Tampere University

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The Witcraft of Seeing Things Differently

Hyperdetermined Humor, Unusual Viewpoints, and Narrative Rhetoric in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* Novels

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Responsible supervisor and Custos	Professor Sari Kivistö Tampere University Finland	
Supervisor	Laura Karttunen, PhD Tampere University Finland	
Pre-examiners	Professor Mika Hallila University of Eastern Finland Finland	Docent Jyrki Korpua University of Oulu Finland
Opponent	Professor Joel Kuortti University of Turku Finland	

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ABSTRACT

Sir Terry Pratchett's bestselling *Discworld* series of novels has been commonly described as comic fantasy, and although it has been previously studied mainly as fantasy literature, another conspicuous feature in these novels, in addition to the fantasy milieu, is their rich and abundant humor. In this study, I have chosen the road less travelled by approaching the *Discworld* novels as humorous literature, and, consequently, my main goal here is to study the poetics of Terry Pratchett's humor—his "witcraft". To be more precise, in this dissertation I have set myself the task of mapping out the comic devices that are most characteristic for Terry Pratchett's witcraft and investigating what makes the *Discworld* novels funny.

The richness of humor that is characteristic for the *Discworld* novels consists partly of the frequent occurrences of humorous descriptions and comic scenes, but also of the numerous comic devices that Pratchett deploys. In this dissertation, I argue that Terry Pratchett's humor is hyperdetermined, which means that he tends to combine numerous comic devices in the same description or scene. Consequently, this study on the poetics of Terry Pratchett's humor is at the same time a study on the construction of hyperdetermined humor. To better understand how hyperdetermined humor is constructed, I have devised a taxonomy that divides comic devices into four categories: situational, contextual, structural, and stylistic. Based on this taxonomy, I argue that the humor of a humorous description or a comic scene can be said to be truly hyperdetermined whenever it combines comic devices from more than one of these categories.

I consider mapping out the comic devices that are most characteristic for Terry Pratchett's witcraft to be one of the major contributions of this dissertation to the academic study of humor in literature. Of situational comic devices, I discuss and analyze examples of dramatic irony and absurd logic that I have detected in the *Discworld* novels. Of contextual comic devices, I discuss Pratchett's parody and satire; of structural comic devices, I study Pratchett's use of paraprosdokian, bathos, figgins (or running gags), and comic footnotes. Of stylistic comic devices, I investigate Pratchett's comic imagery (hyperboles, metaphors, similes, and personifications), his puns (paronomasia, antanaclasis, portmanteaux, and bilingual puns), as well as Pratchett's comic euphemisms.

In this dissertation, I also demonstrate that representing cultural clichés (i.e., familiar cultural phenomena, customary ways of thinking, and conventional ways of representing) from humorously unusual viewpoints is characteristic for Terry Pratchett's witcraft. In the *Discworld* novels, Pratchett transfers various cultural phenomena from the real world, our "Roundworld", to a fantasy world called the Discworld, and as a result of this interworldly resonance, the cultural clichés of our Roundworld appear to the reader simultaneously as familiar and comically strange. These humorous viewpoints can be viewed as an additional constituent of hyperdetermined humor. While the fantasy setting of the *Discworld* novels allows Pratchett to set up comic resonance between the worlds, Pratchett's humor also makes the Discworld a more imaginative and fantastic place than typical fantasy worlds. Many events and phenomena that are represented in the *Discworld* novels can only exist in a world where reality is distorted and enhanced by the special "magic" of comically absurd logic, playing with cultural clichés, and humorous exaggerations.

In addition to the abundance of comic devices, hyperdetermined humor, and humorously unusual viewpoints, I also study in this dissertation what kinds of evaluative attitudes the narrator's humorous viewpoints and the characters' emotional reactions reveal. According to my interpretation, such evaluative attitudes are means of narrative rhetoric, where the author attempts to guide the reader's attitudes of approval or disapproval. Pratchett's humor is often critical—parodical or satirical—although occasionally the narrator's humorous viewpoints represent the cultural phenomena of our Roundworld in a positive light, as something admirable. In this dissertation, I argue that narrative rhetoric is based on representing negative and positive attitudes, and that humor is one possible means of narrative rhetoric.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Sir Terry Pratchettin maineikasta ja menestynyttä *Discworld*-romaanisarjaa luonnehditaan yleensä koomiseksi fantasiaksi, ja vaikka sitä on aiemmin tutkittu etupäässä fantasiakirjallisuutena, niin fantasiamiljöön lisäksi toinen näiden kirjojen silmiinpistävä piirre on huumorin ylenpalttinen runsaus. Tässä väitöskirjassa olen valinnut harvinaisemman lähestymistavan tutkiessani *Discworld*-romaaneja ensisijaisesti humoristisena kirjallisuutena, ja sen mukaisesti väitöskirjani keskeisimpänä tavoitteena on tutkia Terry Pratchettin huumorin poetiikkaa. Tarkemmin sanottuna olen asettanut tässä väitöskirjassa tehtäväkseni kartoittaa Terry Pratchettin huumorille ominaisimmat komiikan keinot ja tutkia, mikä tekee *Discworld*-romaaneista hauskoja.

Discworld-romaaneille ominainen huumorin runsaus koostuu humoristisen kuvausten ja koomisten kohtausten tiheän esiintymisen lisäksi komiikan keinojen laajasta valikoimasta. Tässä väitöskirjassa väitän, että Terry Pratchettin huumori on hyperdeterminoitua, mikä tarkoittaa, että hän yhdistelee erilaisia komiikan keinoja samassa kuvauksessa tai kohtauksessa. Siksi Pratchettin huumorin poetiikkaa käsittelevä väitöskirjani on samalla myös tutkimus hyperdeterminoidun huumorin rakentumisesta. Selkeyttääkseni huumorin hyperdeterminaation rakentumista jaottelen komiikan keinot neljään kategoriaan: tilanteellisiin, kontekstuaalisiin, rakenteellisiin ja tyylillisiin. Sovellan tätä jaottelua väittämällä, että humoristista kuvausta tai koomista kohtausta voidaan perustellusti sanoa hyperdeterminoiduksi silloin, kun siinä yhdistellään komiikan keinoja useammasta kuin yhdestä kategoriasta.

Pidän Pratchettin huumorille ominaisten komiikan keinojen kartoittamista yhtenä tämän väitöskirjan keskeisimmistä kontribuutioista kirjallisen huumorin tutkimukselle. Tilanteellisista komiikan keinoista tarkastelen *Discworld*-romaaneista löytämiäni esimerkkejä draamallisesta ironiasta ja absurdista logiikasta. Kontekstuaalisista komiikan keinoista käsittelen Pratchettin parodiaa ja satiiria, kun taas rakenteellisista komiikan keinoista tutkin, kuinka Pratchett käyttää paraprosdokiania, bathosta, toistuvia piloja (”figgin”) ja koomisia alaviitteitä. Tyylillisistä komiikan keinoista tutkailen Pratchettin koomisia kielikuvia (hyperbolia, metaforia, vertauksia ja personifikaatioita), hänen sanaleikkejään (paronomasia,

antanaklasis, sanataskut ja kaksikieliset sanaleikit) sekä Pratchettin koomisia eufemismeja.

Lisäksi osoitan väitöskirjassani, että Terry Pratchettin huumorille on ominaista kulttuuristen kliseiden (eli tuttujen kulttuuri-ilmiöiden, totunnaisten ajattelutapojen ja vakiintuneiden esittämisen konventioiden) esittäminen humoristisen epätavallisista näkökulmista käsin. *Discworld*-romaaneissa Pratchett siirtää erilaisia oman maailmamme kulttuuri-ilmiöitä Discworld-nimiseen (suom. Kiekkomaailma) fantasiamaailmaansa, ja tämän maailmojen törmäyttämisen seurauksena kulttuuriset kliseet näyttäytyvät lukijalle samanaikaisesti tuttuina ja koomisen outoina. Tällaiset humoristiset näkökulmat vahvistavat osaltaan huumorin hyperdeterminaatiota. Samalla kun fantasiamiljöö mahdollistaa kahden maailman koomisen törmäyttämisen ja oman maailmamme kulttuuristen kliseiden peilaamisen toisen maailman avulla, huumori toisaalta mahdollistaa Kiekkomaailmassa normaalia fantasiaa vapaamman mielikuvituksen lennon, eikä monia *Discworld*-romaaneissa kuvattuja asioita, tapahtumia ja ilmiöitä voisi esiintyä maailmoissa, jotka eivät rakennu absurdin logiikan, kulttuurisilla kliseillä leikittelyn ja koomisen liioittelun kaltaisten todellisuuta vääristävien periaatteiden luoman ”taikuuden” varaan.

Komiikan keinojen moninaisuuden, hyperdeterminoidun huumorin ja epätavallisten näkökulmien lisäksi tutkin väitöskirjassani sitä, millaisia arvottavia asenteita kertojan humoristiset näkökulmat ja humoristisiin kuvauksiin sisältyvät henkilöhahmojen tunnereaktiot paljastavat. Tulkitsen tällaisen arvottavan huumorin kirjalliseksi retorisen vaikuttamisen keinoksi, jonka avulla kirjailija pyrkii ohjailemaan lukijansa hyväksyviä ja paheksuvia asenteita. Useimmiten Pratchettin huumori on kulttuurikriittistä, eli parodista ja satiirista, mutta toisinaan humoristiset näkökulmat esittävät todellisen maailman kulttuuri-ilmiöitä myönteisinä ja ihailtavina. Väitän tutkimuksessani, että kirjallisuuden retoriikka perustuu tällaisten kielteisten ja myönteisten asenteiden esittämiselle ja että huumori on yksi kertomuksen retoriikan vaikutuskeinoista.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Thanks to his bestselling *Discworld* series, Terry Pratchett is one of the most well-known fantasy writers, and the best-known author of comic fantasy, in the whole world. This dissertation focuses on the "comic" part of his comic fantasy, and accordingly my primary aim is to study Terry Pratchett's witcraft[1]—his art of comedy and the poetics of his humor. For this purpose, I will examine Pratchett's comically *unusual viewpoints* on familiar cultural phenomena and investigate his *hyperdetermined humor*, i.e., how Pratchett combines various comic devices. Consequently, this dissertation is a study on how Pratchett constructs hyperdetermined humor in the *Discworld* novels—it provides conceptual tools for analyzing hyperdetermined humor, which has so far received little attention in literary studies and humor research. In addition to the poetics of Terry Pratchett's humor, I will also study his *narrative rhetoric*, i.e., how the narrator's humorous viewpoints and the characters' emotional responses occasionally express evaluative attitudes, which I will interpret as the author's attempt to rhetorically guide the reader's attitudes of approval or disapproval.

Due to the fantasy setting of the *Discworld* novels, these novels have been commonly categorized as fantasy literature and Pratchett as a fantasy author. However, the humor in these novels is so abundant that I think it is equally justifiable to categorize the novels as comedies and Pratchett as a humorist. In the current study, I have chosen this latter approach, the road less travelled. There is certainly plenty of humor in these novels, and while I personally I find the *Discworld* novels exceptionally funny, their immense popularity suggests that also many other readers have found Pratchett's comic fantasy funny. Accordingly, my main research question is: What makes Terry Pratchett's witcraft funny? In answering this question, I will argue that the humor in the *Discworld* novels is so rich and abundant that Pratchett deserves to be considered one of the great humorists in English literature.

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[1] A quick Internet search reveals that the word "witcraft" appears in the title of Ralph Lever's book: *The Arte of Reason, Rightly Termed, Witcraft: Teaching a Perfect Way to Argue and Dispute* (1573) and also in the title of Jonathan Rée's book *Witcraft: The Invention of Philosophy in English* (2019), which appears to have borrowed "witcraft" from Lever's book. In both of these books, "witcraft" refers to the art of reasoning, and not to the art of comic wit, which is the sense that I will use in this dissertation.

My second research question is: What kinds of elements in Terry Pratchett's witcraft can be interpreted as rhetorical? While studying Pratchett's comic devices and hyperdetermined humor allows me to pay close attention to *how* things are said in the *Discworld* novels, the focus on comic devices tends to make analyses of humor dry and formalistic. Answering this second question adds a rhetorical approach to my dissertation, which allows me to study also *what* is said in the *Discworld* novels. In fact, studying Pratchett's comically unusual viewpoints serves a similar purpose in this dissertation and, along with the rhetorical approach, it should help me to avoid the trap of overly formalistic analyses, which are not uncommon in linguistic humor studies. Furthermore, since I consider that evaluative attitudes are essential for narrative rhetoric, and since subjective viewpoints tend to express evaluative attitudes, I argue that Pratchett's humorous viewpoints are inherently rhetorical, and thus the rhetorical approach will complement my study of Terry Pratchett's witcraft. Since studies on the rhetoric of humor seem to be scarce, I have also here chosen the road less travelled.

Considering that Terry Pratchett is widely known as the author of a series of hilariously comic fantasy novels, there have been surprisingly few studies that focus on his humor. At least, the sources I have reviewed so far lead me to that conclusion. One of these sources is a collection of academic articles in literary studies, *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature* (2004), where, out of the 13 articles in total, only one is explicitly concerned with humor.[2] Another source is a Pratchett fan site on the Internet, *The L-Space Web*, which includes a section for analytical Pratchett studies: essays, term papers, and academic theses.[3] Out of the 18 articles archived there, only one focuses explicitly on Pratchett's humor.[4]

Then there is an interdisciplinary collection of articles, *Discworld and the Disciplines: Critical Approaches to the Terry Pratchett Works* (2014), which includes six articles, and only one of them explicitly discusses Pratchett's humor.[5] The same book also contains an annotated critical bibliography that reviews 77 articles, chapters, and monographs, and 13 master's degree theses and dissertations. Out of these studies,

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[2] Andrew M. Butler's article "Theories of Humour" (2004), which introduces some of the commonly known humor theories, using examples lifted from the *Discworld* novels as illustrations.

[3] <https://www.lspace.org/books/analysis/index.html> [accessed 15 January 2023].

[4] Christopher Bryant's bachelor's thesis *Postmodern Parody in the Discworld Novels of Terry Pratchett* (1998), where he argues that parody makes Pratchett's fantasy postmodern.

[5] Gideon Haberkorn's "Debugging the Mind: The Rhetoric of Humor and the Poetics of Fantasy" (2014). Haberkorn has a similar approach to humor as I have in this study, and I will refer to his article in my analyses of Pratchett's comic imagery.

only one thesis seems to be primarily focused on Pratchett's humor.[6] Another collection of academic articles, *Terry Pratchett's Narrative Worlds: From Giant Turtles to Small Gods* (2018), includes two articles on Pratchett's humor.[7] I have also searched the archive of theses and dissertations published at Tampere University, where I found one master's thesis in English philology that studies Pratchett's humor.[8] In addition, I have found two articles on Pratchett's humor, published in journals.[9]

The above research suggests that there are only a few academic studies available that are primarily focused on Pratchett's humor, and thus it seems to me that the current dissertation is not only a contribution to the more general study of hyperdetermined humor; it also fills in a conspicuous gap in academic Pratchett studies.

In the rest of this introductory chapter, I will first introduce Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series, the literary source material for this study. Then I will present the theories of humor and narrative rhetoric that my analyses and interpretations of the poetics and rhetoric of Terry Pratchett's humor are based on, and at the end of this chapter I will outline the general structure of this dissertation.

1.1 Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels

Sir Terence David John Pratchett, an English author who is better known as Terry Pratchett, was born on 28th April 1948. Before he quit his daytime job to become a

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[6] Jen Crowe's *A War of Words: Humour in the Novels of Terry Pratchett* (2003). Unfortunately, this thesis is currently unobtainable, so I have not been able to read it.

[7] In his article "Seriously Relevant: Parody, Pastiche and Satire in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* Novels" (2018), Gideon Haberkorn argues that the pastiches of fantasy fiction in the early *Discworld* novels help Pratchett to create a world where he can employ sophisticated parody and satire later in the series. In the article "Where Discourse Meets Discworld: Labyrinths, Humour and the Neo-Baroque in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* Stories" (2018), Thomas Scholz argues that humor makes Pratchett's fantasy "neo-baroque" (which is Umberto Eco's term for the postmodern).

[8] Raisa Aromaa's *Humour in Terry Pratchett's Discworld Series – Application of Psychological and Linguistic Theories of Humor* (2011). This thesis first evaluates the sexual and aggressive content in Pratchett's humor and then applies two well-known linguistic theories of humor (the Semantic Script Theory of Humor and the General Theory of Verbal Humor) to Pratchett's comic ambiguity.

[9] The first article is Daniel Lüthi's "Toying with Fantasy: The Postmodern Playground of Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* Novels" (2014), which is focused on Pratchett's comic world-building and its effects on readers' willing suspension of disbelief. The second article is Caroline Duvezin-Caubet's "Elephants and Light Fantasy: Humour in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series" (2016), where she finds parallels between postmodernist ideas and Pratchett's parody and argues that Pratchett's "light fantasy", i.e. comic fantasy, is in fact "(en)light(ened) fantasy", since it educates readers and makes them laugh without ridiculing.

professional author (which happened after the third *Discworld* novel had been published), Pratchett had worked as a newspaper journalist (1965–1979) and as a publicity officer for the Central Electricity Generating Board, with responsibility for three nuclear power stations (1979–1987) (Burrows 2021; Smythe 2022). Pratchett is best known for the bestselling *Discworld* series of comic fantasy, which comprises 41 novels.[10] He has authored 59 books, of which 52 are novels, and co-authored 30 more.[11] Before Pratchett's death, the worldwide sales of his novels had reached over 90 million copies and his work had been translated into 37 languages (Smythe 2022). The *Discworld* novels have been bestsellers in the UK, anticipating the phenomenal international success of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* fantasy novels (1997–2007). *The Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of World Literature* claimed in 2009, after Rowling had surpassed Pratchett in book sales in the UK, that Pratchett is "the second-most-read author in England and the seventh-most-read non-American author in the United States" (Hacht et al. 2009, 1255). Pratchett's novels have been adapted as theater plays, comic books, radio broadcasts, television animations, television movies, and computer games. Pratchett was appointed OBE in 1998, and he was knighted in 2009 for services to literature. Pratchett was also conferred honorary degrees by various universities.

In December 2007, Terry Pratchett publicly announced that he had been diagnosed with a rare variant of Alzheimer's disease. Initially, the illness mainly affected Pratchett's hand-eye coordination, while his memory and mental acuity remained mostly unaffected for several years, which meant that Pratchett could still continue writing *Discworld* novels by means of dictation (Wilkins 2022, 374–375). Pratchett died on 12th March 2015 aged 66, and the last *Discworld* novel was published posthumously in August 2015.

Although the *Discworld* novels are typically categorized as fantasy, the comic element is so prevalent that they can be equally associated with the tradition of British comedy and humor. His biographer Rob Wilkins (2022, chapter 2) writes that as a young boy Pratchett was an avid and voracious reader. In the local library, he found bound copies of old *Punch* magazines, which introduced him to many

[10] It appears that the *Discworld* series is now completed, since the hard disk of Pratchett's computer, which contained all his unfinished novel manuscripts, has been destroyed, according to his last will, by running it over with a steamroller <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/aug/30/terry-pratchett-unfinished-novels-destroyed-streamroller> [accessed 15 January 2023].

[11] The copyright of the first two *Discworld* novels is assigned to Terry Pratchett alone, but from the third *Discworld* novel onwards, the copyright notice includes his wife, Lyn Pratchett, who has also been his business partner and personal assistant—her job was to manage Pratchett's diary and finances and to help in sorting the fan mail (Burrows 2021, 123). Terry Pratchett appears as the sole author on the covers of the *Discworld* novels.

humorous writers[12] and exposed him also to the special ways in which humorists see the world. According to Wilkins (ibid., 49), these magazines "were essentially an encyclopaedia of influences that would shape, in the first instance, Terry's journalism, but would for ever after feed his writing beyond that". Another source of inspiration for Pratchett as a writer was the famous wit G. K. Chesterton, who had lived in the same area where Terry Pratchett grew up: Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Wilkins (ibid., 57) states that Pratchett "would in due course take from Chesterton the notion that 'far more grotesque and wonderful than any wild, fantastical thing was anything that was every-day and un-regarded, if seen unexpectedly from a new direction' – a sentiment which was a clear touchstone for Terry's own writing". Wilkins (ibid., 171–172, 191) suggests also that Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1978)[13] played a formative role in Pratchett's decision to explore comic style of writing in the first *Discworld* novel, *The Colour of Magic* (1983).

Despite the fact that the *Discworld* novels are commonly conceived as a series, they do not build any overall narrative arch that would unite the series, as is the case, for instance, with J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels, where every new novel is a sequel to the previous novel. In contrast to this kind of series, each *Discworld* novel tells its own story, and the cast of characters tends to vary from one novel to another. There are several *Discworld* novels whose cast of characters do not appear in any other novels of the series, while in the novels which include recurring characters, there is, with some exceptions, usually not enough narrative continuity between the novels to make any novel a direct sequel to its predecessors.

However, there are a few recurring features that bring unity and continuity into the *Discworld* series. A prominent feature that is common to all *Discworld* novels is their setting—the story events take place on the flat, pizza-shaped Discworld, which is carried by four giant elephants and a galactic turtle. A similar world is depicted in the Hindu mythology. According to Marc Burrows (2021, 12, 88), Pratchett first saw a picture of this mythological world construction as a young boy in an astronomy book that he had borrowed from the library. He then recalled this image, much later on, when he began to design a fictional world that parodies fantasy fiction. The early novels in the *Discworld* series often begin with the narrator's description of the

[12] Among humorists who contributed to *Punch*, Wilkins mentions P. G. Wodehouse, Joyce Grenfell, Kingsley Amis, Quentin Crisp, Basil Boothroyd, Somerset Maugham, Geoffrey Willans, Ronald Searle, R. J. Yeatman, W. C. Sellar, Mark Twain, Jerome K. Jerome, Patrick Campbell, and Alan Coren.

