ON LITERARY NARRATIVES, FICTIONALITY, AND THE RULES OF CONVERSATION

"Writing, when properly managed (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation" - thus Laurence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* (1767).¹ Such statements provoke an examination of possible links between literary narratives and linguistic models of oral communication. Recent developments in the field of pragmatics, in particular Speech Acts, Deixis and H. P. Grice's Logic and Conversation, provide concepts and structural principles which could prove useful to literary criticism. This comment, for instance, by Roland Barthes might suggest the need to resort to the theory of deixis:

Il ne peut y avoir de récit sans narrateur et sans auditeur.²

Conversational deixis similarly requires a speaker and a hearer, an 'I' and a 'you' designated as 'you' by the 'I'. 'I' and 'you' indicate roles in a conversational situation and are interchangeable labels according to who is speaking at the time. Barthes supports his above observation by claiming that there is absolutely no reason why a narrator of a text should assert any piece of information (e.g. "Léo était le patron de cette boîte")² merely to himself: there must be an addressee who, in the narrator's opinion, did not know it before. This element of the hearer's ignorance is likewise a 'preparatory condition', according to John Searle's *Speech Acts* (1969), for

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¹ Volume II, Chapter XI.
the successful performance of the illocutionary act of assertion.\(^3\)
The speech act of assertion must have some relevance to literary narration because asserting that certain events happened is surely what the author is doing.

The speaker and the hearer are always clearly evident in an actual conversation because of visual and auditory monitoring but the author of a novel is not always easy to detect, especially in modern times when theories of the impersonality of narration are prevalent.\(^4\) In the eighteenth century, however, the presence of the author was very much desired both to point the moral of the tale and to interrupt, sometimes at length, with explanations and justifications of the technique of the novel, then a very new literary form. Henry Fielding refers to himself, or, perhaps better, to the narrator 'persona', in *The History of Tom Jones* (1749) as 'I' or 'we' or occasionally 'the writer'. For example, he uses the pronoun 'we' when describing the topic of the work:

> The Provision, then, which we have here made is no other than Human Nature.\(^6\)

The 'dear reader' makes a frequent appearance in novels of this period (and in later novels, such as those of George Eliot) as a parallel convention where the voice of the omniscient narrator is strongly heard. This 'reader' does not have the freedom of a listener in a

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5 See Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 71-76, for a discussion of the author of the text and his relationship to the narrator 'persona' or his 'second self' or his 'official scribe'.
6 Book I, Chapter I.
conversation to respond as he wishes nor to take his turn as speaker in the conversation. Labelled, as for instance by Fielding, 'the virtuous reader' or 'the good-natured reader', all his reactions are laid down by the narrator: he 'will be surprized' or 'shocked' by events in the story and in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* he asks questions about the principles of narration themselves and the way periods of time irrelevant to the progress of the story are ignored by the narrator. Here, Sterne has omitted to tell the reader what his (Tristram's) father was doing in the previous few months. So the 'reader' asks:

> But pray, Sir, What was your father doing all December, - January, and February? - Why, Madam, - he was all that time afflicted with a Sciatica.  

These 'readers' are in fact tools or slaves of a narrator "set over them for their own Good only," and they represent the responses of an inadequate conventional morality (Fielding) or a naïve opinion of what a novel ought to be (Sterne). The narrator, of course, wins the debate against these dim-witted stooges and also cleverly counters beforehand the criticism of his actual public. Thus, even the presence of a 'you' within a literary narrative cannot modify the dominant role of the 'I', who has the conversation all his own way, whereas the 'you' in a real conversation can always indicate his attitude somehow, by gestures, even if he does not get much of an opportunity to talk. A defining characteristic of a literary narrative seems therefore to be the exceptionally high dominance of the 'I' speaker, who never switches to the rôle of a 'you'.

