

SOME REMARKS ON THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

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I

Philosophers have, in the course of history, taken different attitudes and stands with regard to literature. Some of them have expressed their philosophical views also (or mainly, or exclusively) in forms and genres which belong undisputedly to literature as an art; many others have not done so. Some have used literature as a source or as a subject in developing a philosophical view or a philosophical system; others have not referred to literature at all, or only in a very casual way. Some philosophers have, but many have not, contributed to the theory of the study of literature and its foundations.

All these attitudes (and non-attitudes) or stands (and non-stands) could be made the subject of metaphilosophical analysis. A number of intriguing questions may arise in this connection, e.g. : What is the role and function of a poetic or dramatic or narrative form in the development of a philosophical view? Is there some essential connection between the literary form and the philosophical idea? What can be said about the relation between a philosopher's writings in the standard expository mode and his literary writings, if they do not clearly fall apart? What is the importance attached to literature by those philosophers who, in some way or another, have availed themselves of it? To what extent has the study of literature been taken *sui generis*, or as one additional discipline within a class of disciplines, and in the latter case : which class?

The answers to some of these questions are closely connected with one's views as to the general problem whether philosophy itself is, primarily, a form of literature. That is to say, these views will tend to influence one's convictions as to the literary status of philosophy

tout court and the philosophical status of literature. Of course, no strict correlation exists. For instance, the view that philosophy itself is a form of literature will generally favour the belief that in poems, plays or novels philosophical ideas may be stated or developed in about the same sense as in standard philosophical texts. Yet one may feel that philosophy, even if it is a form of literature, is an extraordinary form and that ideas are stated and developed here in a way different from that in poems, plays or novels.

There is a strong case to be made for the view that philosophy is a form of literature. In comparing philosophy with other academic subjects one easily notes that philosophy shows some rather awkward features. Not only are there very few problems with a generally accepted solution, but it also seems difficult to reach agreement on the relative importance of problems and on the methods suitable for their solution. This is most obvious when one takes different traditions into consideration. For while within the tradition of phenomenological, dialectical or analytical philosophy certain methods and criteria are in general use, these methods and criteria seem insignificant to the members of other traditions. So certain results generally accepted within one tradition (and there are not too many of them) may be skeptically received with a "So what?"-reaction by the members of other traditions. Although there are some other disciplines, like sociology and general linguistics, that have to cope with analogous difficulties, these difficulties seem to be especially acute with regard to philosophy¹.

Apparently, in philosophy the search for objective criteria for the relevance of problems and the acceptability of the proposed solutions meets with serious problems: This *could* mean that the search is wrong because it is based on a false analogy between science and philosophy, in that philosophy would rather be a form of art, more specifically a form of literature.

Other arguments in favour of the latter conclusion have recently been systematically surveyed by William Charlton². He summarizes his survey as follows: "Technical reviews of [works of philosophy] contain criticism of their style. Philosophers restate arguments of their predecessors in a spirit in which poets imitate earlier poets, but in which scientists do not reproduce the experiments or demonstrations of earlier scientists. Philosophers think themselves engaged in a literary venture. Literary and philosophical talent in practice go strikingly together. Philosophical works have affinities with speeches which we appraise aesthetically in that they are designed to persuade, and with novels and plays which we appraise aesthetically in that they show psychological insight and a power of

imaginative projection. And finally philosophers, like poets, think in words, and their achievements are immanent in their books. These are the threads, or some of them, which bind works of philosophy into the field of aesthetics"³.

The case is strong indeed. If it were clinching, the subject of this essay would thereby be radically transformed. The relation between philosophy and the study of literature would then contain the relation between philosophy and the study of philosophy. Metaphilosophy itself would come to belong to the study of literature; and since most or all of the arguments in favour of the view that philosophy is a form of literature apply to metaphilosophy too, metaphilosophy would also become a form of literature.

However, in my opinion the case is not quite strong enough to clinch the matter. Charlton himself has his doubts about the cogency of his last and decisive argument, which hinges on the premiss that "if an activity is essentially linguistic or verbal, an aptitude for it is a literary aptitude and success at it is literary success"⁴. Here the adjective "literary" seems to be used in a very wide sense. This would make any essentially verbal activity on any occasion, say the activity of verbally reporting, or commenting on, or propagating any topic whatsoever, a matter of literary aptitude. This exceeds the bounds of the problem one has in mind in asking whether philosophy is a form of literature. If philosophy turns out to be a form of literature in the same sense as an advertising slogan, or a commentary on the Bible, would be a form of literature, then no important result has been reached⁵.

