of the discussion, while continuing to defend them through exemplification in a type of discursivity which does not leave room for *theoretical objections*. The ideas of political ideologies are essentially problematic, and it is to their advantage of not appearing so. Since ideas are the measuring rods of our judgment, what alternative is left if, in a case of radical disagreement and conflict, nothing else remains at our disposal to supersede the oppositions? One way of avoiding to be trapped into such a situation is to prevent the possibility of such an open conflict by illustrating the idea one wants to defend, instead of justifying it against some opposite determination²³. The aim of such an illustration is to stage that idea, in its positive sides if one wishes to advocate it, in its negative ones if one wishes to challenge it. And that linguistic procedure is precisely what we have called before the literary mode of discourse.

We should be aware that, in many cases, the alternatives offered by opposite ideological statements are undecidable. To return to the examples given above, one may be opposed the existence of hierarchies or the complacency of intellectuals, though being reluctant to give way to anti-intellectualism or the utopian hope of suppressing social hierarchies. Literature does not give solutions, but points to a problematic situation, raised by some socio-economical context that *renders* the prevailing ideologies somewhat deficient. But these deficiencies are only so because of an opposite system of thought unable to solve a problem raised outside both of them. The problem was not immanent to either system.

This point enables me to turn to the questions I was mentioning earlier *à propos* Iser's theory.

The basic fact concerning textuality is that it asks for something. A question is thereby raised, in charge of the reader to solve it. That question - or rather, those questions - are not explicit, but rhetorically posed by the text, *implied* by it in *what it declares*.

That is where ideas come in, since the text *represents* them, gives them a particular setting, illustrates them, and the questions at stake relate to ideas in the sense that their answers would stipulate them. When those ideas pertain to some *political* ideology, literature accomplishes what is most essential for such a system of ideas : it does not mention them as they are, but leaves them in the background, unquestioned, though unveiling them at the same time in their alleged validity through some particular case illustrating the latter.

So much for ideologies which are defended. Literature does the job much better than an open argumentation, by staging their ideas quite indirectly, even subreptitiously, while an explicit debate puts them more directly on the battlefield. Literary strategy is more subtle.

On the other hand, by raising questions, text can exert a *control function* which is quite well-known to the theoreticians of questioning²⁴ : they call some idea into question and suggest it *as a question*, while the ideology under attack considers it as a solution, as out-of-the question. Why, now, have recourse to literature ? The answer is quite obvious : to avoid possible repression.

An important point to note is that ideologies are closed systems of thought, which can face all problems by providing a solution conform to its premisses, even if it is an artificial one. The faithful will be convinced, as History shows. No *rational* way remains open to question that ideology and irony is the sole answer left. Literature, touse Frye's words, is intrinsically ironical, to the extent that it *questions* the foundations of political ideologies by discrediting them on their own terms. This procedure can succeed where a non literary one is bound to fail, simply because the latter would place itself on a field where these ideologies have all the argumentative weapons at their disposal to swallow the adversary.

To sum it up, literature brings questions to the fore through textuality, questions which relate to political ideology by raising them as such, or by providing answers suppressing their "questionhood", i.e. by representing them as evident and legitimate, not in themselves, but through some exeplication which necessarily presupposes them. The common feature between those two possible cases reside in the fact that (1) texts raises questions in virtue of their textuality, (ii) that those questions call for answers which embody certain ideas and that (iii) political ideologies and social values are composed of ideas which, contrary to others, need to appear as out-of-the question. As a result, texts have an ideological bearing, either

by raising questions which ideologies are reluctant to pose as such, or by raising questions whose answers reinforce ideologies by exemplifying them. The truth of the matter lies in the fact that some questions are at stake in all thought systems, and that, precisely, textuality consists in asking for something. Literature enables mankind to meet the demands of ideologies with the possibilities of textuality. This leads us back to Iser's views :

"All thought-systems are bound to exclude certain possibilities²⁵, thus automatically giving rise to deficiencies, and it is to these deficiencies that literature applies itself. Thus in the eighteenth-century novel and drama, there was an intense pre-occupation with questions of morality. Eighteenth-century literature balanced out the deficiencies of the dominant thought systems of the time. Since the whole sphere of human relations was absent from this system²⁶, literature now brought it into focus. The fact that literature supplies those possibilities which have been excluded by the prevalent system, may be the reason why many people regard 'fiction' as the opposite of 'reality'; it is, in fact, not the opposite but the complement²⁷."

This view, I said earlier, raises more problems than it solves. All systems of ideas, political or not (i.e. functioning as the ground for legitimation of social and political values, and their corresponding reality), present gaps, which are not necessarily problems in their eyes. Even if they do, they can noneless offer solutions that are quite consistent with their premisses. An ideology always can. After all, it cannot cover *all* the possibilities and the questions which are susceptible of presenting themselves one day or the other.