The fact that literary narration cannot be a true conversational situation where all the normal features of deixis apply has been explained by Janik as due to the limitation that "die Kommunikationsbe-

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7 *Tristram Shandy*, (1767), Volume I, Chapter IV.  
8 *Tom Jones*, Book II, Chapter I.
This acceptance of a pretence is really equivalent to the 'willing suspension of disbelief' by the reader, which also allows him to feel involved in the lives and destinies of fictional characters as if they were real people he cared about. An aspect of the theory of Speech Acts may prove useful in the definition of what fictionality really is. J. R. Ross postulated (1970) that all declarative sentences have an underlying performative verb in the first person, in the present simple tense, non-negative and non-interrogatory, with a direct or indirect object in the second person. Thus, for instance:

(I say to you that) the fox said, "Hello."

The verb 'say' is performative in that it performs the action of telling by the very act of uttering the words. The usefulness of such performative verbs as 'say' and 'tell' in interpreting fictionality is that they do not have truth conditions both as performative verbs and as non-factive verbs. Non-factive verbs do not presuppose the truth of their complements whereas factives such as 'know' and 'regret' do:

I know that you are prosperous.
I regret that I committed a crime.

Although it must be true that 'you are prosperous', there is no need to discuss, within the limits of Ross's theory, whether foxes do or

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11 Ibid.
do not talk, since the speaker in a conversation or literary narrative can say whatever he likes for whatever purposes as long as the 'felicity condition' of a hearer being present is met. But this is an extremely restricted theory and if we posit other underlying performatives such as 'affirm' or 'assert' or 'state', some of the conditions on these verbs present difficulties. Searle has suggested that 'affirm' carries a 'sincerity condition' that the speaker must believe the proposition affirmed, but the author of a literary narrative surely does not believe in the actual existence of the world he creates.

Despite the caveats attached to the application of Speech Acts in a literary context and the fact that such theories are still very much in a process of elaboration and modification, Ross's proposal might be used to define in linguistic terms certain indisputable aspects of literary texts. For example, a play or the dramatic scenes in a novel where the characters speak to one another in direct speech and where the author does not announce his presence must still have a writer back-stage who arranges the whole business of plot intrigue and character development. This invisible narrator can be rendered apparent thus:

(I tell you that) Macbeth says, "Is this a dagger....."

There are other variations on the application of Speech Acts. Samuel Levin has suggested the following formulation of the author's attempt to attract the reader's interest in his fictional world:

I imagine myself in and invite you to conceive of a world in which I assert to you that...

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13 John Searle, op. cit., p. 66.
Here the act of assertion takes place in the imagined world and so the awkward sincerity condition on 'assert' or 'affirm' which has been mentioned above may be circumvented by embedding the verb in a matrix sentence beginning with 'I imagine':

Author: I imagine that I assert X happened to one of my characters. (See Searle's Sincerity Condition) 15

Richard Ohmann has proposed that any literary text can be broken down into a series of different Speech Acts with their respective illocutionary forces of advising, stating, warning, promising, exhorting etc. 16 Exhortation aims at the 'perlocutionary effect' on the reader of persuading him to act according to the author's precepts. The didactic elements in a text can thus be considered as speech acts of exhortation:

Let this, my young Readers, be your constant Maxim,
That no Man can be good enough to enable him to
neneglect the Rules of Prudence. 17

This exhortation is most probably insincere but that inference is only made possible by a consideration of Fielding's consistent moral perspective developed within the text of Tom Jones as a whole. The limited linguistic context here does not provide sufficient evidence for irony. Irony has not been done justice to by linguists. H. P. Grice in his theory of Logic and Conversation 18 has suggested that irony

15 Searle, op. cit., p. 66.
17 Tom Jones, Book III, Chapter VII.
is a violation of one of the Co-operative Principles (Quality, namely) which ensure straightforward, simple, and speedy comprehension in a conversation. The maxim of Quality tells us not to lie, and irony, of course, is a sort of lie. A taxonomy of irony is, however, a very complex matter: irony does not always take the form, as in the Fielding example above, of a plain statement of the opposite of what one really believes, there may be an added tone of exaggeration leading to an absurd climax. An example might be:

The first was a genuine surprise: in July 1914, there were still a few wicked people about; but on 2 August, virtue suddenly seized power and reigned: all Frenchmen became good. 19

Such examples underline the way in which linguistic criticism is often limited by rather basic and general theoretical structures which fail to match the subtlety and inventiveness of literary language.