Some of Charlton's arguments are fairly plausible and carry a certain amount of cogency. There certainly is a close relationship between many philosophical works on the one hand, and the mainstream of fiction and literary essays on the other. Moreover, there is no rule obtaining that philosophy from now on should be safe from literary intrusions. Generally speaking, in philosophy literary procedures are allowed, though by no means necessary or in general use, or even generally desirable⁶. Anyhow, the incorporation of philosophical writings-in-the-literary-manner into the philosophical tradition should be in the mode of rational analysis. Therefore this incorporation has to bring about the unraveling of implicit or suggested lines of thought, of similes and metaphors etc. (either by the author himself or by others), so that the content will be led away from its original literary expression. Such a process of rational development is quite different from the way in which a novel or poem is assimilated and may eventually come to play its role in a literary tradition. Moreover, according as scientific methods are

introduced into philosophy, the part played by literary procedures will lose its importance and gradually shift to the periphery.

After these introductory remarks, I will go somewhat further into the following two topics :

1. What has the study of literature to offer to a scientifically oriented philosophy ? (sec. II).
2. What has philosophy to offer to the scientific study of literature ? (sec. III).

II

To begin with, I should like to stress (quite generally) the importance of case studies for the development of philosophical theories. Many philosophical works suffer from a lack of empirical data and, correspondingly, from a tendency to free-wheeling. Until recently this was valid even for the flourishing field of the philosophy of science. Though a wealth of data in the form of scientific theories, experiments, debates etc. was in principle available, philosophers of science often had in mind a restricted number of cases only, and of these they knew only the main outlines. Hence, the history of science had but little impact on the philosophy of science. Since about 1960 however the situation has radically changed. This is mainly, I think, the merit of T. S. Kuhn, who confronted the philosophers of science with new data taken from the history of science. Moreover, earlier theorists of science who had extensive knowledge of its growth and development, like P. Duhem, came once more to the fore. All this resulted in many new and enlightening problems, arguments and views.

A similar development would be fruitful for other fields of philosophy as well. In this connection I think of the philosophy of language, more especially semantics (the theory of reference not excluded) and pragmatics. In no way do I deny the impressive progress made within these philosophical disciplines in the course of the last hundred years since the days of John Stuart Mill, C. S. Peirce and Gottlob Frege. Nonetheless, I wonder whether it would not be advisable for these disciplines to make a more thorough use of concrete cases than has been done up till now (notwithstanding J. L. Austin). Why should one again and again repeat a number of contrived examples or invent new ones if a wealth of material is ready for use ?

Let us consider, e.g., the different uses of definite descriptions. There are the well-known views of Russell, Strawson, Donnellan and

others. Donnellan has evaluated the theories of his predecessors in the light of his own distinction between the attributive use and the referential use of definite descriptions⁷. This was all to the good. I have the impression, however, that much more could be gained by taking into consideration the use of definite descriptions as found in newspapers, regulations, propaganda, history, literature, etc.⁸. In how far does Donnellan's distinction, though certainly useful from a theoretical point of view, hold water with regard to concrete cases? Difficulties in this respect cannot fail to be beneficial for the theory too.

And difficulties are to be expected. According to Donnellan, "In general, whether or not a definite description is used referentially or attributively is a function of the speaker's intentions in a particular case"⁹. That is, either the speaker intends to enable his audience to pick out whom or what he is talking about (the referential use), or he wants to say something about whoever or whatever fits the description (the attributive use). Now of course one may imagine many cases in which it is clearly possible to apply the principle and decide the issue. Methodologically, however, this procedure has the drawback that the same person who wants to make the point, produces the examples. It would be better to use the existing data in an unbiased way¹⁰. Take, e.g., one of Donnellan's own sentences, in the beginning of his essay. After having announced that he wants to argue that definite descriptions have two possible functions, one of them being the referential function, Donnellan says: "The failure to deal with this duality of function obscures the genuine referring use of definite descriptions"¹¹. Now what about "this duality of function", "the failure to deal with this duality of function" and "the genuine referring use of definite descriptions"? Perhaps Donnellan would say that they are no definite descriptions, in that they do not denote any person or thing, but nothing at all, or some entity of another ontological status¹². Or he could mean that they (or some of them) are definite descriptions but that they are not capable of being used referentially because no person or thing could be referred to by them, so that here too, they are used attributively¹³. Or he could grant that they are definite descriptions and that they can have, in themselves, both functions. In that case, which function do they have here? This I find difficult to decide. For instance, "the genuine referring use of definite descriptions" could be referential in that it serves only to identify the relevant use spoken about; another description would do as well. But in view of the fact that Donnellan has not yet stated any feature of such a use except that it is the referring use (the reference being to what a