[13] It was first published in 1978 as a radio broadcast on BBC Radio 4, and in the following year as a novel.

Discworld, but after about the tenth novel in the series, such descriptions disappear, which suggests that the stories that happened in the Discworld became more interesting than their bizarre setting. A distinguishing feature of the Discworld—when compared to typical fantasy worlds, whose medieval setting is specifically designed to exclude references to our modern culture—is that the Discworld frequently echoes the culture of our Roundworld[14], where the readers live. This cultural resonance between the two worlds is often, although not always, parodic or satiric.

The setting of the *Discworld* novels echoes the Sword & Sorcery and Heroic Fantasy types of fantasy fiction (Pringle 2002, 33–37). The Discworld is a fantasy world where magic exists as a natural resource, and the world is inhabited by the various kinds of fantasy creatures that are characteristic to the genre, such as trolls, dwarfs, and elves, as well as the human character types from fantasy role-playing games: wizards, warriors, assassins, etc. In the Discworld, there exists a gender-based division in the practice of magic: wizards are male, while witches are female. The character gallery of the *Discworld* novels includes also stereotypical creatures from horror fiction, such as vampires, werewolves, and zombies—although Pratchett rarely uses them for creating actual horror effects.

The earliest *Discworld* novels, published in the mid-1980s, pastiche and parody the popular fantasy literature of the latter half of the century, e.g., Fritz Leiber, Anne McCaffrey, Robert E. Howard, and Ursula Le Guin.[15] Some later novels contain occasional parodic allusions to such classics of fantasy literature as J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955) and L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900). Also, the very construction of the Discworld parodies the "secondary worlds" of fantasy, which exist as distinct from our actual world. Thus, the *Discworld* novels gained their fantasy setting largely via pastiche and parody of the fantasy

[14] The term "Roundworld" is introduced in *The Science of Discworld* (1999), where Pratchett's fiction chapters about the Discworld take turns with Ian Stewart's and Jack Cohen's factual chapters about the science of the real world. Roundworld is only mentioned in the four co-authored *Science of Discworld* books, but not in the *Discworld* novels. In the fiction chapters, Roundworld refers to a world that wizards have inadvertently created, which resembles the Earth, while in the factual chapters Roundworld mainly refers to our real world. In Pratchett studies, Roundworld is often used as a playful name for the real world, and in the current dissertation I will follow this convention.

[15] Gideon Haberkorn (2018, 140–142) argues that even though there are also occasional parodic elements in these fantasy allusions (as well as in various allusions to myths and fairy tales), they are mainly pastiches that help Pratchett to build a fantasy world that acts as the backdrop for his comedy.

genre, and this setting remained after the pastiches and parodies of specific fantasy texts had faded into the background.[16]

Recurring characters are another feature, in addition to the peculiar fantasy world setting, that provides unity and continuity to the series. Death—an anthropomorphic personification of the natural phenomenon—is the only character who appears in nearly all *Discworld* novels. In a couple of novels, Death is one of the protagonists, while his appearances in the other novels tend to be brief, as he welcomes to the afterlife the ghosts of characters who have just died. There are also other recurring characters: the wizards of Unseen University in the Discworld's greatest city, Ankh-Morpork; the witches of a small rural kingdom called Lancre; and the guards of Ankh-Morpork's City Watch. The *Discworld* series can be divided into sequences according to these recurring characters, so that the overall series can be understood to include the Wizards sequence, the Witches sequence, the City Watch sequence, the Death sequence (i.e., those novels where Death appears as a protagonist), and the non-sequence novels, where the stories are built around protagonists who do not appear in subsequent novels (Butler et al. 2004, x). In the later novels, there are two recurring protagonists who can be conceived to have their own sequences: a young witch named Tiffany Aching and a reformed conman, Moist von Lipwig. The Tiffany Aching sequence is an extension of the Witches sequence, and the protagonists of the main Witches sequence occasionally appear as minor characters in the Tiffany Aching novels, while the Moist von Lipwig sequence takes place in Ankh-Morpork and includes characters from the Wizards and City Watch sequences as minor characters.

Other characteristics that unify the *Discworld* series are the narrator's style and humorous tone, which remain largely similar throughout the series. However, the last few novels are written in a notably different style, as the narration becomes less vigorous and more rambling. This stylistic change appears to have been caused by Pratchett's illness, which compelled him to write exclusively via dictation (Burrows 2021, 249–250).[17] Also, the extravagant humor of the early novels becomes toned

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[16] In addition to Pratchett, the most well-known authors of modern comic fantasy novels are perhaps Piers Anthony, Tom Holt, and Cristopher Moore, while the list of other fantasy humorists include Robert Lynn Asprin, John DeChancie, Diana Wynne Jones, Jack Chalker, Esther Friesner, Craig Shaw Gardner, Mary Gentle, Andrew Harman, Dan McGirt, Robert Rankin, Collin Webber, and J.B. Priestley (D'Ammassa 2006, vi, 89; Langford 1997, 488).

[17] In his biography of Terry Pratchett, Rob Wilkins (2022, 288–289) reveals that Pratchett actually started to dictate parts of the novel to his personal assistant already when he was writing the twenty-sixth *Discworld* novel, *Thief of Time* (2001), and since then he wrote a major part of his books by dictation. *Unseen Academicals* (2009), the thirty-seventh *Discworld* novel, was the first novel that Pratchett, because of his deteriorating hand-eye coordination, wrote entirely via dictation (ibid., 374–375). After that

down in the latter half of the series, as darker themes (such as serial killers, colonial wars, ethnic discrimination, and terrorism) become increasingly prominent. In the latter half of the series, also a kind of technological revolution takes place in the Discworld, as Pratchett gradually develops the Discworld from a traditional medieval and magical fantasy world toward a more modern, steampunk-influenced fantasy world. However, I conceive this development as largely unrelated to Pratchett's humor, parody, and satire, because it seems to be motivated by Pratchett's admiration for skillfully built mechanical constructions and technological ingenuity rather than by satiric intent.

In this dissertation, I will confine my analysis to the early *Discworld* novels. Pratchett's comic techniques do not change notably from one novel to another, and after researching the first dozen or so novels, I found plenty of new comic examples from the subsequent novels, but hardly any new comic devices. Since the primary purpose of these early novels seems to be to amuse the reader rather than to comment on social problems or modernize the fantasy world, they tend to be funnier and contain more unrestrained comedy than the latter novels.

1.2 Poetics of humor

When scientists and philosophers discuss characteristics that distinguish humans from other animals, a sense of humor is one of the features that is often mentioned. Since the late 19th century, a sense of humor has become a cardinal virtue, a characteristic that everyone wants to have, while saying that someone lacks a sense of humor is one of the worst insults (R. A. Martin 2006, 24). However, this modern positive conception of humor is historically a recent development, since from Plato and Aristotle, via Hobbes, to the late 18th century, philosophers have almost unanimously considered laughter to express and be caused by aggression, ridicule, and feelings of superiority (ibid., 22). In a similar vein, laughter has been traditionally associated with numerous moral vices: insincerity, idleness, irresponsibility, hedonism, diminished self-control, hostility, foolishness, and fostering anarchy (Morreall 2009, 92).

John Morreall (2009, 91–110) argues that a sense of humor requires disengagement from our normal emotional and practical concerns, such as moral

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novel, Pratchett dictated four more *Discworld* novels: *I Shall Wear Midnight* (2010), *Snuff* (2011), *Raising Steam* (2013), and *The Shepherd's Crown* (2015). According to Wilkins (ibid., chapter 20), Pratchett had, due to his advancing illness, trouble putting together coherent plots for his last two novels, and he needed a lot of assistance in this respect from the editor of his publisher.

considerations and truthfulness, and he points out that this kind of disengagement can have harmful effects: irresponsibility, blocking compassion, and promoting prejudice. On the other hand, Morreall (ibid., 112–115) suggests that the same disengagement also gives humor the potential to foster some intellectual virtues. Since humorous playfulness has a close connection with creative thinking, he argues that humor tends to enhance our open-mindedness and creativity, and to foster our critical thinking by opening alternative viewpoints on familiar things. In addition, Morreall (ibid., 115–119) points out that the emotional disengagement of humor can promote moral virtues by reducing negative emotions that arise from our narrow and self-centered "here/now/me" perspective: fear, anger, impatience, intolerance, etc. In the following passage, Morreall summarizes his apology of humor:

> The basic value of amusement is that it allows us to transcend narrowly focused, emotional responses to situations, so that we think and act more rationally. […] [H]umor involves the ability to process our perceptions, memories, and imagined ideas in a way that rises above what is real, here, now, personal, and practical. That ability is not found in the lower animals, but evolved in humans as part of our rationality. (Morreall 2009, 112)

Considering the above perspectives on humor, I am inclined to think that humor in itself is neither moral nor immoral, but, rather, it can be used to promote different kinds of purposes and to produce various kinds of effects. In this sense, humor resembles rhetoric, which has been accused of immorality in a similar manner. In fact, it seems to me that nowadays humor is typically accused of immorality when it is used for rhetorical purposes. However, most theories of humor have focused on the causes of humor rather than its potential morality or immorality.

The multitude of humor theories, developed in various disciplines, are usually divided by humor researchers into three main categories, each of which reveal different perspectives to humor, depending on which specific part of the communicative situation their respective disciplinary approaches highlight: the communicator, the message, or the audience. Sociological humor theories emphasize the intentions of humorists, arguing that attitudes like aggression, hostility, superiority, and mocking are essential to humor. Textual-semantic humor theories highlight the semantic incongruities, conflicts, surprises, and exaggerations that one can find in humor texts. Psychological humor theories foreground the effects of humor on the audience: relief, a sense of humor, and the therapeutic value of humor as a coping strategy in stressful situations. In humor research, sociological humor theories are commonly called *superiority theories*, textual-semantic theories *incongruity theories*, and psychological theories *relief theories* (Critchley 2006, 2–3; Morreall 1983,

5–6). Many general humor theories, like Henri Bergson's (2000) philosophical observations on laughter, combine all three approaches.[18]

Incongruity is the necessary constituent that must be present in all humorous texts, since incongruity is the textual component that triggers the comic effect. But incongruity is also a highly problematic concept, because not all incongruities are comical. Humor theorists have strived to solve this problem by finding additional qualifications that are needed in order to make incongruities comical, such as suddenness and surprise (Chiaro 1992, 5). There is also another salient problem with the incongruity-based humor theories: a joke or a witty jest can produce laughter with one audience, while it can fail to produce the same effect with a different audience. Also, a repeated joke tends to lose its effect, because it is no longer surprising. Thus, there are many variants that contribute to what makes humor funny, and incongruity is just one of them. In this dissertation, I suggest that unusual viewpoints can be funny, but do repeated unusual viewpoints not become usual viewpoints? And if repetition takes the fun out of humor, why is it then that repetition is often pointed out as one of the strategies for creating humor?

My own approach to studying Terry Pratchett's humor takes advice from Aarne Kinnunen's (1994) conclusion that the fundamental causes of humor still remain an unresolved problem—I prefer to leave such problems to philosophers and psychologists. Instead, my dissertation focuses on the techniques and strategies of producing textual incongruities, the comic devices that can be analyzed with the analytical tools offered by literary studies and classical rhetoric.

Next, I will review some terminological controversies in humor theories—such as the umbrella terms for all amusing things and the distinction between humor and wit.

1.2.1 Laughter, humor, and wit

Perhaps the oldest term that humor theorists have used when talking about things that amuse us is "laughter"—or, at least, its equivalent terms in Greek and Latin. However, people sometimes laugh in situations where any kind of amusement is absent; for instance, we can respond with laughter when we are physically tickled. According to Freud (1960), laughter is connected to releasing various kinds of emotional tensions. But laughter can also result from aesthetic appreciation; for

[18] For the history of humor theories, see e.g., Morreall (1987), Butler (2004), R. A. Martin (2006), and Ermida (2008, 14–30).

example, a beautiful firework show can excite the watching audience to laugh and applaud. In general, it seems to me that we tend to smile and laugh to express feelings of pleasure and satisfaction, and humor is only one of the various pleasures that can make people laugh. Hence, associating laughter exclusively with comedy is somewhat misleading.

According to Isabel Ermida (2008, 3–4), the Central European tradition in philosophical aesthetics has used "the comic" as a general collective term for the things that cause laughter, while "humor" in this context is only considered one of the several elements of the comic, along with other related concepts, such as wit, sarcasm, satire, and irony. In this tradition, humor signifies specifically a cheerful attitude toward life and its imperfections. In contrast to this philosophical tradition, Ermida points out a more recent multidisciplinary Anglo-American research tradition, which treats "humor" as an umbrella term that covers all the phenomena that are considered amusing. In this newer tradition, one can talk about aggressive humor, while in the aesthetic-philosophical tradition one would not associate humor with anything aggressive; rather, one would use terms like "sarcasm" or "satire" instead. The word "humor" originally referred to the various bodily fluids that were identified as the causes for human moods and emotions. According to Ermida (ibid.), the modern association of the term "humor" with amusement only started to emerge in the 17th century, and it is therefore a relatively recent historical development.

In this study, I will discuss humor as a general category that includes terms like wit and irony, as well as forms of aggressive humor, but I still prefer to keep the term humor as a sub-category of the terms comedy and the comic. From a rhetorical perspective, it is not insignificant whether humor is understood by the audience as the speaker intends or not. If a speaker persuades the audience to laugh at the speaker's opponent, but the audience decides instead that the speaker is ridiculous, then the persuasion of the comic speech has clearly been unsuccessful. To emphasize this distinction, I will use the term "humor" to denote only intended comedy, while the term "comic" can, in this study, indicate both intended and unintended comedy. Hence, the joke-teller can be viewed as both comical and humorous, while the butt of the joke is comical but not humorous.

Unfortunately, terminological obscurity in studying literary humor is not limited to the decision of which umbrella term one should use—this controversy only marks a point of departure for further obscurities in terminology. Terms like "the ludicrous", "the laughable", and "the risible" have in literary studies been commonly used in the same sense as "the comic", although in the course of the 20th century,

they seem to have gradually disappeared from critical use, while "humor" as a critical term has changed its meaning and become synonymous with the comic. Yet another word, "wit", has been closely associated, and often contrasted, with the term "humor". "Wit" has historically signified the human faculty of intelligence, inventiveness, and mental acuity, but in the 16th and 17th centuries the term "came to be used also for ingenuity in literary invention, and especially for the ability to develop brilliant, surprising, and paradoxical figures of speech" (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 380).

At the beginning of the 19th century, "wit and humor were the two processes most often thought to produce laughter […], and both were subsumed under the terms of comedy […], the risible, and—most frequent of all—the ludicrous" (Martin 1974, 26). In the 19th-century Victorian culture and literary criticism, humor and wit were starkly contrasted; humor was seen as the emotional attitude that aims to evoke approval toward its target, while wit was seen as the emotionally indifferent and purely intellectual attitude that mocks its target in order to provoke laughter. In other words, humor was perceived as the comedy of warm and sympathetic emotions, while wit was understood as the comedy of cold and antipathetic intellect (ibid.).

M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham (2009, 381) observe that, in contemporary use, wit "denotes a kind of expression which is brief, deft, and intentionally contrived to produce a shock of comic surprise" and that this surprise "is usually the result of a connection or distinction between words or concepts which frustrates the listener's expectation, only to satisfy it in an unexpected way". Furthermore, Abrams and Harpham point out that humor can be expressed also in pictures, while wit is always verbal. They offer two examples of wit: the first example is an epigram, which uses the parallel structure of the *isocolon*[19]; in the second example, the humor of wit springs from a paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail structure that involves an unexpected change of perspective (ibid., 381–382). John Morreall's (1983, 72) prime example of wit is a hyperbolic simile. Thus, these theorists seem to associate comic wit with the kind of stylistic dexterity that can be described with rhetorical figures.

1.2.2 Ingredients of Terry Pratchett's witcraft

As I have outlined above, there are many possible approaches to studying humor. Instead of studying feelings of superiority or psychological mechanisms of comic

[19] Isocolon, literally "equal clauses", is the rhetorical figure for "[p]hrases of equal length and corresponding structure" (Lanham 1991, 93).

relief, I will explain Terry Pratchett's witcraft by pointing out various kinds of comic incongruities that I have detected in the *Discworld* novels. Consequently, my focus in this study will be on Pratchett's humorously unusual viewpoints, the comic devices that he deploys, and the hyperdetermined nature of his witcraft.

1.2.2.1 Unusual viewpoints

Perhaps we should consider the Victorian distinction between humor and wit not so much as mutually exclusive alternatives, but rather as two complementary sources of amusement. The concept of a warm-hearted humorous attitude can be conceived as the humorist's playful tendency to constantly seek ways to view the world from an unusual perspective, while the concept of intellectual wit can be readily associated with the stylistic and technical aspects of comedy, namely, comic devices. When humorists deliberately look for comically unusual viewpoints, this tends to foster creative thinking and create funny ideas, but these ideas become considerably funnier when they are delivered in a skillful way, by using witty comic devices. How humorists discover new comic ideas and humorous viewpoints is the subject matter more suitable for psychological humor research, but the technical aspects of verbal comedy can be studied with the tools of textual analysis.

It is not unusual to explain the distinctive character and attitude of humorists by stating that they view the world in a different way than other people. For example, in his short essay "A Note on Humour"[20], P. G. Wodehouse suggests that a humorist sees the world in a special way—and also that this characteristic leads other people to look at humorists in a particular way:

> In the sixteenth century they called humour 'a disorder of the blood', and though they were probably just trying to be nasty, it is not a bad description. It is, anyway, a disorder of something. To be a humourist you must see the world out of focus. You must, in other words, be slightly cock-eyed. This leads you to ridicule established institutions, and as most people want to keep their faith in established institutions intact, the next thing that happens is that you get looked askance at. Statistics show that 87.03 of today's askance looks are directed at humourists, for the solid citizenry suspect them and are wondering uneasily all the time what they are going to be up to next, like baby-sitters with charges who are studying to be juvenile delinquents. (Wodehouse 2007, 315)

[20] Published in *Plum Pie* (1966).

I believe that by "established institutions" Wodehouse here refers to our conventional ways of thinking, which humorists tend to ridicule and bring into disorder with their "cock-eyed" way of viewing the world. In Wodehouse's novel *Service with a Smile* (1961), we can find the following piece of dialogue, which exemplifies how a humorist sees the world out of focus:

> '[…] On no account mention Brazil to him, if you don't mind. It was the scene of the great tragedy in his life. His young wife fell into the Amazon and was eaten by an alligator.'
>
> 'How dreadful!'
>
> 'For her, yes, though not of course for the alligator. […]' (Wodehouse 2009, 53)

The main comic incongruity springs here from the introduction of an unusual viewpoint. The conventional viewpoint—that is, when we see the world in its customary and socially shared focus—would be that if someone's wife has been eaten by an alligator, that is a terrible and tragic accident. But the humor of this dialogue arises from Wodehouse's skewed "out of focus" insight that there is also another possible viewpoint on the tragedy, the alligator's perspective.

What makes Terry Pratchett's humorously unusual viewpoints particularly conspicuous is the setting of the *Discworld* novels—a fantasy world that mirrors our own world. This allows Pratchett to take modern cultural phenomena from our own world and represent them in a fantasy setting, which automatically creates an unusual perspective on these familiar phenomena. Thus, in *Moving Pictures* (1990), a Hollywood-like movie industry takes over the Discworld, while in *Reaper Man* (1991) and *Soul Music* (1994), the familiar cultural phenomena that suddenly appear in the Discworld are a modern shopping mall and rock music. In all these cases, the cultural phenomenon from our world is represented as a magical "wild idea" that enchants the Discworld's inhabitants to imitate the various cultural stereotypes that are typically associated with these phenomena. While this kind of cultural resonance is often parodical and satirical, the mere act of transferring various phenomena from our world to the Discworld is enough to create comically unusual viewpoints.

1.2.2.2 Comic devices and hyperdetermined humor

In addition to humorous viewpoints, the frequent deployment of comic devices is another essential part of Terry Pratchett's witcraft. However, I should perhaps point out that my approach to studying humor in this dissertation, where I map out a

specific humorist's poetics of humor by observing how he combines various comic devices, appears to be uncommon and exceptional in contemporary literary studies. A much more common approach is to focus on a particular humorous genre or type of discourse by picking up fitting examples from one or more humorists in order to illustrate the studied genre or discourse—such as irony, parody, satire, farce, slapstick, subversive humor, carnivalesque, grotesque humor, dark humor, scatological humor, nonsense, absurd humor, etc. (Laakso 2014, 37).

The trouble with studying combinations of numerous comic devices is that you first need to know them before they can be detected in novels, and since few theorists have tried to study comic devices systematically, humor theorists typically provide lists of comic devices that have little in common with similar lists provided by other theorists. In other words, the study of comic devices seems to be more art than science.[21] While preparing the current dissertation, I at first made extensive notes about all the bits that I found funny in a couple of *Discworld* novels, and then I tried to explain the humor in these funny bits by deploying the definitions of comic devices that I had found from various sources. I will point out some of these sources at the beginning of new chapters, when I introduce specific comic devices.

Arthur Asa Berger has gathered an impressive list of comic devices, which he sorts out into four categories: language (verbal humor), logic (ideational humor), identity (existential humor), and action (physical and nonverbal humor) (Berger 2017, 17). Berger remarks that the techniques he lists were elicited by making a content analysis of all kinds of humor in various media. This sorted list of 45 techniques of humor is as follows (ibid., 18):

Language: allusion, bombast, definition, exaggeration, facetiousness, insults, infantilism, irony, misunderstanding, over literalness, puns and word play, repartee, ridicule, sarcasm, satire.