The subjection of a text to such linguistic procedures as I have been describing yields information which may well seem self-evident or even useless to a literary critic; the linguistic approach, in his view, introduces unnecessary and irrelevant terminology. But there may be an advantage in not isolating literature in the realm of aesthetic evaluation: these linguistic theories analyse features of language which do occur in literature as well as in that nebulous and probably indefinable category 'standard language'. 20 The ways in which literary deixis differs from the 'norm' conversational deixis may offer a new angle on familiar concepts in literary criticism or reveal aspects of a text which had previously hardly been analysed. Certain things can, for instance, be taken for granted by the hearer in a real-life conversation: the physical context is the 'here' (spatial deixis) of the speaker and usually also of the hearer, the time of their conversation

20 The term derives from Jan Mukařovský, Standard and Poetic Language (1932).
is a 'now' (temporal deixis). In a literary text, however, the author is responsible for creating an impression of a 'here' and 'now' to the reader sitting in his armchair at five in the evening. Moreover, there may be the additional complication of two 'heres' and two 'nows', if the process of the author writing the book is referred to as well as the situation in the book which is generally earlier in time than and different in place to the former. 21

The type of linguistic theory chosen is, in my opinion, important. Pragmatics, which describes language in use, 'performance' as opposed to 'competence', is probably more useful than transformational grammar, which provides theoretical models of innate language capacities. Speech Act analysis can reveal the attitude and intention of the author and suggest the possible perlocutionary effects on the reader. Furthermore, it is still controversial whether TG can in fact be applied to texts as well as sentences, whereas pragmatics certainly goes beyond the sentence. A literary work is an exceptionally unified text: plot, motifs, repetition of stylistic devices. Several linguists have offered 'coherence' as the basic concern of linguistic stylistics. 22 Linguists can, however, only analyse cohesion on the plane of language since linguistics is not competent to interpret allegory, plot, motifs and character development, all of which contribute to the organic unity of a text. 23

21 Laurence Sterne in Tristram Shandy (1767) gives great prominence to this duality by constantly intermingling the story itself with the process of narration.
To return to the issue of the fictionality and 'unreality' of the world created in a literary work: Julius Petersen has claimed that the 'Glaubhaftmachen des Erzählten', the masking of this unreality, is the central task of the author. There are a number of tricks of the novelist's trade which help to endow the fictional world with an appearance of historicity. Some of these tricks consist in pretending to make use of historical methodology, while others are grammatical in nature. The technique of Albert Camus' *The Plague* (*La Peste*, 1947) is a good example of the first type. The city of Oran was not hit by plague in 1945, but the narrator created by Camus, Dr. Rieux, declares that he has 'data', 'documents', and 'eye-witness accounts', which he is comparing in order to write an objective and accurate report on the happenings. Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea* (*La Nausée*, 1938) pretends to be the edited diary of the late Antoine Roquentin, a gentleman who in fact only ever existed in the mind of Sartre. The novels of Alexander Dumas, however, abound with characters whose real-life counterparts actually were once alive (e.g. Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIV). A parallel instance is George Eliot's setting *Adam Bede* in a precisely defined historical time, 1799. The question to be asked about these two last examples is whether there must be consistency with historical fact. Laurent Stern has maintained that although Flaubert could portray Madame Bovary exactly as he chose because she had no existence prior to his novel, if Napoleon appeared in a novel then his actions must not clash with those of the real Napoleon. I think this theory is not borne out in literary texts. Dumas' Cardinal Richelieu spends a great deal of time and energy attempting to outwit the three musketeers, themselves of doubtful historical origin. Simi-

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larly, it is George Eliot's 1799 we see in her book as it is Dickens' London we encounter in his novels. John Lyons has claimed that the act of referring is deixis-dependent, a function of a particular utterance, and that the use of a definite description such as 'London' does not imply a unique and permanent referent i.e. there can be more Londons than just the topographical and historical entity described in factual records.