speaker wishes to talk about), he rather says something about whatever fits that description, which would make the description perform the attributive function. And is it really the speaker's (in this case, Donnellan's) intention that should decide the issue? Could not a speaker have an intention which simply does not get an adequate realization, so that a definite description used by him does not have the (one) function he intends it to have?

Probably Donnellan is able to answer these questions satisfactorily. I would not suggest that they are unanswerable within his theory. What I would point out is that questions *like these* have no *evident* answers; that they therefore should be treated much more systematically than has usually been done by writers on the subject, and that the most plausible way to do so is to analyze observed cases of language use (oral or written) rather than to concentrate mainly on home-made examples. For in the long run the latter method will inevitably involve a modification of the material in order to adapt it to the proposed categories, distinctions, or explanations.

Of course, I do not deny the importance of analyzing clear-cut cases, free from confusing circumstances. Such analyses are even essential. But in philosophy too the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and philosophers should be willing to apply their distinctions to real cases in order to test and refine or improve them.

At this point I take the opportunity to introduce literature, as I wish to stress its relevance in view of what was said in the previous paragraphs. Although I do not hold that literature is more relevant than other types of language use (nor that no special problems are involved in its interpretation), it has in any case been intensively studied and philosophers can accordingly profit by that. Apart from titles (e.g. "The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'", "The Fall of the House of Usher", "Der Zauberberg" = "The Magic Mountain", etc.) literary works contain many examples of definite descriptions. Questions to be considered are: Do these descriptions fall within two or more main types? And if so, how are these main types to be described?

For the sake of illustration I quote W. H. Auden's sonnet "Macao"¹⁴.

A weed from Catholic Europe, it took root
 Between the yellow mountains and the sea,
 And bore these gay stone houses like a fruit,
 And grew on China imperceptibly.

Rococo images of Saint and Saviour
 Promise her gamblers fortunes when they die;

Churches beside the brothels testify
That faith can pardon natural behaviour.

This city of indulgence need not fear
The major sins by which the heart is killed,
And governments and men are torn to pieces :

Religious clocks will strike; the childish vices
Will safeguard the low virtues of the child;
And nothing serious can happen here.

The phrase "this city of indulgence" is especially interesting¹⁵. According to the title of the sonnet, Macao is the city meant. "This city", then, would have been sufficient to identify the object under discussion, so "of indulgence" is superfluous for that purpose. One of the functions of the addition is to interpret and to recapitulate the situational characteristics described in the four preceding lines. This description amounts to an idiosyncratic and stylized view. In certain circumstances, when true statements are in order because correct information is required, this could be a disadvantage. But if the reader has the attitude appropriate to reading a poem like this one, though factual truth and probability will not be ignored altogether, such a disadvantage does not exist. The title of the poem indicates that the reader is invited to think of Macao, at least to apply the statements in the poem to the city bearing that name. This indication, however, is partly overruled by the aesthetic expediency of concentrating on the given characterization and its import, which may make (though certainly not must make) the city in question largely an imaginary one, as long as it fits the characterization. And this ultimately diminishes the strictly referential function of "this city of indulgence" in favour of its attributive function.

Thus, different factors seem to be involved in the use of "this city of indulgence" in this poem, which may make it difficult to decide the issue. Anyhow, its analysis, together with many other analyses of passages chosen from other literary and non-literary texts, throws light on the problem of what factors may be involved in the use of definite descriptions.