Logic: absurdity, accident, analogy, catalogue, coincidence, disappointment, ignorance, mistakes, repetition, reversal, rigidity, theme/variation.

Identity: before/after, burlesque, caricature, eccentricity, embarrassment, exposure, grotesque, imitation, impersonation, mimicry, parody, scale, stereotype, unmasking.

Action: chase, slapstick, speed, time.

However, even though Berger claims that his list is exhaustive, it is hardly so. For instance, several rhetorical figures that Berger does not mention can be used as techniques of verbal comedy. Nevertheless, his lengthy list should illustrate the fact

[21] In this respect, the study of comic devices notably resembles the study of rhetorical figures—there are neither exhaustive lists nor generally accepted taxonomies of rhetorical figures.

that there are numerous comic devices that one can use to explain what makes a particular piece of comic discourse funny.

Berger does not explain what made him choose these four categories or why specific techniques should go into one category instead of another. This suggests that the categories are less important for Berger than the various techniques he has discovered. In this dissertation, I will sort Pratchett's comic devices into four categories (situational, contextual, structural, and stylistic humor), and I will argue that humor becomes both semantically richer and funnier when it combines comic devices from more than one of these categories.

Of course, analyzing humor by focusing on comic devices is not a new idea. Many of the comic devices that I will discuss in the current study have been listed already in an ancient manuscript on the poetics of comedy, *Tractatus Coislinianus*[22]. Phillip Harding provides a summary of the contents of this manuscript:

> Ancient theory divided humor into humor from speech and humor from action. The first category included figures of speech like the use of homonyms, synonyms or paronyms; simile and metaphor; manner of speech; parody, puns and specific or original word formations, like the diminutive. In tone, comic language was, on the whole, of the common sort. Humor of action (which also included subject-matter) involved deception (*apate*); assimilation from better to worse or vice versa […]; the impossible (*to adynaton*); the inconsequential; things contrary to expectation (*para prosdokian*) and the debasement of character. (Harding 1994, 197)

In chapters two and three of this dissertation, I will consider some of the comic devices that are here listed as "humor from action", while in chapter four I will discuss many of the rhetorical figures that are in *Tractatus Coislinianus* called "humor from speech". These are also the two categories of humor that can be found in most humor theories that attempt to sort out comic devices—Arthur Asa Berger, for instance, mentions language and action as categories of comic devices. In chapter two, I will discuss dramatic irony, where *deception* plays a role, absurd logic, which deals with *the impossible*, and *parody*. In chapter three, I will discuss bathos, which involves *assimilation from better to worse*, and paraprosdokian, or *things contrary to expectation*. Thus, several of the comic devices mentioned in *Tractatus Coislinianus* also appear frequently in the *Discworld* novels, which suggests that what makes people laugh has not changed much from ancient times to the modern day.

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[22] The manuscript known as *Tractatus Coislinianus* is a text from the early tenth century, outlining a theory of theatrical comedy. It is a copy of an older text from antiquity. Richard Janko (1984) argues that it represents the ancient Peripatetic conception of comedy and may even be based on the alleged lost Book Two of Aristotle's *Poetics*. For English translations, see Cooper 1922 and Janko 1984.

An important feature that is closely related to Pratchett's use of a multitude of comic devices is that his humor is often hyperdetermined. The concept of hyperdetermined humor has been introduced to humor studies by Salvatore Attardo, who defines it like this:

> We can define hyperdetermined humor as the presence of more than one active source of humor at the same time, or as the simultaneous activity of a given source of humor in different contexts. (Attardo 2001, 100)

Besides this definition, Attardo does not say much more about hyperdetermination, except the following brief observations when he concludes his analysis of humor in a quote from Thomas Love Peacock's novella *Nightmare Abbey* (1818):

> The general point about hyperdetermination that bears repeating here is that there are several sources of humor active at the same time: register humor, farcical humor, satire on the characters, and parody. The overall effect is rich humor, which it would be impossible to ascribe uniquely to any of the above sources alone. (Attardo 2001, 110)

Here Attardo points out four comic devices which contribute to the comic effect of the quoted passage at the same time. In this dissertation, I will use the term "hyperdetermination" to describe similar passages from the *Discworld* novels where several comic devices are deployed in combination. As Attardo aptly observes above, hyperdetermined humor is typically richer than the kind of simpler humor that builds its comedy on a single source of humor, and I would add that such hyperdetermined humor is also more challenging to analyze than simpler humor. In my analyses of Pratchett's hyperdetermined humor, I will argue that the humor becomes semantically richer especially when comic devices from more than one of the following categories of humor are combined: situational, contextual, structural, and stylistic.

Throughout this dissertation, I will complement my analyses of Pratchett's humor with rhetorical interpretations of the *Discworld* novels, and therefore I will now proceed to outline my understanding of how classical rhetoric can be applied to interpreting literary fiction in general, and especially humorous literature.

1.3 Rhetoric of evaluative attitudes

Are there any elements that can be conceived as rhetorical in fictional novels? If there are, how does this kind of "rhetoric of fiction" or "narrative rhetoric" differ

from the classical rhetoric, which is focused on public speeches rather than fictional narratives? In this chapter, I will attempt to answer these questions, and in the following chapters I will occasionally complement my analyses of Terry Pratchett's witcraft with rhetorical interpretations of the analyzed passages. The narrative rhetoric that I will apply in my interpretations consists of several key components: the classical definition of rhetoric as persuasive evaluation; three story components that arouse the reader's literary interest (the characters' emotional responses, cultural resonance, and authorial designs); narrative and authorial audiences; and rhetorical figures. I will discuss these components below, and, to begin with, I will first define what I mean by the term "rhetoric" in the current dissertation.

1.3.1 The classical idea of rhetoric as persuasive evaluation

While the contemporary uses of the term "rhetoric" vary greatly, my own understanding of rhetoric can be described as neoclassical, since I agree with the classical view that the essence of rhetoric lies in persuasive evaluation—how speakers use words evaluatively to praise or blame, i.e., to represent things either in a positive or negative light in order to guide their audience's attitudes of approval and disapproval.

Originating in ancient Greece and Rome, classical rhetoric is a system that has been devised to teach orators and writers how to compose persuasive speeches and written texts, and in this role, rhetoric has influenced the teaching and studying of writing in European culture for about two and a half millennia. The rhetorical approach has been an integral component of literary studies from the very beginning, as exemplified by such studies as Aristotle's *Poetics* (*Peri Poietikes*, c. 335 BCE) and Longinus's *On the Sublime* (*Peri Hypsous*, 1st century CE). *Poetics* points out a rhetorical function for tragedy, *catharsis*, and *On the Sublime* deals with rhetorical figures found in poetry, arguing that the rhetorical function of poetry is to arouse pathos in the audience.

Classical definitions of rhetoric tend to equate it, explicitly or implicitly, with persuasion, which can be understood as the power or ability to influence the audience's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. According to George Kennedy (2001), the term "rhetoric" first appeared in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias* (c. 380 BCE), where Socrates describes it pejoratively as a form of flattery. In this dialogue, Socrates engages in a dispute with Gorgias, a famous sophist, who defines rhetoric as the "worker of persuasion" (Kennedy 2001, 3). The pertinent Greek words in the

dialogue are *peithous demiourgos*, which literally means "the worker of Peitho". Peitho was the Greek goddess of persuasion, and, as a daughter of Aphrodite, she was associated with the seductive power of speech (Kennedy 1994, 12–13). Thus the ancient Greeks, and especially such professional teachers of rhetoric as Gorgias, conceived rhetorical persuasion as analogous to verbal seduction. The sophist Isocrates used the same definition as Gorgias (Burke 1969, 49).

In his extant speeches, Gorgias can be conceived to build a bridge between rhetoric and prose poetry, since he was famous for the poetical style of his speeches. Some of the stylistic devices that Gorgias used frequently have been subsequently labeled as "Gorgianic devices": phrases and clauses with contrasting thought (*antithesis*) that were often of equal length (*parison*), rhyme at the end of clauses (*homoeteleuton*), and constant play on the sounds and double meanings of words (*assonance*, *paronomasia*) (Kennedy 1994, 20). In one of his few surviving speeches, *Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias defends Helen of Troy by arguing that she was unable to resist Paris because she was overcome by the seductive power of speech, which Gorgias compares to witchcraft and medicine. Thus, Gorgias's speech in fact becomes an encomium for the persuasive power of speech:

> Divine sweetness transmitted through words is inductive of pleasure, reductive of pain. Thus, by entering into the opinion of the soul the force of incantation is wont to beguile and persuade and alter it by witchcraft, and the two arts of witchcraft and magic are errors of the soul and deceivers of opinion. […] The power of speech has the same effect on the condition of the soul as the application of drugs […] to the state of bodies; for just as different drugs dispel different fluids from the body, and some bring an end to disease but others end life, so also some speeches cause pain, some pleasure, some fear; some instill courage, some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion. (Aristotle 1991, 286–287)

It is easy to see that this classical understanding of rhetoric as persuasive evaluation is drastically different from some contemporary literary theories, where rhetoric is treated as synonymous with communication. For instance, when James Phelan (2005, 18) defines narrative rhetoric as "somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened", he merely adds "some occasion" and "some purpose(s)" to the communicative model of reading literature. In the classical tradition, the purpose of rhetoric is persuasion, and changing this persuasion to some undefined purpose dilutes rhetoric, which Gorgias praises for its mesmerizing effects on the audience, to mere purposeful communication of narrative information. However, in this dissertation I will understand narrative rhetoric in a way that agrees with the classical definition of rhetoric, as the author's

attempt to influence the reader's emotional attitudes by representing things evaluatively, in a positive or negative light.

The idea of rhetoric as persuasive evaluation was not confined to the sophists alone; it also dominated the views of the classical theorists of rhetoric. Aristotle (1991, 1355b) defines rhetoric as "an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion". Furthermore, Aristotle points out three primary means of persuasion: *ethos* (character of the speaker), *pathos* (emotions that the speech aims to arouse in the audience), and *logos* (argumentation of the speech). Cicero (2006) defines rhetoric as "speech designed to persuade", and Kenneth Burke (1969, 49–55) argues that also the later classical rhetoricians, such as Quintilian and Augustine, based their definitions of rhetoric on the idea of persuasion—if not explicitly, then at least implicitly.

The three branches of rhetorical speeches in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1991, 1358b)—deliberative, judicial, and demonstrative—are all based on the idea of representing something either approvingly or disapprovingly. In deliberative (or legislative) speeches, the rhetorician looks to the future and aims to represent a particular course of action as a positive one while representing the opposing views negatively. In judicial (or forensic) speeches, the rhetorician acts in the role of an attorney and, speaking of past events, tries to represent the client in a positive light and the opponent in a negative light. In demonstrative (or ceremonial) speeches, the rhetorician speaks of present issues and either praises or blames them. Although this list hardly exhausts all the possible types of rhetorical speech, it gives us a general idea of how rhetoric was conceived by Aristotle.

In this dissertation, I argue that the classical understanding of rhetoric as persuasive evaluation can be applied in literary studies by asking how the author guides the reader's approval and disapproval toward the novel's characters, events, and ideas.

1.3.2 Ingredients of narrative rhetoric

As I mentioned above, Aristotle identifies in his treatise on rhetoric three means of persuasion—*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*—and defines rhetoric as the ability to detect and use them in composing speeches. Literary scholars—such as Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth, and James Phelan—have conceived additional means of persuasion, which

are more specific to literature and other forms of narrative fiction.[23] Later in this dissertation, when I study the rhetorical aspects of Pratchett's humor in the *Discworld* novels, I will apply the insights of these scholars.

1.3.2.1 Literary interests: means of narrative rhetoric

In *Counter-Statement* (1931), Kenneth Burke discusses narrative rhetoric as the "formal appeal in literature"—that is, as the ability of narrative fiction to arouse the reader's emotions and anticipations, which are guided by authorial designs. Hence, Burke (1968, 124) defines the literary form as "an arousing and fulfillment of desires": "A work has form in so far as one part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence." This authorial guidance of readerly expectations creates narrative tensions, and readers will quickly lose their interest in a literary work that lacks such tensions. Burke distinguishes five types of forms in literature: the progressive form (divided into syllogistic and qualitative progressions), the repetitive form, the conventional form, and minor forms. By minor forms, Burke alludes to rhetorical figures: tropes and schemes (ibid., 124–128). Although Burke uses abstract concepts that can be applied to many things, his literary analyses in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941) suggest that his main concern in literary forms are themes and thematic motifs.

Another literary scholar, Wayne Booth, states in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) that "[e]very literary work of any power […] is in fact an elaborate system of controls over the reader's involvement and detachment along various lines of interests", and he argues that at the heart of such powerful literary works lies "some kind of interest that will grasp and sustain the reader throughout the work" (Booth 1983, 123–124). Booth lists three types of literary interests: (1) intellectual or cognitive, (2) qualitative or aesthetic, and (3) practical or human. He points out (ibid., 124–125) that these three types of literary interest resemble Kenneth Burke's five literary forms, but he also argues that interests differ from forms because forms are built upon interests. Burke's literary forms correspond especially with Booth's aesthetic interests, and perhaps to some extent also with the intellectual interests, although not with the human interests. Burke's writings are focused on stylistic patterns and thematic motifs, while Booth also considers the perspective of the common reader, who is

[23] For an overview of the current rhetorical theories of narrative, see Markku Lehtimäki's study *Sofi Oksasen romaanitaide* (2022), where he applies and develops Booth's and Phelan's ideas.

more likely to be more interested in the verisimilitude of characters and the story world than in aesthetic patterns.

James Phelan (1996, 18) has acknowledged that his rhetorical approach is indebted to both Burke and Booth. This influence shows especially in Phelan's conception of the three rhetorical components of narratives, which he first introduces in *Reading People, Reading Plots* (1989). In *Living to Tell about It* (2005), he summarizes them:

> [A]udiences develop interests and responses of three broad kinds, each related to a particular component of the narrative: mimetic, thematic, and synthetic. Responses to the mimetic component involve an audience's interest in the characters as possible people and in the narrative world as like our own. Responses to the thematic component involve an interest in the ideational function of the characters and in the cultural, ideological, philosophical, or ethical issues being addressed by the narrative. Responses to the synthetic component involve an audience's interest in and attention to the characters and to the larger narrative as artificial constructs. (Phelan 2005, 20)

Phelan's mimetic story component corresponds with Booth's human interests (characters considered as similar to real people and the story world considered as resembling the real world), and his thematic component resembles Booth's intellectual interests, while the synthetic component carries the same general idea as Booth's aesthetic interests (story elements considered as components in a work of art, designed by the author). As Phelan (1989, 12–13) points out, we can distinguish the characters' mimetic component from the thematic by considering whether the character is represented as an individual or as a representative of a group, institution, or idea.

In the course of this dissertation, I will adapt Booth's and Phelan's ideas about literary interests and rhetorical story components, with my own accentuation. Of the various possible mimetic components, I will focus especially on the characters' *emotional responses*, which create psychological plausibility by making the characters resemble real people. Of the ideational (or thematic) components, I will point out and discuss various intertextual and contextual allusions[24] to our Roundworld, since while such *cultural resonance* makes the fantasy world familiar and interesting to readers, it also invites us to reconsider the familiar phenomena of our own culture from a fresh, and often comical, perspective. Of the synthetic components, I will pay attention to *authorial designs*, such as comic devices and humorous viewpoints,

[24] In his study on Terry Pratchett's, Philip Pullman's, and China Miéville's politics, Andrew Rayment (2014) applies the theory and terminology of conceptual metaphors and accordingly discusses the cultural resonance between the Discworld and the real world in terms of "domain mapping" and allusions as "metaphorical elements".

and considering what kinds of humorously unconventional viewpoints toward familiar cultural phenomena there are in the *Discworld* novels connects these authorial designs with cultural resonance.

Cultural resonance can be conceived as a rhetorical story component, because while discovering our Roundworld's familiar cultural phenomena in the Discworld makes the fantasy world more interesting, viewing the familiar things from a fresh and humorously unconventional viewpoint also invites us to reevaluate the familiar phenomena. Morreall (2009, 112–113) has argued that the alternative perspectives of humor can foster the audience's critical thinking, while Gideon Haberkorn (2014) suggests that the rhetoric of humor consists of this kind of critical thinking, "debugging the mind", in which the comically alternative viewpoints persuade the reader to participate.

Another literary interest, the characters' emotional reactions, creates a sense that fictional characters are like real people. By making the characters more interesting, emotional reactions invite the reader to identify with the characters and to care what happens to them in the story. However, in order to be psychologically plausible, these reactions must resemble the typical reactions of real people. Plausible emotional reactions also often motivate the characters' actions, which further increases the sense of verisimilitude.

Michael Barrier recounts in *Hollywood Cartoons* (1999, 109–152, 193–234) that when the animators at the Walt Disney Productions studio were creating *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in the 1930s, their aim was to maintain the audience's prolonged interest through a full-length animated movie. For this purpose, the Disney animators gave their animated characters faces that can express emotions. When compared to the preceding Disney animations, where the characters' facial expressions rarely change, the difference is striking. This artistic device, expressive face, reveals the animated characters' feelings and emotions in a way that makes them alive and persuades the audience to identify with the characters. As Barrier (ibid.) points out, when the animated characters' emotional reactions, represented in facial expressions, are appropriate both to the situation and to the characters' own personality traits, it creates the illusion that the characters become alive. This, of course, applies equally to the characters in fictional novels, although literature has other ways to describe the characters' emotional reactions.

Four volumes of Terry Pratchett's early writings, children's stories that he wrote for the local newspaper during the latter half of the 1960s (Cabell 2012, 10), have

been published in recent years.[25] Although Pratchett's wildly associating imagination and humorous viewpoints to familiar things can be found already in these stories, I have noticed that their style is very different from the *Discworld* novels. Although the characters in these early stories go through exciting adventures, they rarely respond emotionally to the story events and situations in which they participate. In contrast, the *Discworld* novels are filled with emotional intensity, and the narrator constantly offers detailed descriptions of the characters' emotional reactions, often by deploying vivid imagery. Consequently, the characters in the *Discworld* novels are much more lifelike and interesting than the characters in these early stories.

The distinction between the authorial and narrative audiences, which I will discuss next, can also be conceived as the distinction between an immersive and critical way of reading. This division allows me to distinguish the author's rhetoric from the narrator's rhetoric and the author's humor from the narrator's humor.

1.3.2.2 Two hypothetical audiences: authorial and narrative

In his book on narrative conventions, *Before Reading* (1987), Peter Rabinowitz outlines two possible ways of reading, which he bases on two hypothetical audience conceptions: authorial and narrative audiences. Rabinowitz (1987, 20–21) distinguishes these audiences from the actual audience, flesh-and-blood people, by stating that authors design their books rhetorically for a more or less specific hypothetical audience, which he calls the "authorial audience". He argues that while the concept of authorial audience is tied to authorial intention, it is not a matter of individual psychology but, rather, of a social convention (ibid., 22). According to Rabinowitz, reading as an authorial audience is the dominant literary convention in our culture—readers tend to look for authorial meanings from novels, and authors design their novels according to the same convention. In a similar manner, we academic writers tend to assume that readers follow this convention and try to understand the authorial meanings of our articles and research papers (ibid., 30). Furthermore, authorial reading can be seen as the necessary precondition for many other kinds of readings, which go against the grain and seek to challenge authorial meanings (ibid., 32).

Rabinowitz also conceives of another hypothetical audience in addition to the authorial audience: the "narrative audience". He argues for the necessity of this

[25] *Dragons at Crumbling Castle* (2014), *The Witch's Vacuum Cleaner* (2016), *Father Christmas's Fake Beard* (2017), and *The Time-travelling Caveman* (2020).

additional audience concept by pointing out that novels are always representational—they "appear to be something that they are not". Consequently, "the aesthetic experience of such works exists on two levels at once", and "events that are portrayed must be treated as both true and untrue at the same time" (ibid., 94). Rabinowitz argues that in order to read a novel, the actual audience—flesh-and-blood readers—must do more than join the authorial audience; we must also become members of the narrative audience to whom the narrator speaks. He further explains that this hypothetical audience is different from the narratological concept of narratee, the person whom the narrator addresses, because the narrative audience is a role that the text forces the reader to adopt, while the same is not true with the narratee. Rabinowitz distinguishes the two hypothetical audiences by concluding that "the authorial audience knows it is reading a work of art, while the narrative audience believes what it is reading is real" (ibid., 100).

I think that Rabinowitz's distinction between the authorial and the narrative audience acts as an analytical description of the more familiar distinction between the critical and the immersive way of reading, while it also helps us to distinguish between the rhetorical roles that the author and the narrator play in novels. The author's role is to be responsible for all the artistic designs of the novel, while the narrator's role is to establish and maintain the reader's willing suspension of disbelief. There are, of course, self-reflexive and metafictional novels that intentionally destroy our willing suspension of disbelief. Such novels foreground the author's role by shifting some of the author's responsibility to the narrator.

In the *Discworld* novels, the narrator can be easily associated with the author, although I conceive of Terry Pratchett the author—planning and designing the stories—and Pratchett the narrator—bringing the stories to life with his telling—as two distinct roles. Consequently, in many analyses of Terry Pratchett's witcraft in this dissertation I will distinguish the author's humor from the narrator's humor according to which of these two hypothetical audiences the reader attends: in the narrative audience we can enjoy the narrator's humor, while in the authorial audience new levels of humorous meanings become available to us. I have not seen Rabinowitz's audience conceptions applied in humor research before the current dissertation, so demonstrating how the author's humor can be distinguished from the narrator's humor is one of the contributions of this dissertation to the academic study of humor in literature.