Let us consider another attempt at masking unreality in the novel. Novelists will go to great lengths to make us feel that their characters are real people, in certain cases by manipulating tense or spatial deixis. Sometimes they try to persuade us that the characters live on after the events of the book have reached a conclusion. Franz Stanzel quotes an example from the last chapter of Tom Jones, where a character is suddenly no longer discussed in the preterite but in the present tense, and so becomes contemporaneous with the author's deictic coding time:

(Blifil) lives in one of the northern Counties, about 200 Miles distant from London...

George Eliot in the last chapter of Middlemarch (1872) discusses the other possible fates her characters might have had other than the ones she allot them; most of the characters are in fact given a long future beyond the time described in the book. We are asked to rejoice in these happy destinies. "All those who have cared for Mary Garth and Fred Vincy will like to know..., as the author puts it. Some of the characters, particularly Dorothea Brooke, are even supposed to have had a direct influence on the real world outside the novel:

27 See for a general analysis: John Lyons, Deixis as the Source of Reference (University of Trier, Linguistic Agency, 1973). In Semantics (Vol. 2, Cambridge, 1977, p. 646), Lyons claims that "deixis, in general, sets limits on the possibility of decontextualisation."

28 Quoted in Stanzel, op. cit., p. 45.
that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.29

In this second example, there is a merging of two time and space continuums, the fictional one of the novel and the real historical one, perhaps because Eliot thinks that the latter offers the characters a much longer opportunity to influence the future, our future. The first example from Fielding involves shifting the character away from the preterite, which was used to describe his actions in the novel, into the author's own tense, the present simple, which is normally used to comment on the events or to express proverbial truths:

Prudence and Circumspection are necessary even to the best of Men.

The tense shift we are discussing may be more than a movement in time: it might seem like a move out of the fictional world into the real one. But this problem only arises if we agree with Köte Hamburger's theory in Die Logik der Dichtung (1957) that the preterite in literature carries with it (unlike the present tense) an implication of fictionality yet not of pastness (fictional events are not past because they did not really happen).30 The issue of tense in the novel will be considered in detail later in this article, but I think it unlikely that here Fielding is literally suddenly conferring reality on Blifil. Dr. Hamburger considers the use of present tenses in the novel unjustifiable in terms of any notion of literary effects: it is simply a case of violation of an absolute rule that the preterite is the true grammatical rendering of the fictional world.

Authors may try to make not only their characters but also themselves seem like real people. Sometimes in the case of an omniscient narrator (i.e. not in a multiple viewpoint novel where each character is a non-omniscient narrator), there is an attempt to modify his God-like superiority: the puppet-master, who knows everything because he decides every move, becomes suddenly more human and more like a real-life reporter of events by being unsure of his facts:

after much Enquiry into the Matter, I am inclined to believe, that at this very Time, the charming Sophia made no less Impression on the Heart of Jones. 31

So, telling the story seems like a real-life situation where any one person has only a partial awareness of the facts. Nevertheless, any kind of authorial interruption calls attention to the process of narration rather than the immediacy of the action in the novel, whereas entirely dramatic scenes without the author as intermediary focus the reader purely on the events and characters and not on the writing of the book. However, when the narrator is not all-knowing but a dramatic participant in the action and not possessed of an extremely enlightened moral understanding but is criticised and judged by other characters, then doubt, memory failure, and self-contradiction seem 'natural' aspects of his personality (not artificial poses of a narrator) and relevant to the dramatic action of the book as well as to the process of narration. Thus Marcel in André Gide's *The Immoralist* (1902) has the natural human difficulties in remembering, coloured by reluctance to remember pain:

I shall not speak of every stage of the journey. Some of them have left me only a confused recollection. 32

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31 *Tom Jones*, Book IV, Chapter XIII.
Of course, Marcel's not remembering is not a gap in the book but a necessary part of the 'implied author's' (Gide's) artistic design.

Literature, however much it may play at being history, dependent on documents and people's fallible memories, is not subject to the drawbacks of history. History is incomplete: there are gaps in its knowledge which may never be filled and it waits forever, perhaps, for completion in the future. Literary works are unified, completed wholes where the author does not have to rely on anything outside himself to provide the details which contribute to the harmony, the resolution of discord. Roquentin, in *Nouvelle*, escapes from the frustrating profession of historian to that of literary artist, from the absurdity and contingency of the real world to the perfection of the fictional one.