The question-view shows that ideologies rest upon problematic presuppositions which, to play their role, must appear as unproblematic. Open justification is always possible, but its weakness is evident in times of crisis or uncompromised rejection. Nothing lies beyond those presuppositions which could justify them and would still pertain to that ideology. Resort to literature appears as a good means to illustrate what can never find an ultimate justification, though being unfalsifiable. Literature enable those political ideologies to call for answers they can provide, without having to say "here are the answers", that is, without having to incur the risk of being put into question by some literal explicitation of their grounding statements. So, literature does not deal only with deficiencies but with all kinds of themes and subjects which one

can find treated in thought systems, it does not deal either with possibilities left aside or excluded by them, but also with actual pre-occupations of those systems. Literature is an answer to problems it treats as problems, but those problems can perfectly well be susceptible of receiving a non literary solution, though it contributes to its convincing power of being illustrated and exemplified. But, quite evidently, when there is some deficiency, i.e. some problem, literature is the best appropriate mode of speech to handle it, since it is a system of answers which call for other answers, literal ones, i.e. which exemplifies them problematologically. Literature answers by staging problems, that is, by asking something else than what is literally said. By not stipulating literally what is in question in its textuality, literature has an ideological impact, since ideologies are precisely systems of ideas which do not want to appear as literally so. That is why an ideology would rather defend itself literarily, unless it is forced to do otherwise, and, at any rate, why it prefers to have a level of literary manifestation, where general ideas can receive a concrete expression. The phrase "what is literary in question is not literally stipulated" should be understood in the following sense : the question is not said, but is inherent in the text which embodies it; it is an essential feature of textuality to raise such a question, and, as to its answer(s), they are then asked by the text through the answers given *within* it. That question is then totally unsaid, and *what* is problematic is not specified, is not stipulated by the text, which, as such, is simply made of answers. The question raised by a text is not literally expressed, hence the role of the reader. What is in question is not literally expressed, i.e. does not appear as such, not even *in* what is said; the proposition dealing with what is in question is not literally present in the text, though suggested by it. From an ideological point of view, it permits to convey ideas in a figurative fashion, without having to bring them into focus.

Opposition to ideologies is ensured through the same means, that is, through the implication of something problematic, but, contrary to the case where ideologies are reinforced, the question raised let appear as problematic some ideas which must remain unquestioned. When facing the so-called "easy" literature, the idea is : "don't ask questions because they're all there", the idea being not to question what is evident. But ideologies are often more subtle when they pass into literature. Literary texts can mean something to which an answer corresponds in the ideology in question, or at least, an answer related to that ideology. In the situation of an ideo-

logical challenge, the question raised by the text, instead of confirming the ideology in question, addresses itself to the questionable character of some ideas, by the answer it gives. Hence the irony of such a procedure, which consists in taking those ideas for granted to derive some unwanted consequences, or in proposing an alternative solution. In the latter case, a question arises as to the necessary validity of the existent solution provided by the targeted ideology. An ideological system being closed upon itself does not admit of questions, hence of alternative possibilities, they would then fall outside its scope of justification and point to its inadequacy. The simple fact of showing *that* an ideological solution is not necessarily so *suffices* to challenge that ideology in its very nature. Excluding alternatives, even to the extent of their possibility, ideologies resent questioning, and then literature: besides enabling its authors to escape open repression, literature presents the advantage of not having to offer a positive answer to some ideological arguments, while criticizing it as ideological and ungrounded, whatever may be, on the other hand, its "social validity". Let me say, in guise of a conclusion, that it is always clever to convey a rhetorical effect deprived of any political-ideological relevance, in order to avoid endangering some political ideology. After all, there is no such thing as "ideological neutrality". In fact one always suggests (assent to) some idea by means of an illustration, e.g. a story. Because all those ideas remain in the background during the reading (i.e. unfolding or discovering) process, some have claimed they were unconscious for the reader. At any rate, by raising a problem through a particular case — which has or not a solution in some definite ideology — however universal it may eventually appear, literature is aesthetic in that it addresses itself to sensibility (i.e. to what is specifically individual in each one of us), even if, from the intellectual point of view, it speaks to us in some unconscious manner. And this is quite the reverse of what one usually reads about literature, namely that sensibility is related to the unconscious, and ideas are conscious. If one agrees to that, one is bound to fail to understand the functioning of ideologies.

Now, a final word about each of the questions posed above, p. 43 :

1) When questions arise which are ideological, literature is quite appropriate since its textuality raises questions in an indirect manner, which is essential to ideology. Those problems must not necessarily be a deficiency presented by the ideology.

2) The survival of a literary work to its ideological matrix can

be explained by the fact that, dealing with problems, it offers alternatives to that ideological horizon, thereby rendering itself independent of it, at least in pretention.

3) An ideological challenge is best carried out literarily for several reasons. It can conceal itself as an attack, and then, escape censorship. It enables writers not to offer an ideological alternative they often do not entertain or are unable to lay down.

4) When a problem arises for an ideology, it may be to its advantage of not putting itself forth as such and to manifest its ideas through some favorable embodiment, more appealing to sensibility, which would make them appear as legitimate.

5) An ideology is always capable of resisting an adverse *rational* argumentation. The closure of a thought system can nonetheless be fractured and literature does it more convincingly, through irony, for instance, to which it is hard to reply, and irrelevant to do it *literally*.