1.3.2.3 Rhetorical figures: comic devices with rhetorical functions

In addition to rhetoric understood as persuasive evaluation, literary interests, and the two hypothetical audiences, my conception of narrative rhetoric includes rhetorical figures. Style is an important aspect of both narrative discourse and verbal wit, and classical rhetoric provides conceptual tools for studying it: rhetorical figures. Literary scholars have found rhetorical figures useful for describing poetic language, and there has been a growing interest toward one specific trope, the metaphor, in linguistics and literary studies due to a recent interest in the "conceptual metaphor"[26]. In literary studies, the conceptual metaphor has been welcomed as a method of interpretation that allows critics to reveal hidden themes from literary texts by "mapping" the underlying semantic sources of literary metaphors.

Some contemporary rhetoricians have suggested that rhetorical figures can carry expressive and argumentative functions. Thomas Conley (2004, 277) describes rhetorical figures as "subtly argumentative", and Brian Vickers (2002, 294–339) argues for the expressive functions of rhetorical figures. In her study on Shakespeare's use of rhetorical figures, Sister Miriam Joseph (2005) foregrounds the persuasive and argumentative nature of rhetorical figures by associating rhetorical figures with the classical strategies of argument called "commonplaces" (*topoi*, *loci*).

Arguing on a more philosophical level, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (2003) have suggested that the metaphor is a basic mechanism in language and thinking. In a similar manner, Jeanne Fahnestock (1999) argues that rhetorical figures like *antithesis* (juxtaposition of opposites), *incrementum* and *gradatio* (cumulation), *antimetabole* (reciprocal inversion), *ploche* (repetition), and *polyptoton* (recurrence of the same root in various forms) represent common strategies of reasoning and epitomize fundamental mental operations, and that rhetorical figures should for this reason be given a central place in rhetorical theory.

Accordingly, I will not only study how Pratchett uses rhetorical figures as comic devices, but I will also examine the possible expressive and argumentative functions of rhetorical figures by discussing how Pratchett uses them for affecting the reader's approval and disapproval. I will also study the mental operations that some rhetorical figures are designed to evoke in the reader—for example, how metaphors and similes bring abstract things before our eyes, how personifications project human qualities onto non-human entities, and how the comic mental associations that analogies (similes, metaphors, and hyperboles) produce differ from—but also resemble—the mental associations produced by wordplay. In addition, this dissertation aims to

[26] See Lakoff & Johnson 2003.

demonstrate that classical rhetorical figures can serve as analytical tools for describing many comic devices, which is a function rarely noticed in books that study and theorize rhetorical figures.

I have discussed above several theories about poetics of humor and narrative rhetoric, which form the theoretical foundation for my study of Pratchett's humor and rhetoric in the *Discworld* novels. I will now conclude this introductory chapter by outlining the structure of the current dissertation.

1.4 Outline of this dissertation

After this introductory chapter (chapter 1), there are three chapters of text analysis (chapters 2, 3, and 4), and the dissertation ends with my conclusions on what makes Terry Pratchett's witcraft funny (chapter 5).

In the three text analysis chapters, I will study Pratchett's humorous viewpoints (chapter 2), his playing with the reader's expectations (chapter 3), and his figurative wit (chapter 4). In each of these text analysis chapters, I will analyze Pratchett's comic devices using numerous quotes from the *Discworld* novels, and I will also point out humorously unusual viewpoints and rhetorically evaluative attitudes whenever I can find them in the analyzed quotes. My main focus in this dissertation will be on analyses of Pratchett's hyperdetermined humor, which consists of combining various comic devices, and I have chosen the quotes and arranged the structure of the dissertation with this focus in mind. Detecting comically unusual perspectives and rhetorical representations serve the purpose of adding culturally contextualizing interpretations to my analyses.

The idea behind the order of the text analysis chapters is twofold. First, it resonates with the three main parts of classical rhetorical compositions: *invention* (finding the available means of persuasion), *arrangement* (structure of the speech), and *style* (which includes the use of rhetorical figures). Since my conception of narrative rhetoric is based on the classical idea of rhetoric as persuasive evaluations, I think that it is appropriate to reflect these classical roots also in the structure of this dissertation.

Secondly, there is a deliberate movement in my dissertation from the general and global level of situational and contextual humor, via the technical aspect of structural arrangements, to the specific and local level of language and style. While humorous viewpoints can be found in all kinds of comic devices, they can perhaps be most easily discerned in the situational and contextual comic devices that play with the

characters' ignorance, paradoxical reasoning, and cultural clichés (chapter 2). Structural comic devices that play with the reader's expectations (chapter 3) rely on the arrangement of discourse for their comic effects, while figurative wit (chapter 4) consists of the stylistic devices of verbal play that mostly take place within one or two sentences. Furthermore, the resulting taxonomy of comic devices helps me to explain how Pratchett combines different levels of humor in his hyperdetermined witcraft: situational, contextual, structural, and stylistic.

In chapter 2, I will discuss four comic devices where the humor arises from comically unusual viewpoints: dramatic irony, absurd logic, parody, and satire. Dramatic irony creates humor by inviting the reader to view an ignorant character's situational irony from a perspective that is epistemically superior to the character's point of view. In absurd logic, comical situations are created by applying paradoxical reasoning, which makes the impossible seem possible. In the *Discworld* novels, parody and satire provide humorously unusual viewpoints on familiar things, such as cultural clichés, by making the fantasy world resonate intertextually and culturally with our Roundworld. Consequently, I will call dramatic irony and absurd logic situational comic devices, while parody and satire are contextual comic devices.

In chapter 3, I will discuss four structural comic devices, where the comedy results from the arrangement of discourse and the order of representation: paraprosdokian, bathos, running gags, and comic footnotes. Paraprosdokian works by establishing an unexpected twist-in-the-tail, which forces us to reinterpret what has just been said, and thus it exemplifies the joke structure where the setup leads us to expect one thing, but the punch line disappoints this expectation. Bathos or stylistic anticlimax tends to disappoint our conventional expectations by sinking things that usually soar. Running gags, which are known in Pratchett's fandom as "figgins", both create and disappoint the reader's expectations via repetition. Comic footnotes can also be viewed as a structural comic device, since they interrupt the narrative flow in order to introduce comic asides. In the *Discworld* novels, this structural feature of footnotes can occasionally imitate extended stand-up comedy gags called "tags" or "tag lines", where several punch lines follow one another.

In chapter 4, I will discuss some stylistic comic devices that can be described with traditional rhetorical figures: verbal images, wordplay, and euphemisms. Of the comic imagery in the *Discworld* novels, I will take a detailed look at hyperboles, metaphors, similes, and personifications, and I will also discuss several types of comic wordplay: paronomasia, antanaclasis, colliding metaphorical and literal senses, portmanteaux, and bilingual puns. Of Pratchett's comic euphemisms, I will analyze some humorous circumlocutions for excrement and sex, and I will end this last text

analysis chapter by studying a case where euphemisms are used for rhetorical purposes.

2 SITUATIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL HUMOR: UNUSUAL VIEWPOINTS ON FAMILIAR THINGS

In this text analysis chapter, I will explore four comic devices that Terry Pratchett often deploys for introducing humorous viewpoints in the *Discworld* novels: dramatic irony, absurd logic, parody, and satire. Since literary critics have not always agreed on how such comic devices as irony, parody, and satire should be distinguished from each other, or from other related literary devices, I will also examine whether Pratchett's novels, which frequently put these devices into practice, can be used for refining the theorists' deliberations.

Furthermore, I will argue in my rhetorical interpretations that viewpoints are inherently rhetorical and evaluative, because they can be used to foreground some aspects of the rhetorical situation while excluding or concealing other aspects. Thus, analyzing humor that is based on evaluative viewpoints should reveal Pratchett's rhetorical attempts to influence the reader's attitudes.

2.1 Dramatic irony: superior viewpoint

Dramatic irony is but one of the numerous ironies, although it can be argued that dramatic irony is the most commonly used type of irony and also a fundamental narrative device in fiction. In addition to the classical *verbal irony*, irony as a trope, modern theorists have also distinguished various kinds of *situational ironies*, and dramatic irony belongs to this latter group. As a rhetorical trope, the definition and meaning of irony is relatively clear and simple: implying the opposite of what is explicitly stated. In literary studies, however, the concept of irony is neither clear nor simple. D. C. Muecke (1982, 7) summarizes this state of affairs by stating that the concept of irony is "vague, unstable and multiform", and that the "different phenomena the word is applied to may seem very tenuously related". Because literary critics and scholars have used the single term "irony" to describe various kinds of oppositions, juxtapositions, reversals, and incongruities, the theoretical attempts to clarify and explain the concept of irony have spawned a "cottage industry in taxonomy" (Hutcheon 2005, 3).

Muecke (1982, 15–16) points out that the ancient Greeks used the word *eironeia* in a different sense than the Romans used the equivalent terms *dissimulatio* and *ironia*, even though they all carry similar denotations of dissimulation, pretense, and deception. For the Greeks, eironeia signified the characteristic behavior of a stock character in comedies, the self-deprecating dissimulator *eiron*, who was set against the boastful dissimulator *alazon* (Frye 1973, 40). The eiron pretends to be less intelligent than he or she really is, and thus Socrates in Plato's dialogues could be described as an eiron. This original Greek meaning of irony has been preserved in modern times in the term "Socratic irony".

While the Greek concept of eironeia refers to deceptive behavior, it was the Roman rhetoricians, such as Cicero and Quintilian, who started using irony as a rhetorical term that describes a specific way to use language. Quintilian (2001, 9.2.44) offers the classical definition of irony as a trope: "we are asked to understand the opposite of what is said". The "we are asked" refers to an implicit—not explicit—request, and this implied request is a crucial part of the definition because it distinguishes irony from lying, where the speaker attempts to hide from the audience the discrepancy between what is said and what is intended. In novels, an ironic intention in the narrator's discourse is typically only revealed to the reader by some apparent incompatibility—a strong contrast or contradiction. Hence, the actual implied meanings of verbal irony are always contextual, and their detection and understanding depends on the reader's interpretative skills (Colebrook 2004, 11–12).

Irony as a rhetorical trope remained the principal understanding of the term for nearly two thousand years, and this meaning still exists as the primary denotation of irony in contemporary dictionaries. According to Muecke (1982, 16–18), the word "irony" did not appear in the English language until 1502, and it only came into general use in literary criticism in the early 18th century. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, with the rise of Romanticism, irony was given several new meanings, which eventually led to the contemporary "cottage industry in taxonomy". Muecke (ibid., 15) calls our attention to the fact that the word "irony" and the concepts that have been attached to it are separate things. Verbal irony, situational irony, Socratic irony, dramatic irony, irony of actions, irony of fate, cosmic irony, structural irony, etc.—all these phenomena existed before they were labeled ironies, and people also responded to them before these phenomena had been named. In some cases, new names have been invented for phenomena that were formerly discussed in terms of irony—for instance, the term "romantic irony" is nowadays seldom used, since the self-reflexive literary phenomenon it denotes can be explained by using the more general term "metafiction".

All the non-classical forms of irony can be classified under the general term "situational irony", in order to contrast them with verbal irony. "Dramatic irony", as the name suggests, is a narrative device that is frequently used in drama. It can be tragic or comic, and it is not restricted to theaters—it is also a common narrative device in novels. While the eiron of Socratic irony only pretends ignorance, dramatic irony involves a character who actually is ignorant of some facts that the author shares with the audience. This ignorance leads the character to act in a way that is inappropriate to the situation (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 167). "Structural irony" involves a structural feature that sustains the irony throughout the work. This structural feature is often the naïve hero whose actions are inappropriate to the situation, and thus structural irony resembles dramatic irony. Dramatic irony can be incidental, especially in the case of comic dramatic irony, but it turns into structural irony when it is sustained through the work (ibid., 166). In the "irony of fate", a deity or the personified fate is represented as deliberately manipulating events in order to lead the character to false hopes and to frustrate and mock the character's aspirations (ibid., 166). "Cosmic irony" is largely synonymous with the irony of fate, and both terms can also be used in cases where there is no personified actor manipulating the human fates and fortunes, but where some meaning or design beyond human powers nevertheless seems to undercut the character's plans and actions (Colebrook 2004, 13).

Most literary critics treat dramatic irony primarily as a theatrical device,[27] while acknowledging that the concept can also be adapted to other genres of fiction, such as novels. Dramatic irony is also frequently equated with tragic dramatic irony, although critics occasionally notice that dramatic irony can also be used as a comic device. As I will demonstrate in my discussion of the examples from the *Discworld* novels below, this critical preoccupation with theater and tragedy can become problematic when one considers dramatic irony as a comic device in novels.

Abrams and Harpham define dramatic irony in a way that can be applied to theater as well as to novels, and also to both tragedies and comedies:

> Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant; in that situation, the literary character unknowingly acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what we know that fate holds in store, or says something that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way that the character intends. […] A comic example of dramatic irony is the scene in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (II.v.) in which Malvolio struts and preens in anticipation of a good fortune that the

[27] See, for instance, Colebrook 2004, 13–15 and Muecke 1982, 81–82.

> audience knows is based on a fake letter; the dramatic irony is heightened for the audience by Malvolio's ignorance of the presence of the hidden hoaxers, who gleefully comment on his incongruously complacent speech and actions. (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 167)

Here the reader's superior knowledge of a character's ignorance is introduced as the primary element of dramatic irony, but then Abrams and Harpham point out other elements that also seem to be important to the definition. The reader's awareness of a character's ignorance is not in itself enough to make the situation ironic—there also needs to be an element of situational irony in the character's actions or speech. This situational irony becomes dramatic irony when the author invites the reader to view it from an epistemically superior position. Abrams and Harpham's example of comic dramatic irony suggests that, unlike tragic dramatic irony, it is typically confined to a particular scene or situation, although they do not make this point explicit—just as they do not explicitly state that in dramatic irony the ignorant character needs to be involved in situational irony.

Abrams and Harpham observe above that the comic dramatic irony in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (II.v.) involves a hoax, and it seems to me that whenever deceptions or dissimulations inside the story world are revealed to the reader, such situations have potential for comic dramatic irony. I have noticed also that another common type of comic situations, comic misunderstandings, carries similar potential for creating comic dramatic irony. Thus, it seems to me that the humor of comic deceptions and misunderstandings can often be explained by considering how such situations construct comic dramatic irony.

Since its humor is created by the reader's epistemically superior position, it seems to me that dramatic irony epitomizes what humor researchers call the superiority theory of humor: we find comic dramatic irony funny because it invites us to feel ourselves superior to the ignorant character. As John Morreall (1983, 4) puts it, "[t]he oldest, and probably still most widespread theory of laughter is that laughter is an expression of a person's feelings of superiority over other people". Comic dramatic irony clearly appeals to this base instinct in us.

In the following pages, I will first discuss the combination of two comic devices, sexual innuendo and comic dramatic irony, in *Guards! Guards!*, and after that I will review an instance of comic dramatic irony in *Witches Abroad*, where it involves dissimulation. I will also discuss how, in *Witches Abroad*, Pratchett uses comic dramatic irony as a plot element.

2.1.1 Irony of sexual innuendo

Sexual innuendo is a useful comic device for authors of comedy, since sexuality arguably remains a taboo topic in our social interactions even today, in the age of the Internet and its free access to many kinds of sexual content that former generations could not have dreamed of. Sigmund Freud (1960) has argued that practically all comic wit uses libidinal elements, sex and aggression, in a way that allows us to release tensions that arise from the conflict between our subconscious primal urges (*id*) and internalized societal norms (*superego*). Although many of Freud's ideas are nowadays considered outdated (Morreall 2009, 21–23), I think his general idea of a conflict between our instinctive desires and their social control has some merit, and Freud's theory is probably still the best available explanation for the curious fact that many people find clever sexual innuendo irresistibly funny. In comedies, sexual innuendo can easily complement comic dramatic irony, because the presence of an ignorant character opens opportunities to talk about sexual topics in the kind of circumlocutional manner that creates a comic contrast between the reader's and the character's knowledge.

In the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), a young man named Carrot is introduced as a foundling who has been brought up by dwarfs in a rural part of the Discworld. When Carrot turns 16 years old, his dwarf family decides to send him to the city of Ankh-Morpork to join the City Watch and live with his own kind. Pratchett offers the reader a peek into the landscape of Carrot's mind, when we get to read a letter that Carrot writes in the city to his stepparents. The letter includes sexual innuendo—and also comic dramatic irony, because Carrot remains ignorant of this innuendo. The place called the Shades, mentioned in Carrot's letter, is the old town of Ankh-Morpork—a disreputable district where respectable citizens and officers of the law do not normally dare to enter. From the letter, it appears that one of the very first things Carrot does after arriving in Ankh-Morpork is to take a walk in this notorious place.

> Dearest Father (wrote Carrot) Well, here I am in Ankh-Morpork. […] I went for a walk. There are many people here. I found a place, it is called The Shades. Then I saw some men trying to rob a young Lady. I set about them. They did not know how to fight properly and one of them tried to kick me in the Vitals, but I was wearing the Protective as instructed and he hurt himself. Then the Lady came up to me and said, Was I Interested in Bed. I said yes. She took me to where she lived, a boarding house, I think it is called. It is run by a Mrs Palm. The Lady whose purse it was, she is called Reet, said, You should of seen him, there were 3 of them, it was amazing. Mrs Palm said, It is on the house. She said, what a big Protective. So I went upstairs and fell

> asleep, although it is a very noisy place. Reet woke me up once or twice to say, Do you want anything, but they had no apples. (*Guards! Guards!*, 41)[28]

The term "innuendo" denotes an indirect way of drawing attention to something, using euphemisms and other circumlocutional expressions; it means implying, suggesting, and hinting, rather than saying things directly and explicitly. But "sexual innuendo" also involves a sense that the speaker is deliberately guiding the audience's attention to the sexual aspects of the topic of discussion. Carrot himself is clearly oblivious to the sexual nature of the "boarding house" he is invited to, but by attending to the authorial audience, the reader can interpret that Pratchett, as the designer of narrative situations in his novels, has built sexual innuendo into Carrot's letter.

There are several sexual euphemisms and other sexually suggestive circumlocutional expressions in this passage. Carrot refers to his genitals as the "vitals", and his euphemism for the codpiece he received as a gift a little earlier in the novel is the "protective". In Mrs. Palm's speech, the same euphemism deploys also sexual innuendo, which Carrot probably understands as an innocent comment on the codpiece as part of his clothing, but the reader is more likely to interpret Mrs. Palm's admiration of the size of Carrot's "protective" as an allusion to the size of the "vitals" that the codpiece protects. Mrs. Palm's name involves a wordplay with sexual connotations, because the expression "Mrs Palm and her five daughters" is, in British slang, a euphemism for masturbation.

Reet's questions and Mrs. Palm's comments are designed to suggest to the reader that Reet is in fact a prostitute working in Mrs. Palm's brothel, so Carrot's complete ignorance of the situation's sexual aspects creates comic incongruity, where Pratchett invites the reader to view Carrot's adventure in the Shades from a position that is epistemically superior to Carrot's. Carrot's ignorance also creates several kinds of situational irony between actions and intentions: brothels are not intended to be boarding houses where customers go to sleep; and because of this misunderstanding, Carrot misinterprets the intentions behind both Reet's initial invitation and her subsequent questions, as well as the intention of Mrs. Palm's offering that "it is on the house". Consequently, Carrot's actions become comically inappropriate to the situation. These comic dramatic ironies are immediately evident and thus differ from tragic dramatic irony, where the ignorant character's present actions lead to tragic consequences in the future.

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[28] The page numbers of *Discworld* novels refer, unless otherwise indicated, to the Corgi paperback editions published in Great Britain.

The sexual innuendo and dramatic irony in the above quote serve primarily comic functions, but they may also be interpreted to reveal attitudes that Pratchett adopts toward violence, prostitution, and sexuality. All these topics are treated amorally, without making moral judgments about them. The chivalrous Carrot takes it as his duty to interfere when he sees men trying to rob a young lady, but when he describes the violence that ensues, Carrot's only evaluative judgment is that kicking him in the "vitals" shows that the men do not know the gentlemen's rules of sport fighting, i.e. "how to fight properly". Pratchett, as the authorial designer of Carrot's discourse, foregrounds the comic aspect of violence by making the ungentlemanly kicker hurt himself. Since, according to Reet, there were three robbers and "it was amazing", the reader can infer that there has been an action-packed fight, but Carrot's letter confines the description of the fight strictly to this comic incident—the reader does not learn who else got hurt in the fight or what kinds of injuries the fighters suffered. This kind of elliptic description can be conceived as a specific type of comic understatement (Haberkorn 2014, 166–169).

Similarly, the brothel and prostitution are represented from a strictly limited viewpoint, which only shows them to the reader as the comic background of Carrot's search for a boarding house. Carrot's incredible combination of innocence and simplicity allows Pratchett to omit any considerations that young women working as prostitutes might involve social and moral problems. Prostitution is mainly viewed in the *Discworld* novels as a source of comic sexual innuendo.[29] In a more general view, affinity for comic sexual innuendo can be interpreted as an expression of a non-moralizing and positive attitude toward sexuality. Thus, my rhetorical interpretation of the above quote is that the comic devices of sexual innuendo and dramatic irony persuade the reader to share Pratchett's comically amoral attitude toward violence, prostitution, and sexuality.