Playing at history is not the author's only way of giving the reader a sense of reality. By means of spatial deixis, the author tries to place the reader physically at the place of action. The word 'here' is purely and simply a function of deixis. It is the location of the speaker (and usually the hearer) at coding time, utterance time. In a novel, 'here' is not the location of the speaker at coding time, in his attic writing the manuscript, nor the location of the reader as he reads the book. 'Here' is determined from the point of view of the character:

> It is time to return to Bernard. Here he is, just waking in Olivier's bed.  

Since in this case 'here' is not the location of the speaker, in standard deixis 'there' would be the right term. Eighteenth-century novelists, self-consciously aware of the strange conventions of that new art-form, the novel, sometimes joke about the way the narrator and the

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33 See Wayne C. Booth, op. cit., pp. 211-221 for examples.
reader must seem to be physically present at the scene of the action
and also be ready to move on to the next location:

Reader, take care. I have unadvisedly led thee to the Top
of as high a Hill as Mr. Allworthy's, and how to get thee
down without breaking thy Neck, I do not well know. 35

(Fielding)

The anonymous author of The History of Charlotte Summers (1749) was
equally aware of creating an illusion of the reader as eye-witness. He
offers the reader 'an easy flying Carriage' to take him 'to the Place
where we would have you attend us' and then announces:

The Journey is over, and we are just alighted at the Gate
of a stately old Building, surrounded with reverend Oaks...
You may enter freely... 36

Spatial deixis is merely one aspect of the conversational setting
but the most successful imitation of the whole speaker-hearer rela­
tionship is the dramatic monologue. In this type of narrative, there
is a speaker, an 'I', and a hearer who is never represented in direct
speech but nevertheless his presence is proved beyond any doubt by
grammatical means. In Camus' The Fall (La Chute, 1956), Clamence, the
speaker, employs imperatives, questions, vocatives, and greetings
which are clearly addressed to a man he meets in a bar. The addressee,
who is never identified or given a definite personality, does reply
but we hear his answers only in the words of Clamence. Sometimes
Clamence does this through echo questions, or he repeats odd words of
his partner, and at other times he leaps to his own conclusions from
what the addressee has apparently said:

35 Tom Jones, Book I, Chapter IV.
36 Quoted in Wayne C. Booth, op. cit., pp. 207-208.
What? Those ladies behind those windows? 37
(echo question)
You are in business, no doubt? In a way? Excellent reply! 38
(partial repetition)
I am indeed grateful to you, mon cher compatriote, for your curiosity. 39 (Clamence's own conclusion)

Of course, the situation is odd in that the addressee's direct speech is blocked out, and this gives Clamence extreme power as the one and only voice in the book. There is no authorial commentary and we do not know how many of the addressee's remarks Clamence may have twisted beyond recognition. What he does to the addressee's comments might be compared to the effects of reported speech. Here is an invented example of direct and reported speech:

John: I am selling my car.
Fred: That fool John says he's selling his rusty old banger.

In my example, what John said is totally transformed by Fred's hostility towards him. Since Clamence often retains the direct speech of the addressee (see above examples) but embeds it in his own viewpoint, a comparison could also be made with the following line from Middlemarch:

She ... spoke of her happiness as a "reward" 40

George Eliot is referring to Rosamond Lydgate of whom she does not approve, and an unwillingness to accept Rosamond's opinion is perhaps indicated by the quotation marks around "reward" because surely otherwise they could have been omitted. Similarly, Clamence's repetition of his addressee's exact words may well be an indication of irony and impertinent mimicry. Clamence's status of authority is really essential