F.N.R.S. et Université de Mons

NOTES

¹J.L. Borges. *Labyrinths*. Penguin Modern Classics, 1970, p. 69.

²"To compose the *Quixote* at the beginning of the XVIIth Century was a reasonable undertaking and perhaps even unavoidable; at the beginning of the XXth, it is almost impossible" (p. 68).

³"The contradiction in style is also vivid. The archaic style of Ménard — quite foreign after all — suffers from a certain affectation. Not so that of his forerunner, who handles with ease the current Spanish of his time" (p. 69).

⁴If somebody says, for instance, "I have nothing personal against Mr. X", it is because the addressee could have thought the opposite. The question of personal enmity is then raised by that very sentence, and since the possibility of such a feeling has been alluded to the suspicion, that the locutor could still, in fact, nourish it is also raised by his denegation. This can be generalized : whatever we say raises a question.

⁵Pragmatically, I would say that it is not *literally* equivalent, but that it is *figuratively* so.

⁶ means = can be rendered by = is equivalent to = says that = implies = gives, as problem, = is. In one sense, "it is 1 o'clock" is (as statement between quotes) "I'm hungry ...". *If you know the locutor's problem, you know what is meant by (4).*

⁷ N. Frye: *The Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 81.

⁸ C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts. *The New Rhetoric*, p. 4, University of Notre-Dame Press, 1969.

⁹ P. Ricoeur. *La métaphore vive*, p. 141. Paris, Le Seuil, 1975.

¹⁰ P. de Man. "Semiology and Rhetoric", p. 128 ff. in *Textual Strategies*, J. Harari, ed., Cornell University Press, 1979.

¹¹ If, for example, I write to someone who made me an offer some months earlier "..., if your proposal still holds, ...", I address a question by my explicit answer, namely that it could be otherwise. This could give my addressee an argument to go back on his offer; while, if I had not raised that question by saying that about it, I would have prevented my addressee to react dialectically. The question of that possible dialogue would never have been alluded to (see my note 4).

¹² Let us note, in passing, that this is a feature of many ordinary situations, of all debates on ethical values, and we shall see, of literature too.

¹³ I call them intensifiers, since, as we shall see, all sentences have naturally (i.e. contextually) a rhetorical-argumentative impact.

¹⁴ P. Ricoeur. *Op. cit.*, p. 111 ff.

¹⁵ P. de Man. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

¹⁶ G. Granger defines style as "the individual solution brought to the difficulties that any problem of structuring raises" (*Essai d'une philosophie du style*, Paris, 1968).

¹⁷ A good example is given by Yeat's poem, cited by Paul de Man, in the article quoted above.

¹⁸ "Roland Barthes uses the term 'hermeneutic' to describe this function, which 'articulates in various ways a question, its response and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the questions or delay the answer' (*S/Z*, p. 17). What will happen? is the basic question" (S. Chatman. *Story and Discourse*, p. 48, Cornell University Press, 1978). Chatman, in that same book, stresses the fact that, in modern plots, it is not so much questions which are

at work, but time relations. But it seems clear to me that the temporal order serves the same purpose : it links a beginning — of

¹⁹See for instance, K. Stierle, "The Reading of Fictional Texts" in *The Reader in the Text*, ed. by S. Suleiman and I. Crosman, pp. 83—105. Princeton University Press, 1980.

²⁰M. Meyer. "Dialectic and Questioning : Socrates and Plato". *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 4, no 17, 1980.

²¹Essentially to be found in Wolfgang Iser's "Die Wirklichkeit der Fiktion" in *Rezeptionsästhetik*, ed. by R. Warning, pp. 300—311, UTB, München, 1975 (Engl. Tr. in *New Literary History*, 7, 1975—76) and in his book *Der Akt des Lesens*, ch. 3 (Engl. Tr. published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). The problematic of ideology is also developed in Christian Enzensberger's book, *Literatur und Interesse*, 2 vol., Carl Hanser Verlag, München, 1977.

²²W. Iser. *The Act of Reading*, p. 79.

²³"It is an old idea that the more pointedly and logically we formulate a thesis, the more irresistibly it cries out for its antithesis". (Hermann Hesse. *The Glass Bead Game*, p. 1).

²⁴See E. Goody, ed. *Questions and Politeness*, p. 30. Cambridge University Press, 1978.

²⁵Iser is too vague as to what he exactly means : is the exclusion rooted in the impossibility of saying everything or in the leaving aside of what they cannot account for ? And if so, is it due to the fact that is a contradiction to their system of beliefs, or, on the contrary, to the fact that the negated possibility is compatible with the system, though unable of being captured within that system ?

²⁶Empiricism was then the dominant ideology. Association of ideas leaves the subject in the background, though it is a necessary entity since it functions as the unifying pole of the ideas which are combined. But such a pole lies itself outside the realm of experience : it is not itself an identifiable object of experience. Hence, the necessity of shadowing it. As a result, intersubjective relationships, morality and sociality, were falling outside the dominant ideology, where literature picked them up.

²⁷"The Reality of Fiction", *New Literary History*, 1975—76 (see note 21), p. 24.