Dramatic irony frequently functions as a characterizing device, since it evaluates the ignorant victim of situational irony negatively, as someone who is not very clever. On the other hand, comic dramatic irony tends to represent those who do understand it as perceptive and well-informed, and when the author invites the reader to join the select group of these knowledgeable people, this intensifies the pleasure that we get from comic dramatic irony. At the same time, the reader is also invited to share the author's attitudes toward the discussed topics, such as violence

[29] For example, the narrator refers to prostitutes by using the comic euphemism "ladies of negotiable affection" in *Small Gods* (1992) and in several subsequent *Discworld* novels. In *Men at Arms* (1993), the guild of prostitutes is introduced as the Seamstresses' Guild, with the explanation that a survey made in the docks area of Ankh-Morpork found 987 women occupied as "seamstresses"—but only two needles.

and sexuality. The pleasure that we receive from humor serves the rhetorical function of making such authorial invitations more alluring and seductive.

Describing these events to the reader by showing us Carrot's letter is a clever play with viewpoints, which temporarily substitutes a comically unreliable narrator for the authorial narrator. Carrot's viewpoint is unreliable in its naivety, while the simple, condensed syntax and grammatical mistakes are stylistic additions to the comedy. It would have been much more difficult to show the comicality of Carrot's viewpoint in this brothel episode through the authorial narrator's discourse and characters' dialogue. Since most of the novel is written using these other narrative devices, Carrot's letters disrupt the narrative flow and foreground Carrot's comically unusual viewpoint. And, as exemplified by the above quote, Carrot's letters often involve also the epistemically superior authorial viewpoint via dramatic irony, which Pratchett invites the reader to share. Hence, Pratchett offers the reader two alternative viewpoints of the events that Carrot's letters describe. The comic incongruity is created by the contrast between these two viewpoints, and it is Carrot's innocent viewpoint that Pratchett offers to us as a comically unusual perspective on the represented familiar cultural phenomena: street violence, prostitution, and brothels.

2.1.2 Irony of dissimulating witches

The Greek word from which the English word "irony" is derived means "dissimulation", which can be understood as the kind of deception where someone conceals his or her true feelings or intentions under a feigned appearance. This original sense of irony has been passed on to modern times in the concept of Socratic irony, and it also seems to me that when dissimulations and deceptions are represented in fiction, they often create dramatic irony. When a character successfully deceives another character, we already have two of the three essential elements of dramatic irony: the ignorant character, who has been deceived, and the reader's epistemically superior position in comparison to the ignorant character. However, there should also be some kind of situational irony in the ignorant character's speech or actions before we can describe the situation as dramatic irony, and thus all dissimulations are not automatically ironic.

Tragic dramatic irony typically depends on a disclosure, where the protagonist's tragic destiny is revealed already at the beginning of the play, so that dramatic irony becomes a plot element and the audience can observe how the tragic protagonists

unwittingly follow the path that fate has designated to them. In the twelfth *Discworld* novel, *Witches Abroad* (1991), dramatic irony is used in a similar manner as a plot element—although it covers only a small part of the plot, where dissimulation is used for persuading the protagonists to travel abroad. Desiderata Hollow is introduced in the early pages of the novel as a witch and a fairy godmother who has "second sight"—the ability to see things that happen in the future. With this ability, Desiderata knows that she is about to die very soon. In the Discworld, dying is not the ultimate end, but rather a brief interlude before moving on to see what happens next. Nevertheless, the knowledge about her own death upsets Desiderata, because she has important unfinished fairy godmother business to do in a distant land called Genua. When Death comes for Desiderata, she tells Death how she has planned to cajole three of her witch colleagues to sort out that unfinished business, even though she knows that one of them is a difficult person to persuade.

> Desiderata had that inward look again, her voice talking to herself. 'See? I got to get the three of them to Genua. Got to get 'em there because I've seen 'em there. Got to be all three. And that ain't easy, with people like them. Got to use headology. Got to make 'em send 'emselves. Tell Esme Weatherwax she's got to go somewhere and she won't go out of contrariness, so tell her she's not to go and she'll run there over broken glass. […]' (*Witches Abroad*, 16)

Here Pratchett informs the reader about Desiderata's plan through her speech, in a similar manner as dramatic ironies are typically set up in tragedies, for instance when Iago reveals his plan for revenge in a soliloquy at the beginning of Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603). Desiderata can anticipate how her plan will appear from Granny Weatherwax's viewpoint, and this ability to consider things from someone else's perspective allows Desiderata to invent a comically creative solution to the problem that Granny's characteristic emotional responses present. The image of Granny Weatherwax running somewhere over broken glass just because she has been told not to go there is comically hyperbolic, while it also aptly characterizes the old witch.

At this point in the novel, the reader only gets the general outline of Desiderata's plan, and we need to keep reading in order to learn how the details of the plan start to unfold. But, from this passage onwards, we nevertheless have more information about Desiderata's motives than the three witch protagonists of the novel, and this information makes us aware of the developing dramatic irony. As Desiderata has, with her second sight, seen the three witches in Genua, her plan of dissimulation becomes a device for fulfilling the witch protagonists' predestined fate, in a similar manner as the tragic protagonists' fate is fulfilled in tragic dramatic ironies, although

Desiderata's clever "headology", along with the absence of tragic consequences, makes her plan comical rather than tragic.

Before dying, Desiderata has mailed her fairy godmother's wand to Magrat Garlick, the youngest of the three witch protagonists, with a short letter as an attachment.

> When Magrat was left alone […] she unwrapped the parcel. It contained one slim white rod.
>
> She looked at the note again. It said, 'I niver had time to Trane a replaysment so youll have to Do. You must goe to the city of Genua. I would of done thys myself only cannot by reason of bein dead. Ella Saturday muste NOTTE marry the prins. PS This is importent. […] PSPS Tell those 2 Olde Biddys they are Notte to come with Youe, they will onlie Ruine everythin.' (*Witches Abroad*, 34)

There are several unusual and comical features in this short letter. The misspellings are comical in a similar manner as strong accents in characters' speech are comical in comedies. Desiderata also seems to share the random use of capital letters at the beginning of words with Carrot, whose letter I have discussed above. And, since writing is clearly a difficult task for her and she has been in a hurry, the message is condensed—she goes to the point directly, using the imperative mood and skipping the conventional courtesies. This unconventional directness is another comic feature in the letter, while it also conveys strong authoritative persuasion. Sending the fairy godmother's wand is another headological way to persuade Magrat—in order to morally earn the precious fairy godmother's magic wand, she needs to obey the instructions of the letter.

Another comic anomaly from conventions is that Desiderata knows she will be dead when the letter arrives, so the present tense of this matter-of-fact comment creates the comic illusion that she was already dead when she was writing the letter, while her written ghostly voice continues to give Magrat orders. Yet another latently comic design is that the mentioned Ella Saturday is the Discworld's equivalent of Cinderella—which the rhyming wordplay between Ella and Cinderella implies—and in this novel the fairy godmother's task is to ensure that Ella does not marry the prince, who is actually a frog that has been magically turned into a human. But this comic design is only revealed to the reader as the story proceeds, so these early hints in Desiderata's letter can be viewed as a narrative foreshadowing device. Then there is also the post post scriptum, which is comical because the reader can observe how Magrat is made the ignorant victim of Desiderata's dissimulation, while the reader already knows that the real intention behind Desiderata's instruction to Magrat is

headological, which in this case means reverse psychology, and is intended to persuade the old witches to accompany Magrat to Genua.

When Magrat goes to Desiderata's cottage, she finds out that the two old witches are already there, looking for the fairy godmother's magic wand. The actualization of Desiderata's plan continues when Magrat refuses to hand over the wand to Granny Weatherwax, saying that Desiderata gave it specifically to her.

> Both of the older witches watched a small piece of paper fall out of Magrat's sleeve and zigzag down to the floor. Granny darted forward and snatched it up.
>
> 'Aha!' she said triumphantly. 'Let's see what Desiderata really said…'
>
> Her lips moved as she read the note. Magrat tried to wind herself up tighter.
>
> A couple of muscles flickered on Granny's face. Then, calmly, she screwed up the note.
>
> 'Just as I thought,' she said, 'Desiderata says we are to give Magrat all the help we can, what with her being young and everything. Didn't she, Magrat?'
>
> Magrat looked up into Granny's face.
>
> You could call her out, she thought. The note was very clear… well, the bit about the older witches was, anyway… and you could make her read it aloud. It's as plain as day. Do you want to be third witch forever? And then the flame of rebellion, burning in a very unfamiliar hearth, died.
>
> 'Yes,' she muttered hopelessly, 'something like that.' […]
>
> Magrat made an effort.
>
> 'Genua really is a long way away,' she said.
>
> 'I should 'ope so,' said Granny Weatherwax. 'The last thing we want is foreign parts up close.'
>
> 'I mean, there'll be a lot of travelling,' said Magrat wretchedly. 'And you're… not as young as you were.'
>
> There was a long, crowded silence.
>
> 'We start tomorrow,' said Granny Weatherwax firmly. (*Witches Abroad*, 38–39)

This passage showcases Pratchett's notable skill in designing intense and dramatic tensions between characters, and here this ability is harnessed for comic use. When the narrator provides a close-up description of Granny's face while she reads Desiderata's letter, the reader gets a vantage point for observing the comedy of how she rallies round to save her façade with a characteristically bluffing dissimulation.

Magrat is the point-of-view character in this scene, and the narrator's account of her thoughts characterizes Magrat as sympathetic but weak-willed. Both Granny Weatherwax's bluffing and Magrat's weak rebellion against Granny's authority, which the narrator describes here with a poetic metaphor, are characteristic emotional responses that add psychological plausibility to the story while inviting the reader to identify with the characters' positions in the situation. In contrast, young Carrot in the earlier discussed quote represents the kind of comic character who does not display big emotional responses despite enduring the vicissitudes of fortune and exciting adventures, such as getting into a street fight and sleeping in a brothel. Consequently, we are less likely to identify ourselves with Carrot's position in those adventures, even though he is the first-person narrator and the point-of-view character in his letters.

Granny Weatherwax is not the only dissimulator in this scene—also Desiderata Hollow participates in the situation via her letter. At first, when Granny gets to read it, Desiderata's words persuade Granny to decide out of contrariness that Magrat needs her and Nanny Ogg's help in her travel to Genua, just as Desiderata had anticipated. And because Desiderata concealed her true intentions also from Magrat Garlick, she unwittingly talks to Granny in a way that further consolidates Granny's resolution to travel to Genua. All three witch protagonists are ignorant of Desiderata's successful dissimulation, while the reader views it from the same epistemically superior position as the author. When the characters' ignorance and the corresponding reader's epistemically superior viewpoint are combined with the comic situational irony where both Magrat and Granny think that the old witches are acting against Desiderata's instructions, while in fact they are doing exactly as she wanted, the result can be described as comic dramatic irony.

In the quote from *Guards! Guards!*, the dramatic irony is occasional and situation-bound. In *Witches Abroad*, Pratchett uses dramatic irony as a plot element, so that the comic dramatic irony bears some resemblance to tragic dramatic irony, although Pratchett uses this plot element also to construct comic situations where the dramatic irony is only occasional. Situational irony is inherent in classical tragedies, because the tragic endings typically result from fate or destiny thwarting the tragic protagonist's plans and efforts and leading them to outcomes that are the opposite of those that the protagonist intended. Thus, dramatic irony typically becomes a plot element in tragedies. In contrast, dramatic irony in comedies usually seems to lack such pre-destined endings. Consequently, comic dramatic ironies tend to be more occasional, not stretching over the entire story arc. This seems to me a salient distinction that theorists of dramatic irony tend to ignore—possibly because they are

preoccupied with tragedies. In the discussion above, I have also emphasized the necessity of situational irony in dramatic irony, which is not usually stated explicitly in theoretical discussions on irony.

Perhaps the clearest rhetorically evaluative element in the above-discussed quotes is that the ignorant characters and butts of comic dissimulations are represented in a less flattering light than the more knowledgeable characters and successful dissimulators. Carrot is an ignorant character, but also Magrat Garlick and Granny Weatherwax are unaware that they are being manipulated. Desiderata Hollow, on the other hand, is represented in a positive light as a successful dissimulator who outsmarts the other witches. In the quote from *Guards! Guards!*, Carrot's ignorance creates a comically unusual viewpoint on brothels, while in the *Witches Abroad* quote, Desiderata's "headological" dissimulation creates a comically unusual perspective on how an obstinate person can be easily manipulated to do something.

In addition to comic dramatic irony, the quote where Carrot visits a brothel contains also some stylistic comic devices: sexual innuendo (euphemistic wordplay), understatement, and grammatical mistakes, which make the humor in Carrot's letter hyperdetermined. In the quotes that focus on Desiderata Hollow's dissimulation, the dramatic irony is again combined with stylistic comic devices: a hyperbolic metaphor depicts Granny Weatherwax running over broken glass where she is told not to go, while the poetic metaphor about Magrat's weak "flame of rebellion, burning in a very unfamiliar hearth" comically contrasts these characters' willpower. Also Pratchett's playing with humorous viewpoints and cultural clichés makes the humor in these quotes more hyperdetermined.

Since dramatic irony involves situational irony, I call it a situational comic device. Another comic device that often creates comic situations is absurd logic, which also depends on unusual viewpoints for its effect. Since absurd logic tends to create comic situations, I consider also absurd logic a situational comic device, and I will next take a look at how Pratchett makes his fantasy world absurdly humorous by founding the Discworld on the principles of dislocated logic and paradoxical reasoning.

2.2 Absurd logic: paradoxical reasoning

Absurd humor was most likely recognized already in the ancient theory of comedy, since *Tractatus Coislinianus*, which I have discussed above (in chapter 1.2.2.2), mentions a comic device called "the impossible". John Morreall (1983, 74–77)

introduces the "violation of logical principles" as a particular type of comic incongruity in verbal humor and suggests that it works best when the logic is not violated in the way that it is entirely lacking but, instead, there is "a violation of some logical principle in a piece of reasoning that is just logical enough to sound somewhat plausible". This qualification distinguishes comically twisted logic from comical nonsense, which can be understood as a chain of events or phrases that lack any logical connections.

Walter Nash (1985, 109–113) writes about "dislocated logic" as one of the major sources of humor. As an example, Nash refers to the dilemma that is introduced in Joseph Heller's satirical novel *Catch-22* (1961)[30]: Every flight mission takes American bombers in World War II into the mortal danger of the enemy's anti-aircraft fire, and obviously only insane people would be repeatedly willing to risk their lives like that. According to army regulations, all army personnel who are insane must be immediately relieved from duty. However, the bombers cannot be relieved unless they personally request it, but asking to be relieved proves that they are sane and thus not qualified to be relieved. This twisted catch-22 logic is comically absurd, although in contrast to the nonsensical lack of logic, it seems to be based on sound reasoning. At the same time, the twisted logic also performs a symbolic function in Heller's novel by epitomizing the insanity and absurdity of war.

Absurd logic is a notable and frequently used comic device in the *Discworld* novels, and the Discworld itself is based on comically dislocated logic: in the mythological worldview, the world must rest on something strong and solid to prevent it from falling into emptiness, and accordingly the Discworld is carried by four elephants who stand on the back of a turtle that swims through the space.

Many unusual phenomena in the Discworld are based on comically dislocated reasoning, which the narrator usually explains in a way that makes the phenomena plausible inside the story world. A number of these phenomena are based on the logic of inventing an antithesis for some existing phenomenon. For example, the first *Discworld* novel, *The Colour of Magic* (1983), introduces reannual plants, which grow backwards in time—so that they must be planted next year if you want to harvest them this year—and in the fourth and seventh *Discworld* novels, *Mort* (1987) and *Pyramids* (1989), the narrator explains the effects of counterwise wine, which is made of reannual grapes: you get a hangover the morning before the drinking begins,

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[30] The *Discworld* novels include occasional allusions to Heller's novel. In *Lords and Ladies* (1992), the protagonist Yossarian is briefly mentioned, and in *The Last Hero* (2001) Heller's comically absurd dilemma is replicated when Rincewind tries to avoid participating in a space flight around the Discworld, organized by the Patrician, on grounds of insanity. After the Patrician has explained his options, Rincewind concludes: "I think there's a catch there."

and then one needs to drink a lot of counterwise wine to become sober again. The fifth *Discworld* novel, *Sourcery* (1988), introduces the opposite state to being drunk, knurd. One can become knurd by drinking too much strong Klatchian coffee; in the state of being knurd one becomes so terribly sober that one perceives the world without any of those little fictions, white lies, and other self-delusions that most people depend on to make life bearable. The ninth *Discworld* novel, *Eric* (1990), introduces Old Tom, the great tongueless bell in the Clock Tower of Unseen University, which tolls every hour rhythmical silences that repress all sounds.

In the third *Discworld* novel, *Equal Rites* (1987, 243), a character quips "Million-to-one chances […] crop up nine times out of ten", and the narrator recycles this witticism in several subsequent novels. In the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), the characters try to exploit this paradoxical logic in an attempt to shoot a dragon's vulnerable spot with an arrow by comically inventing various improbable tweaks in the circumstances to make the shot an exact million-to-one chance. The phrase "million-to-one chance" signifies something that is practically impossible, and yet in numerous adventure stories the hero's escape and survival from dangerous situations depends on the last desperate attempt after all hope has gone—which nevertheless invariably succeeds against all odds. So, on the one hand, Pratchett's paradoxical witticism resonates with our Roundworld's culture by parodying a convention of adventure stories. On the other hand, the paradox that nearly impossible attempts succeed almost every time epitomizes the twisted logic behind the way that luck works. In some *Discworld* novels, luck is personified as a character. Thus, there is a deity called the Lady, who wins every time when the Discworld gods play games by casting a die. The gods use the characters depicted in the novels as pawns in their games, which comically foregrounds the role of luck in these stories.

The novels include various comical authorial designs that are based on dislocated logic. For instance, the story of the thirteenth *Discworld* novel, *Small Gods* (1992), relies on the authorial design where the divine power of gods is based on the strength of their believers' faith. In the novel, the great god Om manifests himself on the Discworld and finds out that his powers have almost completely vanished because, although the monotheistic religion of Omnianism has many followers, the god has only one true believer. Another comic authorial design that is based on absurd reasoning is the Thieves' Guild in Ankh-Morpork, first introduced in *Equal Rites*, which explores the idea that when thieves are given the official civic status as a licensed guild, this gives the city's authorities an effective way to control the criminals, who can also then be made responsible for preventing any unlicensed crime in the city, so that the actual police force becomes redundant.

Some comic authorial designs borrow scientific ideas from our Roundworld, such as L-space in *Guards! Guards!* (a distortion of time and space that connects all libraries in the past, present, and future); the study of invisible writings in the fourteenth *Discworld* novel *Lords and Ladies* (1992) (study of books not yet written, which the use of L-space enables); the Trousers of Time in the twenty-first *Discworld* novel *Jingo* (1997) (bifurcation of alternative futures); and narrative causality in the twelfth *Discworld* novel *Witches Abroad* (1991) (often repeated stories bend events in history to their own narrative shapes). These authorial designs take existing concepts—the phase space, intertextuality, and the conception of history as narrative[31]—and apply absurdly dislocated logic to them in order to create comedy.

In what follows, I will take a look at some examples that showcase how Pratchett deploys absurd logic as a comic device in the *Discworld* novels. First, I will discuss a case where Pratchett introduces a talking dog as a character in his novels and uses it to establish an authorial design that involves unconventional reasoning, and then I will discuss logical paradoxes that appear in the characters' dialogues.

2.2.1 Twisted logic of a talking dog and sub-table persuasion

In the *Discworld* novels, dislocated logic can be found not only in authorial designs, but also in dialogues, which typically means that the characters practice unsound reasoning. For instance, in *Moving Pictures* (1990), the tenth *Discworld* novel, the "wild idea" of the film-making industry appears in a Discworld location called Holy Wood and, as one of the many consequences, some animals suddenly acquire the ability to speak human language and think like humans, just like the personified and humanized animal characters in animated Hollywood films. But, unlike in animated films, human characters in the Discworld do not expect animals to speak, which creates opportunities for Pratchett to design comical situations:

> 'Did I hear things, or can that little dog speak?' said Dibbler.
>
> 'He says he can't,' said Victor.
>
> Dibbler hesitated. The excitement was unhinging him a little. 'Well,' he said, 'I suppose he should know.' (*Moving Pictures*, 290)

[31] Such as Roland Barthes's and Hayden White's ideas about the rhetorical and narrative nature of writing history.

In his discussion on comically incongruous logic, John Morreall (1983, 74) notices that "[s]ome pieces of humor even work a logical incongruity into an interchange between two characters so that not only is the incongruity accepted as if it made sense, but the person responding to the incongruous line actually builds on the incongruity". Morreall's observation works as an apt description of what happens in the above quote. Victor's line presents a logical contradiction, because if the dog has said that it cannot speak, then that makes it obvious that the dog *can* speak, and that the denial is therefore a blatant lie. This logical contradiction makes Victor's comment amusing, but the comedy of the dialogue is developed further when Dibbler accepts the apparent logical contradiction based on the kind of reasoning that may at first sight appear to be plausible, even if it turns out to be flawed on closer examination. It is, of course, true that a dog should know whether it can speak, but that has nothing to do with the actual issue of whether the dog can speak or not. Thus, Dibbler's reasoning is invalid because it includes a *non sequitur*[32] fallacy. Even though the narrator offers an excuse for Dibbler's faulty reasoning, the mishap suggests that Dibbler is perhaps not a particularly smart individual. Thus, dislocated logic can function as a device of characterization that represents characters from an evaluative viewpoint.