38 Ibid., p. 8.
39 Ibid., p. 33.
to his purposes - to convince the listener (and us) of certain unpleas­
ant truths and to convert him to his own brand of cynicism. He argues cleverly, being a lawyer, and the whole monologue is a 'macro-speech act'\textsuperscript{41} of persuasion. Not only the logic of the argument is under his sole control, but also the physical setting and the description of the people of Amsterdam where he lives. He calls Amsterdam's canals 'the circles of hell' and refers to an art thief as 'the brown bear you see over there', pointing him out presumably (gestural deixis). We must see everything through Clamence's eyes and through his rather repul­sive amoral perspective. There is no authorial voice to criticise him, so the only way he can be undermined is by his own hesitation or self­contradiction, of which there is little. In Gide's \textit{The Immoralist}, the 'immoral' main narrator of the dramatic monologue is at least criti­cised before and after his narrative by another narrator. In Oliver Goldsmith's \textit{The Vicar of Wakefield} (1766), a fictive autobiography of a parson, the parson trips himself up by self-contradiction. For in­stance, near the end of the narrative he tells Burchell that he had always thought "that your mind was noble"\textsuperscript{42} but earlier on he had in fact referred to Burchell's villainy.\textsuperscript{43} The reason why Camus allowed Clamence to present his views unchecked by criticism is, I think, un­likely to be discovered by linguistic analysis alone.

I have dealt with the way writers make their fictional worlds seem real and like a conversation. However, it is possible that they in fact want to do exactly the opposite - stress the unreality of the events. Käte Hamburger in her \textit{Die Logik der Dichtung} (1957) has claimed just that. Her theory is based on a to some extent deviant use

\textsuperscript{41} I take this term from Teun A. van Dijk, \textit{Text and Context} (London and New York, Longman, 1977), Chapter 9.
\textsuperscript{42} Oliver Goldsmith, \textit{The Vicar of Wakefield}, Chapter XXX.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., Chapter XV.
of the preterite - this tense is often found combined with the deictic adverb 'now' in literature. The use of a restricted number of linguistic features to define the type to which a particular text belongs is a common method among linguists. N. E. Enkvist, for example, talks of 'style markers' in Linguistic Stylistics (1973): certain archaisms, for instance, characterise religious language today. It is easy to find examples of Hamburger's literary 'style marker':

And now both together attacked our Herce...

It touched Lydgate now, and mingled the early moments of his love with...

Certainly this appearance of 'now' is strange since that adverb is normally the deictic coding time, the present, the speaker's moment of utterance. But is this usage confined to literature? W.J.M. Bronzwaer has found a similar use in some history books:

Having put his house in order, Mohammed now began to enjoy his power...

Such examples call the basis of Hamburger's theory into question, since 'now' plus preterite occurs in non-fiction also.

Apart from being supposedly an indicator of fictionality, Hamburger claims that 'now' with the preterite represents not a past time but a present, that of the characters as they directly experience the events in their 'now':

44 See Roy Pascal, op. cit., p. 2.
46 Tom Jones, Book V, Chapter XI.
(The preterite) loses its function to refer to the past, which is caused by the fact that the time of the action, and therefore the action itself, is not related to a real I-origo, a real subject of utterance, but to the fictive I-origines of the characters. 49

A real I-origo would be an I-narrator; a corollary of Hamburger's theory is that narration in the first person, fictive autobiography, cannot be true fiction because it breaks the rules. A second corollary is an objection to the use of the historic present, since in any case the preterite has present reference. 50 A novelist employs the historic present to make the action seem more vivid and more immediate; usually, it interrupts a narrative in the preterite:

Next day it was not so fine; that is, a wind sprang up and the horizon became dull and grey.
Marceline is suffering; the sand in the air burns and irritates her throat. 51

In contrast to Hamburger who does not accept the literary effect achieved this way, Bronzwaer has proposed an interpretation in terms of how such a shift in tense represents an increase in empathy with a character. 52 In a few novels, the present tense is used throughout to describe the events of the story. Such a one is Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* (1939) and, in the 'Prefatory Essay', the author claims that the main character is unaware of past and future and drifts along in the present; this is embodied linguistically in a stream of short sentences in the present tense without causal or temporal connectives:

50 See for summary of the arguments: Pascal, op. cit., p. 8.
52 Bronzwaer, op. cit., p. 67.
Johnson is amused. He borrows a penny from Ajali and gives it to the Waziri. All laugh. The gin is opened and drunk. 53