A similar conclusion applies to other problems and issues in the philosophy of language, such as the problem of referential opaqueness (this already appears from the above remarks) and the problems with regard to metaphor (for which the poem quoted may also serve as a useful datum)¹⁶. And I think it will be clear that also philosophical subjects other than the philosophy of language may

profit by a close study of literary texts. In connection herewith I only mention the philosophy of art and the philosophy of mind (part of which is the theory of imagination). There is a tendency among the workers in these fields to attach more value to role and weight of data derived from the inspection of actual cases (works of art, and art criticism). This is a fortunate tendency indeed.

III

Philosophy may contribute to the study of literature, besides profiting by it. As a matter of fact, the contributions of philosophy have been of a divergent nature. It may be useful to distinguish three main types of contribution during the present century.

First, there has been the large-scale contribution of philosophers like Benedetto Croce and Roman Ingarden. Their views on art in general, and on literature in particular, have not failed to influence many students of literature. Students of Romanic literatures in Europe during the twenties and thirties, as well as American New Criticism during the thirties and forties were influenced by Croce. The influence of Ingarden has been important especially in the study of the theory of literature, partly through the work of R. Wellek and A. Warren (*Theory of Literature*, 1st impr. 1949, esp. ch. 12). Also Hegel, even a long time after his death, has left his mark on the study of literature, e.g. through Dilthey's work and the school of the so-called "Geistesgeschichte".

I have called this first type of philosophical contribution "large-scale" because it consists in supplying a general frame for the study of literature. The various instances of this large-scale contribution may have been (next to other differences) beneficial or detrimental in different degrees. Indeed, some of them did not last and their effect has even been regretted. But anyhow one should not lose sight of the fact that the study of literature until recently was, and maybe still is, rather helpless against the claims of different philosophies as to the nature of art and literature¹⁷. It had no stable notion of its own object and task. Consequently, the study of literature is in a situation quite different from that of the natural sciences, which are safe from philosophy in that they do have such a stable notion. Of course, in all sciences there is a more or less continuous shift of problems and this may affect very basic ideas too. But this may be a rather autonomous process, independent of philosophical views. In the study of literature, however, essential shifts in the general notion of its object have sometimes occurred

partly under the influence of philosophical currents.

Secondly, there is the more direct but small-scale contribution which consists in the elucidation from a philosophical point of view of some specific problem or subject-matter in the field of the study of literature. One outstanding example is the contribution Sartre made by his exploration of the characters and the careers of Baudelaire, Flaubert and Jean Genet. This second type of contribution seems to be most useful and even necessary with respect to those poets, playwrights or novelists whose works show a strongly philosophical character. As to modern Dutch literature I am thinking of e.g. figures like P. C. Boutens, P. N. van Eyck and S. Vestdijk. Philosophers who are also men of letters, like Sartre himself, naturally also call for a philosophical interpretation of their literary work, if only to analyze the essence and degree of its philosophical import. But there is of course an overwhelming number of literary writers the study of whose works asks, among other things, for a philosophical approach¹⁸. For instance, this may amount to the analysis of basic views like naturalism, spiritualism, idealism or determinism. It may also bear upon something like the consciousness of time and the attitude towards past or future. Many philosophers, from Augustine to James, Bergson and Husserl, have developed theories and concepts in this respect, which can be used in the elucidation of the emotions of a poet, a narrator or a character.

Thirdly, I would say, there is a type of contribution which is large-scale or somewhat indirect like the first type, but which is different in that it is primarily methodological instead of substantive. It concentrates on methodological issues. Accordingly, the essential contribution of this third type is the one that stems from the philosophy and methodology of science.

A century of serious debates on the cognitive and scientific status of the humanities has passed. It is quite impossible, of course, and fortunately unnecessary, to sketch the development of these debates and the problems that were at issue. Here I only mention that logical empiricism, with its claims as to the unity of science, looms large in the centre of the debates, and that apparently its contribution has ultimately led to a willing suspension of distrust from the side of the students of literature with respect to the introduction of methods and reasonings from the sciences into the study of literature.

This is a far-reaching claim and perhaps it is not justified. Nonetheless, it seems to be correct at least in two respects. For one thing, formal methods (e.g. formal linguistics, especially formal semantics) are applied in the theory of literature much more intensively than they used to be. For another, problems regarding the

verification and falsification of statements — statements of description as well as of explanation, interpretation, and evaluation of works of literature — are often taken into consideration, and the result shows the impact of the empiristic movement in the philosophy of science.