Gaspode appears as a character in several subsequent novels. At the end of *Moving Pictures*, the magical enchantment that the "wild idea" of Holy Wood has cast evaporates, and Gaspode loses his ability to talk like humans. But apparently Pratchett liked Gaspode's character so much that in *Men at Arms* (1993), the fifteenth *Discworld* novel, Gaspode gets back his ability to speak after sleeping near the High Energy Magic building of Unseen University, where he is affected by the leaking magic. Since the High Energy Magic building is associated with a new and dangerous branch of magic, which resembles our Roundworld's nuclear physics research, Gaspode's story may be interpreted to resonate intertextually with some old superhero stories in comics and movies, where the hero gains superhuman powers after becoming exposed to nuclear radiation. Gaspode's return to the series is worth mentioning here, because when Gaspode can talk again in *Men at Arms*, the logic behind one of Pratchett's comic designs seems unintentionally faulty.

The specific comic situation that I want to discuss is set up by a couple of other comic situations, where a human character is alone when Gaspode speaks to the character. In these situations, the human typically hears a voice speaking and looks around, only to see no-one else but a small mutt nearby. Then, after reasoning that dogs cannot talk, the human further reasons that the perceived voice must in fact be

[32] Latin for "it does not follow".

the character's own thoughts. Hence, when Gaspode says something like "give the doggy a biscuit" (113), the human gets a strong urge to follow this suggestion. Pratchett uses this dislocated logic to set up the kind of causality where Gaspode's voice can persuade human characters on the subconscious level. Although the idea may at first appear implausible, as soon as the reader has accepted the logic behind the phenomenon, it becomes a comic design that Pratchett can use in various situations.

Thus, when Captain Quirke from the Day Watch of Ankh-Morpork's City Guard comes to tell the Night Watch, which consists of the protagonists of the novel, that they will from now on be under his command by the Patrician's orders, Gaspode's secret persuasive abilities create a comical situation, where Captain Quirke becomes the butt of Gaspode's retaliating prank.

> 'Seems to me—' Quirke began again, and then noticed the dog. 'Look at this!' he said. 'Dogs in the Watch House!' He kicked Gaspode hard, and grinned as the dog ran yelping under the table. […]
>
> 'You got to see the big picture,' said Quirke.
>
> 'Mister Captain,' said a low voice from under the table, audible at a conscious level only to Angua, 'you got an itchy bottom.'
>
> 'What big picture's this, then?' said Sergeant Colon.
>
> 'Got to think in terms of the whole city,' said Quirke. He shifted uneasily.
>
> '*Really* itchy,' said the sub-table voice.
>
> 'You feeling all right, Captain Quirke?' said Angua.
>
> The captain squirmed.
>
> 'Prickle, prickle, prickle,' said the voice.
>
> 'I mean, some things are important, some ain't,' said Quirke. 'Aargh!'
>
> 'Sorry?'
>
> 'Prickle.'
>
> 'Can't hang around here talking to you all day,' said Quirke. 'You. Report to me. Tomorrow afternoon—'
>
> 'Prickle, prickle, prickle—'
>
> 'Abouuut face!'
>
> The Day Watch scurried out, with Quirke hopping and squirming in, as it were, the rear. (*Men at Arms*, 229–230)

There is comic dramatic irony in this scene, as Pratchett invites the reader to observe Captain Quirke's predicament, which only Gaspode and Constable Angua—who is a werewolf and therefore perceives the world from both human and canine perspectives—seem to be able to fully understand. In addition to this comic viewpoint, the comedy is intensified by the narrator's stylistic wit when he coins the punning expression "sub-table voice" to describe Gaspode's supposedly subconscious voice and by emphasizing the word "rear" at the end of the quote, thus echoing the comic motif of Quirke's itchy bottom. This combination of comic devices—absurd logic, dramatic irony, and punning—make the humor in the scene hyperdetermined.

The logical design of the situation works quite well as comedy, but the reader may nevertheless justifiably ask some questions: Why does no-one else in the room, besides Angua and Quirke, hear Gaspode's sub-table voice, and why does Quirke think that this voice is a part of his own thinking, and not someone else's voice in the crowded Watch House? Pratchett, as the author responsible for the artistic designs of his novels, has apparently failed to see how the previously established causal logic of Gaspode's subconsciously persuasive powers simply does not apply in this situation.

Even though this lapse in Pratchett's reasoning may seem obvious now that I have pointed it out, there are factors that might make it less obvious for both Pratchett and his readers. For one thing, the reader of the *Discworld* novels is asked to actively practice not only the willing suspension of disbelief, which most fiction is based on, but also a willing suspension of our normal judgments about what is possible or impossible. The Discworld is filled with impossibilities and absurdities that are justified either because of the fantasy setting or simply because they are funny. However, usually the absurdities are also justified by some internal logic of the story world, but in the above quote Gaspode's subconsciously persuasive powers violate the internal logic that Pratchett has established for them earlier in the novel.

One may justify this violation of the internal causal logic of the story world—where the same causes should always have the same effects—by the comedy it produces, but there is also another kind of psychological and moral "logic" that may be considered as a justification. Captain Quirke is represented, by the narrator's description as well as by Quirke's actions and spoken words, as a smug and arrogant person who clearly enjoys bullying the protagonists in the Night Watch. Also, the description of how Quirke kicks Gaspode can be interpreted as a calculated rhetorical design that guides the reader's antipathy toward Quirke and empathy toward the maltreated dog. These evaluative viewpoints persuade the reader to feel

that Gaspode's prank is a justified retaliation, while the narrator's wit takes a side in this persuasion by ensuring that Quirke's distress is represented as comical. These comical, psychological, and moral factors have their own kind of "logic", which might lead the reader to ignore the causal logic of the story world that should have made Gaspode's comic retaliation impossible.

2.2.2 Paradoxes of philosophers, liars, and lightning-fast tortoises

The paradox is a rhetorical figure that consists of a "seemingly contradictory statement, which yet is shown to be (sometimes in a surprising way) true" (Lanham 1991, 107). As paradoxes already appear to be implausible, they can be easily made impossible and comically absurd by combining paradoxical statements with comically dislocated logic. Several *Discworld* novels contain brief references to the philosopher Ly Tin Wheedle, whose reasoning typically introduces paradoxical and comically absurd viewpoints. Here is one of those references, from the fourth *Discworld* novel *Mort* (1987):

> The only thing known to go faster than ordinary light is monarchy, according to the philosopher Ly Tin Wheedle. He reasoned like this: you can't have more than one king, and tradition demands that there is no gap between kings, so when a king dies the succession must therefore pass to the heir instantaneously. Presumably, he said, there must be some elementary particles—kingons, or possibly queons—that do this job, but of course succession sometimes fails if, in mid-flight, they strike an anti-particle, or republicon. His ambitious plans to use his discovery to send messages, involving the careful torturing of a small king in order to modulate the signal, were never fully expounded because, at that point, the bar closed. (*Mort*, 24)

Absurd humor can be conceived as an intellectual puzzle that invites us to ask: What is the comic flaw in this seemingly sound logic? In this quote, Ly Tin Wheedle's reasoning on the speed of monarchy juxtaposes the logical concept of royal succession with a physical and measurable phenomenon. The speculation about physical elementary particles that are supposed to be involved in royal successions is an attempt to disguise a logical concept as a physical phenomenon. The names of these elementary particles involve punning, and they can be interpreted as a satiric allusion to quantum physics, which has introduced some strangely named subatomic particles. The idea to use the royal succession as a means to send messages is another comical absurdity, and it continues the motif of representing a logical idea as a newly discovered physical phenomenon. The quote ends with bathos, when the philosopher's lofty theories are revealed to be just a drunken person's deliriums.

The following dialogue, from the twelfth *Discworld* novel, *Witches Abroad* (1991), exemplifies how Pratchett uses the dislocated logic of paradoxes as a comic device in the discourse between the witch Nanny Ogg and the dwarf Casanunda.

> 'How come you're in the palace guard, Casanunda?'
>
> 'Soldier of fortune takes whatever jobs are going, Mrs Ogg,' said Casanunda earnestly.
>
> 'But all the rest of 'em are six foot tall and you're—of the shorter persuasion.'
>
> 'I lied about my height, Mrs Ogg. I'm a world-famous liar.'
>
> 'Is that true?'
>
> 'No.'
>
> 'What about you being the world's greatest lover?'
>
> There was silence for a while.
>
> 'Well, maybe I'm only No. 2,' said Casanunda. 'But I try harder.' (*Witches Abroad*, 252)

The humor in this quote is based on the logical contradictions that are inherent in lies, but it also resonates with a specific historical person in our Roundworld, since Casanunda's name resembles the name of the most famous—and possibly the greatest—lover in our world, Casanova. This resemblance also includes a wordplay that is based on pronunciation: Casan-over vs. Casan-under. The name and its cultural resonance can be conceived as an authorial design that makes fun of the dwarf character's small size. Since also Nanny Ogg is represented as a comic character, these two characters form a comic romantic pair, which allows Pratchett to poke fun of the stereotypes and clichés of courting and seduction.

Casanova's amorous adventures became famous via his memoirs, and in memoirs people tend to represent themselves as better than they are in real life. This might explain why the Discworld's comic version of Casanova is represented as a braggard and a liar. The difference between these two braggards is that, unlike Casanova, Casanunda also brags about his lying. And, as there are inherent contradictions in lies, the credibility of anything that Casanunda claims becomes comically uncertain—if a liar says he is a liar, what is the truth value of that statement? In philosophy and logic, this is known as the liar paradox. Casanunda can be conceived as a modern-day equivalent of the braggard soldier, alazon, who was one of the stock characters in the ancient Greek comedies and the counterpart of the self-deprecating dissembler, eiron.

Other famous logical paradoxes are the Greek philosopher Zeno's logical arguments that a flying arrow does not move and that no matter how fast the famous athlete Achilles runs, he can never catch up with a tortoise. Pratchett applies Zeno's paradoxes for comedic purposes in the seventh *Discworld* novel, *Pyramids* (1989), and simultaneously also alludes to Aesop's fable *The Tortoise and the Hare*, when the protagonist Teppic meets some Ephebian philosophers. Ephebe is the Discworld's equivalent of our Roundworld's ancient Athens.

> 'Xeno's the name,' gasped the fat man[…]. '[…] You haven't seen a tortoise up there, have you? Damned fast things, go like greased thunderbolts, there's no stopping the little buggers.'
>
> Teppic deflated again.
>
> 'Tortoises?' he said. 'Are we talking about those, you know, stones on legs?'
>
> 'That's right, that's right,' said Xeno. 'Take your eyes off them for a second, and *vazoom*!'
>
> 'Vazoom?' said Teppic. He knew about tortoises. There were tortoises in the Old Kingdom. They could be called a lot of things—vegetarians, patient, thoughtful, even extremely diligent and persistent sex-maniacs—but never, up until now, fast. Fast was a word particularly associated with tortoises because they were not it.
>
> 'Are you sure?' he said.
>
> 'Fastest animal on the face of the Disc, your common tortoise,' said Xeno, but he had the grace to look shifty. 'Logically, that is,' he added[…].
>
> The tall man gave Teppic a nod.
>
> 'Take no notice of him, boy,' he said. 'He's just covering himself because of the accident last week.'
>
> 'The tortoise *did* beat the hare,' said Xeno sulkily.
>
> 'The hare was *dead*, Xeno,' said the tall man patiently. 'Because you shot it.'
>
> 'I was aiming at the tortoise. You know, trying to combine two experiments, cut down on expensive research time, make full use of available—' (*Pyramids*, 236–238)

Zeno's logical paradoxes provide an already absurd starting point for Pratchett's parody of logical paradoxes and satire of philosophers, and Pratchett exaggerates the absurdity to comical proportions by combining the paradoxes and by concretizing the logical proofs as empirical experiments. The comically unusual viewpoint here, rhetorically amplified by Xeno's hyperbolic descriptions, is the claim that tortoises are fast. Teppic is in this quote the point-of-view character, and Teppic's thoughts

about tortoises, delivered by the narrator, remind the reader about what is the more conventional conception of tortoises, which further emphasizes the comic unconventionality of Xeno's viewpoint. By making Xeno's experiments resemble Zeno's logical paradoxes, Pratchett uses cultural resonance for framing yet another perspective on tortoises, which reveals that there is some kind of logic after all in those failed experiments—although it is not the normal kind of logic, but rather the comically dislocated kind. This satiric viewpoint represents the Ephebian philosophers, as well as their counterparts in the ancient Athens, as some sort of proto scientists, which becomes evident in Xeno's last line that hints at scientific research. Pratchett develops this satirical view of Ephebian philosophers further in the thirteenth *Discworld* novel, *Small Gods* (1992).

The critically evaluative element of satire serves a rhetorical function: when something or someone is criticized by the means of satiric ridicule, this can be viewed as an attempt to affect the audience's attitudes. But cultural allusions—in this case, to Zeno's paradoxes and Aesop's fable—also have their own, subtler, rhetorical effects that concern identification rather than persuasion (Burke 1969, 55). By using this kind of cultural resonance, the author invites us to identify ourselves as belonging to the select group of readers who have the cultural knowledge that is needed to detect the allusions.

I have demonstrated above that the comic use of absurd logic in the *Discworld* novels is not just amusing; it can also be interpreted to perform various rhetorical functions: guiding the reader's approval and disapproval toward characters and dividing characters whose reasoning is sound from those whose reasoning is unsound. Also, the satire of philosophers and scientific theorists, such as Ly Tin Wheedle and Xeno, contains critically evaluative ridicule.

I have also demonstrated that Pratchett combines comically dislocated logic with cultural resonance in order to create new, comically unusual viewpoints on things that are familiar to readers. We have watched intelligent dogs in films and talking animals in animated cartoons, but giving a talking dog's speech unconsciously persuasive powers is a novel way of conceiving what would happen if dogs actually could speak. Suggesting that a dwarf can successfully pretend to be tall by lying about his height creates an unusual viewpoint on the deceptive power of lies. An unusual perspective is also needed if one wants to argue that tortoises can be as fast as greased thunderbolts.

In some of the quotes that I have discussed above, other comic devices are used in combination with absurd logic, which makes their humor hyperdetermined. The quote where Captain Quirke suffers from an itchy bottom includes not only absurd

logic, but also dramatic irony and punning, and thus Pratchett combines in that scene two situational comic devices with a stylistic one. The quote about Ly Tin Wheedle's theory of kingons, queons, and republicons includes punning, and it ends with a bathetic anticlimax. Hence, it combines absurd logic and a satire of scientific theories with a stylistic comic device and a structural comic device. The quotes where Casanunda and Xeno appear combine absurd logic with a contextual comic device, satire, and a stylistic comic device, hyperbole.

In addition to dramatic irony and absurd logic, parody is another comic device that often depends on unusual viewpoints for its comic effect. While I conceive comic dramatic irony and absurd logic as situational comic devices, parody involves cultural resonance, which makes it a contextual comic device. Next, I will discuss parodic allusions in the *Discworld* novels as instances of comic intertextual imitation.

2.3 Parody: cultural resonance with intertextual comedy

One of the most prominent comic techniques in the *Discworld* novels is the frequent cultural resonance between the Discworld and our own Roundworld, which creates comically unusual viewpoints on various familiar cultural phenomena. In chapter 2.3, I focus my discussion on intertextual allusions, and I will discuss non-textual cultural resonance in chapter 2.4. When comedy is combined with intertextual allusions, as is often the case in the *Discworld* novels, it is called parody. In a similar manner, when the non-textual cultural resonance is combined with a critical attitude and ridiculing humor, it becomes satire. Since the humor in parody and satire is based on cultural resonance, I conceive both of them as contextual comic devices.

Like irony, parody and satire are old terms—their etymological origins can be traced back to the Greek *parodia* (counter song) and the Latin *satura* or *satira* (medley) of antiquity. The status of satire as a critical term is well-established, while parody has been contested by other, more modern terms and has only recently been revived as a key term in literary criticism. Two particularly influential proponents of parody in this postmodern re-evaluation of critical terms are Linda Hutcheon (2000) and Margaret Rose (1995), and although they both aim to free parody from its previous pejorative connotations as mere ridicule and mockery, their conclusions differ from each other. Hutcheon treats the previous associations of parody's critical and comical aspects as optional additions—her definition of parody is a neutral "repetition with difference" (Hutcheon 2000, 32). Rose, on the other hand, would prefer to retain the traditional close association between parody and comedy, while making the

critical function of parody optional. There are also contemporary critics, for instance Simon Dentith (2000), who still consider parody as a predominantly ridiculing mode of discourse, which emphasizes the evaluative and critical functions of parody.

Parody, burlesque, and travesty have been frequently used as largely synonymous terms in literary studies, although there are differences in the nuances of their meanings. Abrams and Harpham (2009, 35–36) echo many modern (19th and 20th century) literary critics' understanding of these terms by stating that burlesque should be considered as the general term for all incongruous imitations, while parody and travesty are better treated as specific instances of burlesque. According to this conception, parody is "high burlesque", where "the form and style are high and dignified but the subject is low or trivial", while travesty is "low burlesque", where "the subject is high in status and dignity but the style and manner of treatment are low and undignified". Burlesque is also commonly associated with a particular kind of American theatrical variety show that consists of various short performances—comic sketches, music, dancing, and striptease—which have little or nothing to do with incongruous imitations in literature. Thus, burlesque as a critical term is prone to unfortunate misunderstandings.

Rose (1995) points out that parody is a more traditional term than burlesque and argues that it should therefore be treated as the general term for all comic intertextual imitations. Rose (ibid., 51–52) defines parody as "the comic refunctioning of preformed linguistic or artistic material". This definition highlights the comic and intertextual aspects of parody while allowing the possibility that the "refunctioning"—i.e., giving the object of parody a different function in the parody text than in the source text—may be an evaluative one, such as ridicule. However, the refunctioning may also be non-evaluative or appreciative: Rose argues that since parody makes its target a part of the parody text, it can simultaneously laugh both *at* and *with* its target, thus rendering the potential critical attitude ambivalent.

Another critical term that is often contrasted with parody is pastiche, which denotes a medley in music criticism and montage in visual arts, but in literary studies pastiche usually means stylistic imitation without critical distance (Dentith 2000, 194). According to Hutcheon (2000, 38), pastiche operates by similarity while parody seeks difference, although parody can contain pastiche and use it for comical or critical ends.

Critics tend to discriminate parodies into different kinds according to two important divisions. First, the subtext of a parody text may be a body of texts, a genre, or a recognizable type of discourse, but parody may also imitate a specific text—Dentith (2000, 7) calls the former "general parody" and the latter "specific

parody". The second distinction is between brief "parodic allusions" and the "fully developed formal parody", which constitutes the complete text. Parody can also be considered either as a genre or as a stylistic mode, although the latter approach seems to be more common among contemporary literary scholars.

Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605–1615) is a formal parody that takes the genre of chivalric romances as its precursor, while Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (1741) parodies a specific text, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740). In fantasy literature, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955) and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels (1997–2007) have spawned numerous formal parodies. In Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series (1983–2015), the first two novels may be viewed, depending on which definitions one uses, either as formal parodies or pastiches of the fantasy genre, while the subsequent *Discworld* novels tend to take more general cultural phenomena as the targets of comic imitation. However, incidental parodic allusions remain frequent in all *Discworld* novels.

The vast majority of the intertextual allusions in the *Discworld* novels serve a comic function. Thus, these comic intertextual allusions can be conceived to be parodic. In what follows, I will discuss allusions to specific texts (specific parody) as well as metafictional allusions to conventions of representation in fiction (general parody).

2.3.1 Parody of *Macbeth* and *Dirty Harry*

With some of the *Discworld* novels, readers can identify one or more subtexts that the plot, characters, and/or themes are based on. Such *Discworld* novels with clearly identifiable subtexts are typically loose adaptations or retellings rather than faithful replicas of the original narratives. This kind of intertextual resonance adds an extra layer of meanings to the *Discworld* novels, but it differs from the parasitic way in which some formal parodies depend heavily on the parodied subtexts. If we fail to detect the subtexts of the *Discworld* novels, we do not know that we have missed one layer of meanings.

The first two *Discworld* novels pastiche and parody several popular works of fantasy fiction,[33] although these intertextual imitations are episodic and embedded in the main story line, which is Pratchett's original composition. Similarly, *Witches Abroad* has an original narrative, while it also incorporates elements from a number

[33] Andrew M. Butler (2001, 24–26) points out the fantasy fictions of Fritz Leiber, Robert E. Howard, and Mervyn Peake as Pratchett's obvious targets, but there are also many other targets, such as H. P. Lovecraft and Anne McCaffrey.

of Grimm's fairy tales into the main story. Other examples of *Discworld* novels that resonate strongly with the characters, settings, themes, or plots of specific subtexts are *Eric* (the Faust legend, which was made famous by Christopher Marlowe's and Goethe's adaptations), *Wyrd Sisters* and *Lords and Ladies* (Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and *Maskerade* (Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*, which is nowadays perhaps better known as Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical adaptation). All *Discworld* novels are dense with intertextuality, but more often than not the intertextual resonances with specific texts are brief incidental allusions, not incorporated as structural elements in Pratchett's novels.