I-narration also is rejected by Hamburger (she accepts only third-person narrative), because such an 'I', as we have mentioned, is writing about a past, his own, and is not portraying events as if they were happening at the moment. Some occurrences of 'now' plus the preterite do, however, occur in The Vicar of Wakefield, a fictive autobiography: 'I now began .......'. Oddly, this work is not a novel to Hamburger nor is Camus' L'Etranger, another fictive autobiography, written in the 'passé composé'. The advantage of this tense and the English present perfect over the preterite in appropriate situations is, however, that they can describe permanent traits of character true even of the narrator at the time of writing (e.g. I have always been a peaceable man); and also since the present perfect has current relevance to and effects on the present time, it is very able to represent continuity of character development. The preterite is generally used in The Vicar of Wakefield but then the novel ends at a moment of harmonious completion of the story long before the Vicar starts to write his autobiography. In L'Etranger, however, the time of writing is just before Meursault's execution, and the whole of the past narrative about the events which lead him to his tragic end are of considerable current relevance to him. The way the 'passé composé' alternates with the present tense to create an impression of close connection between past and present can be illustrated in this example from the book.

Pour la troisième fois, j'ai refusé de recevoir l'aumônier.
Je n'ai rien à lui dire, je n'ai pas envie de parler, je le verrai bien assez tôt. 55

54 Oliver Goldsmith, The Vicar of Wakefield, Chapter X.
55 Albert Camus, L'Etranger (1942), Chapter V.
Another novel, this time in diary form, which uses first person narration and mostly the present tenses is Sartre's *Nausea*. A diary can also employ ellipsis (e.g. Had breakfast today. Went shopping...), but in this book the present tenses are particularly appropriate for portraying a stream of disconnected impressions which have not been analysed and summed up by a narrator looking back and putting his past in order in the preterite. The theme of the book is the perception of absurdity which is conveyed in the linguistic choice of the more 'open-ended' and less 'finished' present tense:

Now, I don't think about anybody any more; I don't even bother to look for words. It flows through me, more or less quickly, and I don't fix anything, I just let it go.\(^{56}\)

Surely, the explanation of the use of tenses in narrative need not be as rigid and schematic as Hamburger's. Much depends on the context of a literary work and what is required to enact the theme also on the level of style. Creative writers ought not to be hidebound by literary conventions, which anyway were already being challenged as early in the tradition of the novel as 1767 when *Tristram Shandy* came out. Furthermore, a literary historical explanation of the preterite may be more satisfactory than a linguistic one. Sartre in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (1948), discussing the omniscient narrator and the choice of the preterite in the novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, maintains:

Dès lors l'histoire qu'on livre au public a pour caractère principal d'être déjà pensée, c'est-à-dire classée, ordonnée, émondée, clarifiée, ou plutôt de ne se livrer qu'à travers les pensées qu'on forme rétrospectivement sur elle. C'est

pourquoi, alors que le temps de l’Épopée, qui est d’origine collective, est fréquemment le présent, celui du roman est presque toujours le passé. 57

So the choice of the preterite was, in Sartre’s view, natural to an age when values were clear and could be relied upon by an omniscient narrator, who presented his story from the point of view of order and certainty. Sartre also claims that the preterite with its frequent implication of a remote past distances us from the events and the sufferings which are endured before the novel reaches its conclusion, the harmonious resolution of all conflicts:

Il y a eu trouble, c’est vrai, mais ce trouble a pris fin depuis longtemps: les acteurs sont morts ou mariés ou consolés. Ainsi l’aventure est un bref désordre qui s’est annulé. Elle est racontée du point de vue de l’expérience et de la sagesse, elle est écouter du point de vue de l’ordre. 58

Examples of such harmonious endings which bring order and calm after stormy conflicts are:

In their death they were not divided. (The Mill on the Floss, 1860)
I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for: all my cares were over; my pleasure was unspeakable. (The Vicar of Wakefield, 1766)

In the first one, George Eliot describes the reunion, though in death, of Tom and Maggie; after the corrupting experiences which took her away from the Mill. The second example alludes to the new-found happy-

57 Jean-Paul Sartre, Qu’est-ce que la littérature? (Gallimard, 1948), p. 171.
58 Ibid., p. 174.
ness and wealth of the Vicar after poverty and imprisonment. In contrast, some twentieth-century novels have an open conclusion pointing to a future where everything is a new opportunity:

I feel very curious to meet Caloub. (The Counterfeiters, 1925)

Here, the narrator of Gide's novel, having summed up the fates of the major characters, now turns to a minor character who has hardly been noticed before and announces a possible future which centres on him.