Although this third type of contribution from the side of philosophy is centered around methodological issues, I would not restrict it to contributions from the philosophy and methodology of science only. This may already appear from what I said at the end of the preceding paragraph. For the theory of value has something to say about the problems of the verification and falsification of evaluative statements. Moreover, still other branches of philosophy may have an impact on the study of literature which is cognate to the ones now under discussion. This applies, e.g., to the theory of reference. Auden's sonnet may be used once more by way of an example. We have already seen that instead of "this city of indulgence", "this city" would have been sufficient for the strictly identifying task of fixing the subject which the relevant sentence is about. The addition underlines the characterization of the subject as then already given. Now it seems that the last sentence of the poem is different in that "here" is strictly identifying without any descriptive content whatsoever. But this idea has to be qualified. To begin with, from an aesthetic point of view one should note that lines 9 and 14 of the poem are connected, partly by an acoustic factor (rhyme), partly by semantic parallelism. As a result, "here" tends to become short for "in this city of indulgence", instead of for "in Macao". Moreover, there is a second aspect which has to be reckoned with and which is the most significant in my argument. It regards the fact that "here" has a modal context: "nothing serious can happen here", i.e. "it is impossible that something serious should happen here". The role of referring phrases (and deictic phrases, for that matter) within modal contexts is still a vexed question¹⁹. But one plausible view at least is that an object in itself cannot be the basis of a modal statement, but that modal statements are true on the basis of the names used. This would imply that "here" has to be interpreted in such a way as to give it descriptive content. And even if one is willing to assume that objects have (aristotelian) essential properties, the relevant object would be Macao *as defined in the poem*, which also would affect the function of "here".

All this is not meant to imply that Auden's poem is not about the actual pre-war town of Macao at all. Only it is not strictly so. Its references to it are weakened, partly as an effect of the attitude taken by its reader, partly as an effect of the way the poem itself has

been built up. To a certain extent the actual town of Macao is replaced by some imaginary one. The theory of reference helps to explain this process²⁰.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above remarks seems to be the following. Philosophy and the study of literature have something to offer to each other. The traffic is in both directions. Philosophy may gain some specific though perhaps complex material to test and refine its distinctions and theories. The study of literature may gain in technical finesse and systematic approach. Both may lose certain traits of innocence and naiveté in this interaction.

NOTES

¹Cf. my article "De Filosofie en de Wetenschappen", *Wijsgerig Perspectief op Maatschappij en Wetenschap*, vol. 7 (1966-67), pp. 270-289.

²William Charlton, "Is Philosophy a Form of Literature?", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 14 (1974), pp. 3-16.

³*op.cit.*, p. 15. At the end of his article Charlton concludes: "Philosophy to my mind stands to the obvious literary arts somewhat as a comet stands to the planets. ...Philosophy is less substantial than the literary arts generally and its business is different, but it draws its impetus from the same source and if it were to break loose from that source and depart from the literary system altogether, it would cease to be philosophy". (pp. 15-16).

⁴*op.cit.*, p. 12.

⁵As a matter of fact, Charlton's second premiss in his decisive argument is as follows: "Philosophy is essentially verbal: the philosopher thinks and works in words in the same sense as does the poet". (p. 12). The addition "in the same sense as does the poet" is formally speaking superfluous. Its presence shows that Charlton also feels that the first premiss is too weak for its purposes. But the addition is highly debatable, even in the light of Charlton's further explanations.

⁶Charlton considers philosophy somewhat too much as being of a piece. This is surprising since with regard to the field of aesthetics he has the "family resemblance" view.

⁷Keith S. Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions", *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 75 (1966), pp. 281-304. I have also

commented on this stimulating article in my essay "On Reference", *Ut Videam* (Festschrift for P. A. Verburg, edited by Werner Abraham), Lisse 1975, pp. 202-215, esp. 207-210. Cf. the discussion between A. F. MacKay and Donnellan in *The Philosophical Review* 77 (1968), pp. 197-215. On definite descriptions, see also E. M. Barth, *The Logic of the Articles in Traditional Philosophy* (Dordrecht 1974).

⁸ Cf. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts, An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge 1969, p. 72.