As I pointed out above, the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), echoes Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) in many of its story elements: the novel elevates the witches as protagonists who meddle with royal politics in a story where a usurper has murdered the king with a dagger. One of the characters is a genius playwright whose works resemble Shakespeare's, and consequently the novel resonates culturally not only with a specific play of Shakespeare, but also with several other things that can be associated with theater and Shakespeare's life. Besides these general intertextual and interworldly resonances, there are also numerous more specific intertextual allusions, such as the embedded quote in the following dialogue between Duke Felmet and his jester, the Fool:

> To his horror he realised the duke was weeping.
>
> The Fool fumbled in his sleeve and produced a rather soiled red and yellow handkerchief embroidered with bells. The duke took it with an expression of pathetic gratitude and blew his nose. Then he held it away from him and gazed at it with demented suspicion.
>
> 'Is this a dagger I see before me?' he mumbled.
>
> 'Um. No, my lord. It's my handkerchief, you see. You can sort of tell the difference if you look closely. It doesn't have as many sharp edges.'
>
> 'Good fool,' said the duke, vaguely.
>
> Totally mad, the Fool thought. Several bricks short of a bundle. So far round the twist you could use him to open wine bottles. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 65)

The Fool is here represented as the point-of-view character, whose emotions and thoughts the narrator conveys to the reader, and Pratchett uses this viewpoint to characterize Duke Felmet as comically insane. The duke's absurd confusing of a handkerchief for a dagger is already enough to create the impression of insanity, but the comic heaping up of hyperbole and insulting idiomatic metaphors in the Fool's

thinking confirms this evaluative judgment of the duke's character and makes the situation funnier by exaggerating the characterization.

Perhaps the most famous soliloquy in *Macbeth* is in Act 2, Scene 1, where Macbeth prepares to kill King Duncan and has a vivid vision of the murder weapon, although his hand goes through the envisioned dagger when he tries to touch it. The soliloquy begins with the words: "Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle toward my hand?" As Duke Felmet is the Discworld's equivalent of Macbeth—with the difference that the duke has already committed his regicide some time ago, while Macbeth is still preparing for the murder when he sees the vision—guilt is the apparent psychological reason why both characters hallucinate about a dagger. However, Pratchett has added to his story the confusion with a handkerchief, which creates comic dramatic irony and renders *Macbeth*'s dramatic scene the opposite of tragic: comically absurd and ridiculous.[34]

P. G. Wodehouse's novel *Psmith, Journalist* (1915) includes an apparent allusion to the same soliloquy. In this novel, the protagonist Psmith is chased by gangsters in New York and ends up trapped on the roof of a tenement building. When he notices an escape route, he says: "Is that a ladder I see before me, its handle to my hand?" While Wodehouse's intertextual allusion seems to exist purely for comedic purposes, Pratchett's allusion also serves a rhetorically evaluative purpose, since the exaggeration of Macbeth's vision foregrounds its implausibility.

When Pratchett removes the original dramatic function of Macbeth's soliloquy and makes it comical, this refunctioning of the subtext matches Margaret Rose's (1995) conception of parody, while it also includes the critical and evaluative functions that critics like Simon Dentith (2000) associate with parody. However, as my next example will demonstrate, the critically evaluative function is not a necessary feature of Pratchett's parody.

In the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), a great dragon terrorizes the city of Ankh-Morpork, and the scene depicted in the following quote takes place when an angry mob has gathered in front of Lady Sybil Ramkin's mansion. Lady Ramkin breeds swamp dragons, which are small and relatively harmless creatures, distant relatives of the magical great dragons, and because the city is attacked by a great dragon, the mob wants to kill all dragons. Lady Ramkin has temporarily accommodated Captain Samuel Vimes of the City Watch after he has been knocked unconscious in an encounter with the great dragon. When Vimes hears the voices of

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[34] Pratchett recycles the same allusion later in the novel, when Hwel the dwarf—who is the Discworld's equivalent of Shakespeare—writes a play that resonates with *Macbeth*, and in early draft reveals that at first he had experimented with the line "Is this a duck I see behind me, its beak pointing at me" (184).

the mob outside, he rises from his sickbed, comes out of the mansion determined to rescue Lady Ramkin and her swamp dragons.

> A streak of green fire blasted out of the back of the shed, passed a foot over the heads of the mob, and burned a charred rosette in the woodwork over the door.
>
> Then came a voice that was a honeyed purr of sheer deadly menace.
>
> '*This is Lord Mountjoy Quickfang Winterforth IV, the hottest dragon in the city. It could burn your head clean off.*'
>
> Captain Vimes limped forward from the shadows.
>
> A small and extremely frightened golden dragon was clamped firmly under one arm. His other hand held it by the tail.
>
> The rioters watched it, hypnotised.
>
> 'Now I know what you're thinking,' Vimes went on, softly. 'You're wondering, after all this excitement, has it got enough flame left? And, y'know, I ain't so sure myself…'
>
> He leaned forward, sighting between the dragon's ears, and his voice buzzed like a knife blade:
>
> 'What you've got to ask yourself is: Am I feeling lucky?'
>
> They swayed backwards as he advanced.
>
> 'Well?' he said. '*Are* you feeling lucky?' […]
>
> The leader […] did manage to find his voice.
>
> 'Who are you, anyway?' he said.
>
> Vimes drew himself up. 'Captain Vimes, City Watch,' he said.
>
> This met with almost complete silence. The exception was the cheerful voice, somewhere in the back of the crowd, which said: 'Night shift, is it?'
>
> Vimes looked down at his nightshirt. In his hurry to get off his sickbed he'd shuffled hastily into a pair of Lady Ramkin's slippers. For the first time he saw they had pink pompoms on them. (*Guards! Guards!*, 136–137)

This situation has several comical aspects. One of them is the shift of narrative viewpoint in the last paragraph of the quote. Vimes's entrance into the situation is described from the rioters' perspective, but the reader only becomes aware of Captain Vimes's inappropriate and comically unheroic clothing at the same time as Vimes himself, when the narration shifts the viewpoint to focus on Vimes's thinking. Before that, Pratchett has delimited the narrative viewpoint in a manner that

excludes Vimes's clothing, so that this revelation comes to the reader as a surprise, while the mob has been aware of this comic incongruity since the moment he appears. This change of narrative perspective produces a bathetic turn, which changes a suspenseful situation into a comical one. Another comically unusual viewpoint is created when Vimes uses the swamp dragon, instead of a more conventional police officer's weapon, to protect Lady Ramkin and her swamp dragons. Both Vimes's inappropriate dressing and his unconventional weapon serve as comic designs that undermine the serious aspects of the situation.

Still, perhaps the most comical element in the situation is the intertextual resonance between Vimes's words and similar lines in the Clint Eastwood starred crime thriller film *Dirty Harry* (1971). In that movie, the eponymous police protagonist threatens a criminal with his gun and growls this memorable monologue: "I know what you're thinking: 'Did he fire six shots or only five?' Well, to tell you the truth, in all this excitement, I've kinda lost track myself. But being this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, that would blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky?' Well, do you, punk?" The offensive word "punk" is absent in Vimes's addressing of the mob, but the word is nevertheless implicitly there, at the end of Vimes's last line, for those readers who recognize the *Dirty Harry* allusion. As an additional comic detail, the aristocratic name of the dragon—which resonates also with the habit in our Roundworld to give pedigree pets aristocratic names—echoes the caliber of "Dirty" Harry Callahan's weapon.

Rhetorical poetics in the antique world—exemplified by Longinus's *On the Sublime* and Demetrius's *On Style*—treat tropes as a means to affect the audience's emotions, pathos, and in the representation of Vimes's *Dirty Harry*-influenced speech the tropes serve a similar function. Clint Eastwood has a distinctive way of speaking when he plays tough characters; Pratchett seems to strive for a similar effect when he delivers Vimes's opening line in emphatic italics and adds hyperbole, metaphor, and simile to the narrator's description of Vimes's voice: "a honeyed purr of sheer deadly menace" and "buzzed like a knife blade". In Clint Eastwood's acting, the harsh tone of voice and grim facial expression are not comic techniques, and neither do these tropes here serve primarily as comic devices; rather, they add emotional intensity to a suspenseful situation. However, this amplified suspense also serves to intensify the comic effect when Vimes's comically inappropriate clothing is revealed to the reader.

The allusion to *Dirty Harry* serves the narrative function of characterization, which can also be interpreted as a rhetorical function since it offers the reader an evaluative viewpoint on Captain Vimes in a similar manner as the *Macbeth* allusion

both characterizes Duke Felmet and evaluates him. Dirty Harry is a police officer, just like Vimes. Elsewhere in the same novel, this allusive characterization of Vimes is complemented with another type of masculine hero, the hardboiled detective, via allusions to films starring Humphrey Bogart. Hence, the allusion in this quote can be interpreted to subtly persuade the reader to adopt the viewpoint that Vimes possesses similar raggedly heroic character traits as Dirty Harry. While the *Macbeth* allusion characterizes Duke Felmet negatively as a madman, the *Dirty Harry* allusion characterizes Vimes positively as a hero. When Lady Ramkin is in danger, Vimes acts like a true hero, even though there are some comic aspects in the situation, such as the parodic allusion to Dirty Harry's monologue, which both moderate this heroism and make it more humane. In this novel, Vimes is both the point-of-view character and a humanely imperfect hero, and these two qualities make him a protagonist with whom the reader can easily identify.

2.3.2 Parody of guards, gloaters, and cinematic special effects

While the above-discussed allusions can be associated with specific subtexts, I will now survey a different type of intertextual allusion, which takes conventions of representation as its targets. According to Margaret Rose (1995, 95), metafictional parodies "foreground the techniques used in the construction of other works […] as a part of their comic (and complex) reconstruction of the other work, or with some comic juxtaposition of elements of that work to which their comic undermining of reader expectations for it is related". Comic intertextual allusions that call the reader's attention to conventions of representation can thus be conceived as metafictional parody, and Pratchett seems to be fond of this type of parody in the *Discworld* novels. As conventions are typically not tied to a specific subtext, but, instead, they exist in numerous texts, parodies of conventions can be classified as general rather than specific parodies (Dentith 2000, 7).

Metafictional parody allows Pratchett to recycle clichés and stereotypes while adding new comic viewpoints to the worn-out conventions. For example, the stereotypical plot climax in Westerns is a dramatic gunfight scene between the protagonist-hero and the antagonist-villain. Many other genres of popular fiction also use a similar plot climax, where the intense tension between the hero and the villain is resolved in a dramatic showdown near the end of the story. Most *Discworld* novels include this kind of plot climax, and occasionally Pratchett self-reflexively calls the reader's attention to the clichéd elements of such dramatic showdowns. The

comedy in this kind of metafictional parody comes, as Rose above suggests, from the way it undermines the reader's expectations which the conventions have created. An example of such metafictional playfulness can be found in the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), which is also the first novel in the City Watch sequence.

The authorial dedication at the beginning of *Guards! Guards!* already refers to the specific convention that Pratchett recycles and revises later in the novel:

> They may be called the Palace Guard, the City Guard, or the Patrol. Whatever the name, their purpose in any work of heroic fantasy is identical: it is, round about Chapter Three (or ten minutes into the film) to rush into the room, attack the hero one at a time, and be slaughtered. No-one ever asks them if they wanted to. (*Guards! Guards!*, 5)

Even in novels where the reader can easily associate the narrator with the author, as is the case in the *Discworld* novels, dedications are special kinds of paratexts that represent the author's voice more directly than the narrative discourse. One might say that the author writes dedications in the author's role, wearing the metaphorical author's hat, while in writing the authorial narrator's discourse the author adopts another role and wears the narrator's hat. Even though the dedication suggests that the author's sympathies are on the side of the guards, Pratchett also uses this unusual viewpoint to introduce comedy into the conventional confrontation between the hero of the novel (who is an officer of the city guard) and the palace guards.

The scene that the title of the novel refers to develops further the play with the convention that the dedication introduces. In this scene, the protagonist, Captain Vimes of the City Watch, confronts Lupine Wonse, the main villain of the story, who has usurped the leadership of Ankh-Morpork from the previous Patrician.

> '[…] Guards! Guards!' […]
>
> There were footsteps in the passage outside and four of the palace guards padded in, swords drawn.
>
> 'I wouldn't put up a fight, if I were you,' Wonse went on. 'They're desperate and uneasy men. But very highly paid.'
>
> Vimes said nothing. Wonse was a gloater. You always stood a chance with gloaters. The old Patrician had never been a gloater, you could say that for him. If he wanted you dead, you never even heard about it.
>
> The thing to do with gloaters was play the game according to the rules.
>
> 'You'll never get away with it,' he said. (*Guards! Guards!*, 246–247)

Here Pratchett calls the reader's attention to the clichéd nature of the situation by making his narrator convey Vimes's observation that Wonse is a gloater. This kind of gloating villain is a clichéd convention in various adventure and action fictions—for example, in *James Bond* films. When Vimes realizes that Wonse is a stereotypical gloating villain, he shows that he is also aware of the conventional response of the villain's victims ("You'll never get away with it"). At the same time, Vimes's awareness of the conventions points out their conventional nature to the reader. Vimes's assessment that the old Patrician was not a gloater involves an explicit critical evaluation of this convention of gloating villains: as long as the hero plays along and allows the villain to go on gloating, the hero has a chance to survive, while a non-gloating villain would kill the hero immediately after gaining the upper hand.

As this scene continues, Pratchett takes another clichéd convention as the target of his metatextual parody, the one he already brought up in the novel's dedication.

> 'Er,' said the leader of the guards, and hesitated.
>
> 'What's the matter, man?'
>
> 'You, er, want us to attack him?' said the guard miserably. Thick though the palace guard were, they were as aware as everyone else of the conventions, and when guards are summoned to deal with one man in overheated circumstances it's not a good time for them. The bugger's bound to be heroic, he was thinking. This guard was not looking forward to a future in which he was dead.
>
> 'Of course, you idiot!'
>
> 'But, er, there's only one of him,' said the guard captain.
>
> 'And he's smilin',' said a man behind him.
>
> 'Prob'ly goin' to swing on the chandeliers any minute,' said one of his colleagues. 'And kick over the table, and that.'
>
> 'He's not even armed!' shrieked Wonse.
>
> 'Worst kind, that,' said one of the guards, with deep stoicism. 'They leap up, see, and grab one of the ornamental swords behind the shield over the fireplace.'
>
> 'Yeah,' said another, suspiciously. 'And then they chucks a chair at you.'
>
> 'There's no fireplace! There's no sword! There's only him! Now take him!' screamed Wonse.
>
> A couple of guards grabbed Vimes tentatively by the shoulders.
>
> 'You're not going to do anything heroic, are you?' whispered one of them.
>
> 'Wouldn't know where to start,' he said.

> 'Oh. Right.'
>
> As Vimes was hauled away he heard Wonse breaking into insane laughter. They always did, your gloaters. (*Guards! Guards!*, 247–249)

As the dedication points out, the fight scene between the hero and the palace guards is a narrative cliché. Here this cliché is recycled, through the dialogue, in a situation where no such fight actually takes place. Pratchett makes the stereotypical nature of the heroic fight scene obvious to the reader by showing that the guards are also aware of the convention. This awareness makes the situation comical when the palace guards are cautious to attack Vimes for the very reason that they outnumber him—which is comically absurd but nevertheless quite logical as long as one bears in mind the convention that, in certain types of stories, the outnumbered hero typically wins the fight. Thus, the guards' reasoning here involves, in addition to the metafictional parody, also absurd logic, while the guards' inappropriate adds comic dramatic irony to the situation.

In this scene, as well as in the whole novel, Pratchett represents Vimes as the main point-of-view character whose thoughts the narrator reveals to the reader. This can be interpreted as a rhetorical strategy that persuades the reader to adopt Vimes's viewpoint in the situation. In the conversation between the guards and Wonse, a guard's thoughts are mediated to the reader, which serves the same function of guiding our identification and sympathy. Sharing the awareness of plot conventions is another characteristic that subtly persuades us to identify with the character. The reader is made aware of the conventions and, accordingly, those characters who share the same awareness of conventions appear to the reader as "one of us" (Burke 1969, 55). Wonse does not seem to be aware of any of these stereotypes, while the palace guards are aware of one kind of convention. Vimes, on the other hand, seems to be aware of all the conventions that Pratchett introduces to the reader, and this awareness persuades us to identify ourselves with Vimes, while we are also persuaded to feel some sympathy for the palace guards.

Clichéd representations in movies, especially cinematic special effects, are frequent targets of metafictional parody in the *Discworld* novels, and Pratchett seems to have a penchant for reproducing visual special effects from films verbally. For instance, in the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), the narrator refers to cinematic conventions in his verbal description of the passing of time, when one of the witch protagonists, Granny Weatherwax, has made a spell that instantly shifts the small kingdom of Lancre fifteen years into the future, so that the exiled boy child

of Lancre's murdered king could grow up and return to challenge the usurper as soon as possible.

> It is almost impossible to convey the sudden passage of fifteen years and two months in words.
>
> It's a lot easier in pictures, when you just use a calendar with lots of pages blowing off, or a clock with hands moving faster and faster until they blur, or trees bursting into blossom and fruiting in a matter of seconds …
>
> Well, you know. Or the sun becomes a fiery streak across the sky, and days and nights flicker past jerkily like a bad zoetrope, and the fashions visible in the clothes shop across the road whip on and off faster than a lunchtime stripper with five pubs to do.
>
> There are any amount of ways, but they won't be required because, in fact, none of this happened.
>
> The sun *did* jerk sideways a bit, and it seemed that the trees on the rimward side of the gorge were rather taller, and Nanny couldn't shake off the sensation that someone had just sat down heavily on her, squashed her flat, and then opened her out again.
>
> This was because the kingdom did not, in so many words, move through time in the normal flickering sky, high-speed photography sense of the word. It moved around it, which is much cleaner, considerably easier to achieve, and saves all that travelling around trying to find a laboratory opposite a dress shop that will keep the same dummy in the window for sixty years, which has traditionally been the most time-consuming and expensive bit of the whole business. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 155–156)

Margaret Rose (1995, 99) points out that while metafictional parody typically shows that the parodied texts and their depictions of truth and reality are constructions, it can also show *how* these illusions of truth and reality have been constructed. In the above descriptions of cinematic special effects, Pratchett accomplishes also this other function of metafictional parody.

Even though the narrator at first claims that it is impossible to use cinematic conventions in verbal descriptions, and that they are not even needed in this case, the conventions *are* used here. In the rhetorical tradition, this strategy of emphasizing something by pointedly seeming to pass over it is called *paralepsis* (or *paralipsis*) (Howard 2010, 150; Lanham 1991, 104). The descriptions serve as a setup for two comic punch lines, of which the first is the simile about a lunchtime stripper and the second the comically absurd idea that moviemakers would need to film the changes of fashions in a real dress shop window when they prepare their visual descriptions of how times change.

The narrator's verbal representations of cinematic special effects can be conceived as hypothetical, because the narrator denies that anything visible actually

happened, and also the description of how the time travel is felt by Nanny Ogg consists of a hypothetical verbal image, which nevertheless describes an actual experience. She is briefly made a point-of-view character whose sensation of being squashed the narrator conveys to the reader, even though she has not really been squashed. As I will demonstrate in chapter 4.1, where I discuss Pratchett's comic imagery, it is not unusual for the narrator of *Discworld* novels to deploy this kind of counterfactual speculation in combination with comically exaggerated analogies, such as hyperbolic metaphors or similes, when the narrator describes the characters' emotional responses.

There is also comically absurd logic when the narrator explains that moving the kingdom around time would be somehow different than moving it through time. Such explanation may at first create the impression of making sense and being supported by some sort of logical reasoning, but a closer look reveals that the explanation does not actually make any sense. Calling the reader's attention explicitly to the cinematic conventions in this absurd context can be interpreted as ridicule of the clichéd nature of these conventions. Also here, as in the above-discussed metafictional parodies of suicidal guards and gloating villains, Pratchett on the one hand incorporates the clichés he criticizes as a part of his own stories, while on the other hand he revises and revitalizes these clichés by comically refunctioning the conventions. From readers' point of view, this comic device offers us the pleasure of recognizing something familiar, combined with the pleasure of seeing those familiar things from a fresh, humorous viewpoint.

I have pointed out above that the quote that parodies *Macbeth* also includes comic dramatic irony and two hyperbolic metaphors, while the quote that parodies *Dirty Harry* includes bathos. In both quotes that include metafictional parody, there is also absurd logic, while the guards' inappropriate behavior creates comic dramatic irony, and in the quote that describes the passage of time, there are two comic similes. Thus, the humor in all the discussed quotes is hyperdetermined, and even though I have focused my discussion on a contextual comic device, parody, two of these quotes include a situational comic device (dramatic irony), while one quote includes a structural comic device (bathos) and two quotes include stylistic comic devices (hyperbolic metaphors and similes).

By substituting a handkerchief for the dagger and a swamp dragon for the .44 Magnum, Pratchett creates comically unusual viewpoints on a famous soliloquy in *Macbeth* and a dramatic scene in *Dirty Harry*. The humor in the other quotes is similarly based on comically unusual viewpoints, when the palace guards are

reluctant to arrest a single unarmed man and when the narrator claims that filming seasonal changes in a dress shop window usually takes many years.

Most of the analyzed humorous intertextual allusions include rhetorically evaluative elements and viewpoints, which can be interpreted as the author's attempts to guide the reader's attitudes. In the *Wyrd Sisters* quote, the Fool is a point-of-view character, and both the cultural resonance with *Macbeth* and the Fool's emotional response to the duke's behavior characterize Duke Felmet negatively, as an insane person. In *Guards! Guards!*, the cultural resonance with *Dirty Harry* characterizes Captain Vimes favorably, as a rugged hero. Also Vimes is a point-of-view character, and in his thoughts he evaluates the new Patrician Wonse negatively, as a gloater. Metafictional parody in the above-discussed quotes evaluates several conventions negatively by foregrounding their clichéd nature. I have also pointed out above that allusions to conventions persuade through identification, since it is easier for the reader to identify with those characters who are aware of the clichéd nature of the conventions than with those who are not.

So far, I have discussed two situational comic devices and one contextual comic device—dramatic irony, absurd logic, and parody—and argued that they are all based on comically unusual viewpoints. Next, I will discuss another contextual comic device where the humor is based on comically unusual viewpoints, when I analyze satire in the *Discworld* novels as critical and ridiculing cultural resonance.