In general, therefore, I think that Hamburger's theory fails to take into account a literary historical perspective; moreover, she compares the use of the preterite in the novel only with its use in standard language but does not recognise that a literary work may build a frame of its own within which certain linguistic choices will either be stressed or form part of the pattern there established.

Although linguistic theories rigidly applied to literature often misfire, this does not mean that literary language is too subtle and sophisticated to make use of the very simplest of grammatical tools. Deixis describes such basic elements e.g. pronouns, tense, time adverbs. A sudden eccentricity in the choice of one of these can sometimes produce striking literary effects or even symbolise the theme of a novel. I would like to conclude this article with two examples of the creative use of deictic features in literature.

Tristram Shandy is concerned with two distinct periods of time: Tristram's childhood and adolescence, and the later time when the adult Tristram is actually writing the novel which bears his name. One character in the book is Dr. Slop, who delivers baby Tristram. Thus, Slop belongs to the earlier period and is usually described in the third-person and in the preterite. All of a sudden, the narrator Tristram addresses him directly as if Slop were his partner in a conversation at the present time of narration:
Truce! - truce, good Dr. Slop! - stay thy obstetrik hand. 59

It is as if the mistake at the birth (the baby's nose is flattened) could be prevented after it had happened - as, of course, it can since nothing in a novel is a real event but only a whim of the narrator/author!

Here is one final example of a shift in person deixis; this change from 'your wife' to 'Lady Blanche Pump' means an insistence on a polite attitude of distance, expressed by the title 60 and by third-person reference rather than second-person address:

After this interesting event, some old acquaintance, who saw young Pump in the parlour at the bank in the City, said to him, familiarly, "How's your wife, Pump, my boy?"
Mr. Pump looked exceedingly puzzled and disgusted, and after a pause, said, "Lady Blanche Pump is pretty well, I thank you."61

59 Volume II, Chapter XI.
60 See Lyons, Deixis as the Source of Reference (University of Trier Linguistic Agency: 1973), p. 79., for a discussion of social deixis i.e. the implications of modes of address.
61 William Makepeace Thackeray, The Book of Snobs (1847), Chapter VIII.
Povzetek

O LITERARNI PRIPOVEDI, IZMIŠLJENOSTI IN PRAVILIH POGOVORA

Namen članka je izmeriti, kako koristne so teorije pragmatike (zlasti tiste, ki zadevajo deiksis in "govorna dejanja"), kadar so orodje za analizo literarnih pripovedi. Po avtorici sta si sicer literarna pripoved pa razmerje med govorečim in poslušalcem v pogovoru že v osnovi podobna, vendar so med literarno pripovedjo in tem razmerjem tu bistveni razložki (npr. glede na časovno in prostorsko deiksis), ki jih smemo šteti za posebnosti izmišljenega. Najznačilnejša teh posebnosti je silna premoč govorečega/pisca v romanu, pogojena s tem, da poslušalec/brolec nima priložnosti za odgovor. Avtorica nasprotuje teoriji Käte Hamburger, po kateri je izmišljenost vedno označena z rabo preteklika. Širšo teoretično podlago članka tvori z ene strani ugovor zoper to, da se literatura zapira v estetsko vrednotenje, kjer uhaja primerjavi s standardnim jezikom, z druge strani trdi avtorica, da se jezikovna kritika vse preveč omejuje samo na svoje teorije ter se ne meni za zgodovino literarnih konvencij in povezanost le-teh s kulturno-zgodovinskimi spremembami.