⁹ *op.cit.*, p. 297. The most comprehensive description of the two uses is as follows: "A speaker who uses a definite description attributively in an assertion states something about whoever or whatever is the so-and-so. A speaker who uses a definite description referentially in an assertion, on the other hand, uses the description to enable his audience to pick out whom or what he is talking about and states something about that person or thing. In the first case the definite description might be said to occur essentially, for the speaker wishes to assert something about whatever or whoever fits that description; but in the referential use the definite description is merely one tool for doing a certain job — calling attention to a person or thing — and in general any other device for doing the same job, another description or a name, would do as well. In the attributive use, the attribute of being the so-and-so is all important, while it is not in the referential use". (*op.cit.*, p. 285). For non-assertive modes of expressions (questions and commands), see pp. 287-288.

¹⁰ One could also use methods analogous to those developed by Arne Naess in his *Interpretation and Preciseness: A Contribution to the Theory of Communication*, Oslo 1953.

¹¹ *op.cit.*, p. 281. Here and elsewhere (e.g. p. 295, l.2) Donnellan states that there are exactly two uses of definite descriptions. But sometimes he seems to suggest that there may be more (p. 284 and p. 293, l.3 from below).

¹² One of the phrases quoted is a this-expression. Donnellan does not make use of this-expressions in his examples (but he does not define the notion of a definite description). Some of his examples could be easily changed into a this-expression; e.g. "this man drinking a martini" (instead of "the man drinking a martini", p. 287) could also be used referentially as well as attributively. John R. Searle uses "definite descriptions" as short for "complex noun phrase in the singular", which would include expressions of the form "this

so-and-so" (*op.cit.*, p. 81). See also Jerzy Pelc, *Studies in Functional Logical Semiotics of Natural Language* (The Hague-Paris 1971), pp. 34-35.

¹³This second possibility is not very plausible because Donnellan takes seriously the view "that sentences can be divided up into predicates, logical operators, and referring expressions". According to him this view is not "generally true". His reason for saying so is that "in the case of definite descriptions one cannot always assign the referential function in isolation from a particular occasion on which it is used". (*op.cit.*, p. 297). Thus it would not be sentences in the abstract that can be divided up in the way indicated. But the view under discussion would lose every plausibility if referring expressions could only refer to persons or things.

¹⁴W. H. Auden, *Collected Shorter Poems 1930-1944*, London, 1950, pp. 35-36 = *W. H. Auden: A Selection by the Author*. The Penguin Books, 1958, p. 59. The original publication of this poem was in *Journey to a War*, by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, London, 1939, p. 22. In *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957*, London 1966, p. 121 = *Journey to a War*, 2d rev. ed., London 1973, pp. 13-14, the sonnet was radically changed. Some of the changes are relevant to the problem at hand. In the new version the second line reads: "Between some yellow mountains and a sea", and the ninth line: "A town of such indulgence need not fear". These changes could be considered in the light of Auden's own statement, in the Foreword to his *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957*, London 1966: "The definite article is always a headache to any poet writing in English, but my addiction to German usages became a disease". (p. 16; the statement relates to his poems written during the nineteen-thirties).

¹⁵Being a this-expression it is doubtful whether it falls within the concept of definite expression which Donnellan has in mind. (See n. 12 above). But his distinction is clearly applicable to many this-expressions (and that-expressions, for that matter) as well, though they may tend to be referentially used.

¹⁶See, e.g., my "Metafoor en Vergelijking in de Literatuur", *Forum der Letteren* vol. 14 (1973), pp. 121-157; and my "Tenor, Vehicle and Reference", *Poetics* vol. 4 (1975), pp. 257-272.

¹⁷As to the helplessness of the study of literature against some claims of other sciences, see A. Kibédi Varga, *De Wetenschappelijkheid van de Literatuurwetenschap*, Rede (...), Assen 1974, pp. 1-3.

¹⁸Two recent publications on the philosophical import and

significance of literary works are : Richard Kuhns *Literature and Philosophy : Structures of Experience*, London 1971; and Peter Jones, *Philosophy and the Novel*, Oxford 1975.

¹⁹ Cf. Leonard Linsky (ed.), *Reference and Modality*, Oxford University Press 1971. To avoid quantification *into* a modal context, one may construe the last sentence of the poem as follows : "It is not possible that some x 'exists' such that x is a serious event happening here".

²⁰ About the significance of philosophy for the study of literature see also my essay "De Filosofie van de Literatuurwetenschap", *Controversen in de Taal-en Literatuurwetenschap*, Wassenaar 1974, pp. 57-84.