2.4 Satire: cultural resonance with extratextual ridicule

In some early novels of the *Discworld* series, the narrator describes the Discworld as a "mirror of worlds", which refers to the abundant cultural resonance between the Discworld and our Roundworld. Some of these comic allusions are intertextual, while others take extratextual cultural phenomena as their targets. Often the allusions are neutral in their attitudes toward the Roundworld points of reference, serving purely the function of creating comic incongruities, but in some cases the comic allusions include evaluative elements that represent the Roundworld phenomena in either a positive or negative light. Critically evaluative cultural resonance that ridicules its extratextual targets is called satire.

Literary scholars sometimes classify parody as a particular type of satire, but especially the late modern theorists of parody tend to stress their differences. Abrams and Harpham (2009, 320) define satire as "the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of

amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation". They also juxtapose satire with comedy, pointing out that while the main purpose of comedy is to evoke laughter, satire uses laughter as a weapon against a butt that exists outside the work itself. Similarly, Dustin Griffin (1994, 1) states that the main distinctive factor between satire and pure comedy is satire's darker or sharper tone, while another important difference is that satire's victims come from the real world.

Writers who use satire to criticize other people tend to justify their satiric attacks by claiming that satire works as a corrective of human vice and folly, thus ridiculing the failing rather than the individual (Pollard 1970, 7), although Abrams and Harpham (2009, 320) notice that this noble aim has not always been carried out in practice. Consequently, theorists of satire have conceived two types of satirists: the benevolent optimist, who aims to heal the folly and wickedness of mankind with ridicule, and the misanthropic pessimist, who believes that there is no cure for people's ignorance and therefore only aims to punish (Highet 1972, 233–238).

Abrams and Harpham (2009, 320) also observe that while satiric ridicule functions as the primary organizing principle in works that constitute the formal genre of satire, satire can also appear as an incidental element within works whose overall mode is not satiric. In some *Discworld* novels, such as the two novels that I will discuss below, the main theme is cultural resonance—*Soul Music* resonates with the rock music industry and *Moving Pictures* with the film-making industry—and thus they can be read as modern representatives of the satire genre.

Satire can be distinguished from parody by designating their different targets: parody imitates other texts, while satire criticizes extratextual matters—in Linda Hutcheon's (2000, 43) terms, parody is "intramural" while satire is "extramural". Although this may appear as a clear distinction, the concept of "text" is a fluid one, and it is not always easy to determine what is textual and what is not. Also, whenever parody and satire criticize something by means of ridicule, the comic incongruities tend to introduce ambiguities, which can make it difficult to pinpoint what the actual target of ridicule is. Another difficulty in trying to separate parody from satire is that literary texts frequently combine both, mixing satire and parody in the same passage.

Scholars have also observed a close connection between satire and irony—as exemplified by the structural irony of Swift's satiric essay *A Modest Proposal* (1729). Linda Hutcheon (2000, 52–55) argues for a close connection between parody and irony, although her understanding of irony as a "semantic difference" is wider than most theorists of irony would accept. Margaret Rose (1995, 87–90) has analyzed the characteristics that make parody, irony, and satire different from each other. In her taxonomy, irony includes two messages within one code, and most satire sends one

largely unequivocal message, while parody contains at least two codes: the code of the parody text and the code of the parodied text. Hence, Rose conceives of parody as a double-coded device (ibid., 117), while both irony and satire only contain one code (ibid., 89). However, I think the clearest differences between satire and parody are, first, they have different targets, and, secondly, while parody does not always criticize and ridicule its target, satire does.

2.4.1 Satiric ridicule of rocking senior wizards and littering literary critics

The *Discworld* novels are frequently associated with both parody and satire in book reviews, and the following quote from the sixteenth *Discworld* novel, Soul Music (1994), can be conceived to combine both. In *Soul Music*, Pratchett introduces "Music With Rocks In" as a "wild idea" that travels between worlds, and in this novel it lands on the Discworld. This allows Pratchett to play with a multitude of allusions to the history of our Roundworld's rock music, as well as to its associated youth culture, popular mythology, and commercial industry. Several different kinds of wild ideas appear in the *Discworld* novels—such as the film industry in *Moving Pictures* and the shopping mall in *Reaper Man*. These wild ideas have their own kind of magic, which differs from the usual Discworld magic in its ability to captivate people's minds. Rock music, both in the Discworld and in our Roundworld, has the power to incite unusual behavior among its listeners, and as a consequence the senior staff of Unseen University gets arrested for dancing and reveling in a Music With Rocks In concert. In the following passage, the head of wizards, Archchancellor Ridcully, has just bailed the other senior wizards out of the prison.

> 'Twenty-seven dollars!' said Ridcully. 'Twenty-seven dollars to get you out! […] Wizards *arrested*! […] I mean, what did you think you were doing?'
>
> 'mumblemumblemumble,' said the Dean, looking at the floor.
>
> 'I'm sorry?'
>
> 'mumblemumbledancingmumble.'
>
> 'Dancing,' said Ridcully levelly, walking back along the row. 'That's dancing, is it? Banging into people? Throwin' one another over yer shoulders? Twirling around all over the place? Not even trolls act like that […] and you're supposed to be *wizards*. People are supposed to look up to you and that's *not* because you're somersaulting over their heads […]. Do I make myself clear?'
>
> 'mumblemumblemumbleeveryonewasdoingitmumble,' said the Dean, still looking at the floor.

> 'I never thought I'd say this to any wizard over the age of eighteen, but you're all gated until further notice!' shouted Ridcully. […]
>
> 'mumblemumbledon'tseewhymumble,' mumbled the Dean.
>
> He said, much later on, on the day when the music died, that it must have been because he'd never been really young, or at least young while just being old enough to know he was young. Like most wizards, he'd begun his training while still so small that the official pointy hat came down over his ears. And after that he'd just been, well, a wizard.
>
> He had the feeling, once again, that he'd missed out on something somewhere. He'd never really realized it until the last couple of days. He didn't know what it was. He just wanted to *do* things. He didn't know what they were. But he wanted to do them soon. He wanted … he felt like a lifelong tundra dweller when he wakes up one morning with a deep urge to go water-skiing. He certainly wasn't going to stay indoors when there was music in the air …
>
> 'mumblemumblemumblenotgonnastayindoorsmumble.'
>
> Unaccustomed feelings surged through him. He wanted to disobey! Disobey everything! Including the law of gravity! He was definitely not going to fold his clothes before going to bed! […]
>
> 'mumblemumblemumble,' said the Dean defiantly, a rebel without a pause. (*Soul Music*, 172–173)

The humorous play on words and ideas in this passage is made of various comic devices that extend over several paragraphs. The Dean's numerous mumblings act as a setup for the punch line at the very end of the quote, but there are also other comic devices that are constructed in this quote in a way which would be difficult to demonstrate by quoting just one or two paragraphs.

The target of comic ridicule in this quote is ambiguous. The most obvious target is probably the character inside the story world, the Dean, but there are also several other potential targets. The punch line, at the end, uses *paronomasia* (play on similar-sounding words) to allude to a film starring James Dean, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), and the wizard's name, which is a university staff title rather than his proper name, supports this intertextual allusion—although this name allusion is technically extratextual, since there is no character named James Dean in the movie. Additional cultural resonance arises from the fact that James Dean is known for his characteristically mumbling manner of speech in movies. Since films can be conceived as texts, this mumbling allusion is clearly intertextual, and potentially parodical. Besides these allusions to James Dean and to the name of the film, there is also some intertextual resonance in the senior wizards being arrested, since *Rebel*

Without a Cause begins with the character acted by James Dean being in the custody of the police—although in the movie the cause of the arrest is public drunkenness, not reveling at a rock concert.

This intertextual and interworldly juxtaposition of the Dean and James Dean contains a comic incongruity, since James Dean's character in the film is a slim-bodied teenager while the Dean is old, bearded, and fat, as most of the senior wizards tend to be in the *Discworld* novels. According to Margaret Rose, parody is comic intertextual imitation, and the quoted passage fulfils these requirements. Another humorous aspect in the passage is opened in the narrative prolepsis, or flashforward, where the senior wizard tries to explain why he has acted like a teenager. This explanation highlights the conventional cultural and social association between youth, rock music, and rebellion, which is, at least partially, extratextual and can therefore be interpreted as satirical ridicule.

The Dean's thoughts and emotional responses echo the stereotypical conceptions of what goes on inside a rebellious teenager's mind: a strong, unexplained urge to experience new things and to rebel against the existing order. The description of this emotional response culminates in a pathos-evoking hyperbolic simile, which is then followed by a bathetically feeble act of rebellion that furthermore foregrounds how the Dean has adopted the role of a teenager.

Parody's intertextuality means to Margaret Rose that parody "may be said to differ from both satire and irony (as well as from other devices) in its comic juxtaposition of specific preformed linguistic or artistic materials" (Rose 1995, 89), and such intertextuality also enables parody to use the "preformed material" of its target text as a constituent part of its own structure in order to comically refunction it (ibid., 83). An interesting thing in the above quote is that the stereotypes and clichés of a teenager's mindset cannot be said to be in any obvious way "preformed linguistic or artistic material", and yet Pratchett incorporates them as a constituent part of his text, possibly also refunctioning—or, at least, reframing—them comically. Thus, the incorporation and refunctioning does not seem to be limited to intertextuality, as Rose argues; it can also be applied to "extramural" material. Consequently, satire may perhaps also be understood as a potentially double-coded device—a quality which Rose reserves exclusively for parody.

Satire of rock music, and the culture and industry that surrounds it, is a major theme in *Soul Music*, but an example of more incidental satire can be found in the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), when the orangutan-shaped Librarian of Unseen University travels in L-space by swinging himself from one bookcase to another.

> The Librarian swung on. It was slow progress, because there were things he wasn't keen on meeting. Creatures evolve to fill every niche in the environment, and some of those in the dusty immensity of L-space were best avoided. They were much more unusual than ordinary unusual creatures.
>
> Usually he could forewarn himself by keeping a careful eye on the kickstool crabs that grazed harmlessly on the dust. When they were spooked, it was time to hide. Several times he had to flatten himself against the shelves as a thesaurus thundered by. He waited patiently as a herd of Critters crawled past, grazing on the contents of the choicer books and leaving behind them piles of small slim volumes of literary criticism. And there were other things, things which he hurried away from and tried not to look hard at …
>
> And you had to avoid cliches at all costs. (*Guards! Guards!*, 190–191)

From the reader's perspective in the narrative audience, kickstool crabs, thesauri, Critters, and clichés are all strange and unusual creatures that live in L-space—which is a strange and unusual dimension that connects all libraries in the past, present, and future. The Librarian of Unseen University, being orangutan-shaped, is well-adjusted to explore L-space, which appears to resemble the combination of a library and a jungle. In the rainforests of our Roundworld, orangutans and other apes can climb in trees and swing from branch to branch; in L-space, the Librarian travels in a similar manner, by climbing the bookshelves. And, similarly to jungles, also in L-space the Librarian can observe the behavior of harmless creatures to detect the approach of more dangerous ones. Readers can perhaps associate a thesaurus thundering by as the library version of a kind of dinosaur, due to the paronomastic resemblance of the words, and with such association the reader's viewpoint would still belong to the narrative audience.

However, if the reader associates Critters with the eponymous alien monsters from the science fiction horror comedy film *Critters* (1986), then recognizing this intertextual allusion transfers the reader to the authorial audience and its viewpoint of Pratchett's novel as an artistic artefact. In this quote, the word "Critters" is clearly a paronomastic pun on the word "critics", which associates the Critters satirically with literary critics. Combined, the intertextual allusion, the pun, and the satiric association ridicule literary critics as alien monsters with big mouths and sharp teeth, who move around in herds, digest books, and excrete volumes of literary criticism. Representing the criticized human targets as something inhuman—such as animals, mechanically acting caricatures, or machines—is a traditional motif in satire; it works as an indirect way of showing satiric aggression (Kivistö 2007, 10).

Once the narrator has established this comically unusual viewpoint, the imperative to avoid clichés can also be associated with the targets of satire, the

literary critics of our Roundworld. From the viewpoint that Pratchett has set up for the narrative audience, clichés are creatures that the Librarian needs to avoid while travelling in L-space, but from the viewpoint of the authorial audience clichés are something which, according to the prevailing opinion among literary critics, authors need to avoid at all costs. In other words, from the viewpoint of the narrative audience, the generic pronoun in "you had to avoid cliches" refers to the Librarian and other travelers of L-space, while from the viewpoint of the authorial audience it refers primarily to Pratchett and other authors.

2.4.2 Satire of commercialism in movies

The tenth *Discworld* novel, *Moving Pictures* (1990), satirizes our Roundworld's movie industry, especially its commercialism, which prospers on multiple levels: in advertising films, in making the content of movies more appealing to the audience, and in product placement—and possibly even in subliminal advertising. As the film industry starts rapidly blooming in the Discworld's Holy Wood, a shady Ankh-Morporkian small-time businessman and seller of low-quality hot dogs, C.M.O.T. (Cut-Me-Own-Throat) Dibbler, smells big business. When we join the authorial audience, we can observe how Pratchett makes Dibbler's industrious efforts to gather maximal profit from Holy Wood movies the main instrument of his satire.

2.4.2.1 Movie posters and spectacles

Thomas Silverfish is one of the first film producers in Holy Wood. Dibbler introduces himself to Silverfish, promising that he can help Silverfish to cover the costs of making movies. In the following quote, Dibbler reveals his extraordinarily keen business acumen when he helps Silverfish to enhance his film posters.

> Dibbler wasn't listening. He pointed to a stack of boards leaning against the wall.
>
> 'What are those?' he said.
>
> 'Ah,' said Silverfish. 'That was *my* idea. We thought it would be, er, good business sense', he savoured the words as if they were some rare new sweet, 'to tell people about the other movies we were making.'
>
> Dibbler picked up one of the boards and held it critically at arm's length.
>
> It said:

Nexte weke wee will be Shewing

Pelias and Melisande,

A Romantick Tragedie in Two Reels.

Thank you.

'Oh,' he said, flatly.

'Isn't that all right?' said Silverfish, now thoroughly beaten. 'I mean, it tells them everything they should know, doesn't it?'

'May I?' said Dibbler, taking a piece of chalk from Silverfish's desk. He scribbled intently on the back of the card for a while, and then turned it around.

Now it read:

Goddes and Men Saide It Was Notte To Bee, But They Would Notte Listen!

Pelias and Melisande, A Storie of Forbiden Love!

A searing Sarger of Passion that Bridged Spaes and Tyme!

Thys wille shok you!

With a 1,000 elephants!

(*Moving Pictures*, 68)

Thomas Silverfish[35] is the President of the Alchemists' Guild, and it is alchemists who—inspired by the wild idea of Holy Wood—have invented the film material, octo-cellulose, that is necessary for making movies in the Discworld.[36] Thus, Silverfish is portrayed as a man of a technical orientation. He knows how to make movies but is considerably less proficient in marketing, which requires a different type of imagination and the ability to place oneself into the position of the movie audience. For Silverfish, movies are a way to introduce to the audience the new technology that he has invented, and the content of the films is of secondary importance. Dibbler, on the other hand, does not know anything about making films, but he has a lot of experience in marketing various items that he wants to sell to people.

[35] The name Silverfish involves interworldly cultural resonance, via cryptic wordplay, with the famous Hollywood film mogul Samuel Goldwyn, whose original name was Gelbfisch.

[36] The process of filming involves also small imps inside cameras, painting pictures very quickly on the octo-cellulose film, while projecting the films involves flashlight-producing salamanders.

Pratchett constructs the comedy in this quote by comically juxtaposing these two starkly contrasting viewpoints and attitudes. The film advertisement designed by Silverfish offers a technically accurate description of the movie, but juxtaposing the two versions of the same advertisement demonstrates concretely how much it lacks the "good business sense" that Silverfish attributes to it. While the focus of Silverfish's advertisement is on the film's technical facts—date of display, name, theme, and length—Dibbler's advertisement surpasses factuality and appeals directly to the audience's primal desires: drama, conflict, passion, excitement, and spectacle, conveyed stylistically with wild hyperboles and plenty of exclamation marks.

In addition to this comic incongruity between the two viewpoints, the technical and the commercial, Dibbler's film advertisement can be interpreted to satirically ridicule the film advertising strategy in our world that appeals to emotions and to parody the movie posters that manifest this strategy. While Silverfish's technical viewpoint and Dibbler's commercial viewpoint are explicitly represented, and thus made obvious to the narrative audience, the satiric critique is a more implicit viewpoint that becomes observable when the reader joins the authorial audience, viewing the novel as an artistic artefact. Later in the novel, Dibbler hires artists to paint pictures into his film advertisements, which gives them an even closer resemblance to the movie posters of our Roundworld.

The conversation between Silverfish and Dibbler continues and turns from advertising to the contents of the movie.

> Dibbler stared. He didn't know where they were coming from, but now he was putting his mind to it he was getting some very clear ideas about what you needed to put in movies. A thousand elephants was a good start.
>
> 'No elephants?' he said.
>
> 'I don't think so.'
>
> 'Well, are there any dancing girls?'
>
> 'Um, no.'
>
> 'Well, are there any wild chases and people hanging by their fingertips from the edge of a cliff?'
>
> Silverfish brightened up slightly. 'I think there's a balcony at one point,' he said.
>
> 'Yes? Does anyone hang on it by their fingertips?'
>
> 'I don't think so,' said Silverfish. 'I believe Melisande leans over it.'
>
> 'Yes, but will the audience hold their breath in case she falls off?'

> 'I hope they'd be watching Pelias' speech,' said Silverfish testily. 'We had to put it on five cards. In small writing.'
>
> Dibbler sighed.
>
> 'I think I know what people want,' he said, 'and they don't want to read lots of small writing. They want spectacles!'
>
> 'Because of the small writing?' said Victor, sarcastically. (*Moving Pictures*, 69–70)

Also with the preference for the content of the film, Silverfish's and Dibbler's viewpoints contrast in a similar manner as with the advertisement posters. Silverfish's idea of a romance movie seems to be a theatrical balcony scene with long monologues, while Dibbler's idea of a good film clearly resonates with the commercial Hollywood films of our Roundworld, such as musicals, action films, and historical spectacle films. The commercial motivation of Dibbler's viewpoint is represented to the reader in the previous quote by parodying some clichéd conventions of movie posters in our world, but here Pratchett represents the same attitude with allusions to the clichéd conventions of some commercial movie genres. Dibbler's idea of the ultimate spectacle seems to be a thousand elephants, a hyperbole that appears in both quotes.

Juxtaposing Silverfish's and Dibbler's contrasting viewpoints applies the rhetorical figure *antithesis*[37] as a comic device, but there is also implicit parody and satire mixed with this explicit comedy. Pratchett makes his parodic ridicule of the action film convention, where people hang from a cliff-edge, obvious to the reader when Dibbler wants to combine it with a theatrical convention, the romantic balcony scene. But more prevalent than such occasional parody of clichéd conventions is the satire of commercialism in movies, which is epitomized in the novel by Dibbler's excessively aggressive marketing viewpoint. Pratchett's satirical and critical attitude to commercialism is conveyed to the reader by the impracticality of Dibbler's ideas, such as a thousand elephants, and also at the end of the quote by the protagonist Victor's sarcasm, which turns the word "spectacles" in Dibbler's speech into a homonymic pun, antanaclasis. Pratchett makes this satire of commercialism in movies a recurring thematic motif in the novel via Dibbler's comic businessman character.

However, on closer examination one can distinguish two aspects in Pratchett's satire. The first is the creative aspect of the wild idea of Holy Wood, which is implied at the beginning of the above quote, when the narrator tells that Dibbler does not

[37] Antithesis is the rhetorical figure of conjoining contrasting ideas (Lanham 1991, 16).

know where his ideas come from. The other aspect is the exaggerated application that Dibbler's greediness adds to the ideas that he receives, and it is this exaggerated pursuit for commercial profit that becomes the main target of satiric ridicule in *Moving Pictures*. While the satire of commercialism in the film industry can be conceived as a recurring thematic motif in *Moving Pictures*, Dibbler's constant failures in executing his ideas for maximizing monetary profit become a running gag—the structural comic device that is known among Pratchett's fandom as a "figgin".

2.4.2.2 Product placement

After getting his metaphorical foot in the door of Silverfish's film company, Dibbler soon takes over the movie production and hires some of his own relatives to work there. One of them is his nephew Soll, whose ambition is to direct artistic films. Hence, the conventional and non-comical viewpoint that contrasts with Dibbler's comically exaggerated commercial aspirations now comes from the movie director's artistic integrity. Soll's emotional responses when he discovers his uncle's additions to the films foreground both the contrast between their viewpoints and the comic inappropriateness of these advertisements from the artist's perspective.

> 'OK, people,' said Soll. 'This is the scene near the end where Victor meets Ginger after all they've been through together, and on the card he'll be saying—' He stared at the big black oblong handed to him. 'Yes, he'll be saying "Frankly, my dear, I'd give anything for one of … Harga's … prime … pork … ribs … in … special … curry … sauce …" '
>
> Soll's voice slowed and stopped. When he breathed in, it was like a whale surfacing.
>
> '*Who* wrote THIS?'
>
> One of the artists cautiously raised a hand.
>
> 'Mr Dibbler told me to,' he said quickly.
>
> Soll leafed through the big heap of cards that represented the dialogue for a large part of the click. His lips tightened. He nodded to one of the people with clipboards and said, 'Could you just run over to the office and ask my uncle to stroll over here, if he's got a moment?'
>
> Soll pulled a card out of the stack and read, ' "I sure miss the old mine but for a taste of real country cooking I always … go … to … Harga's … House … Of …" I *see*.'
>
> He selected another at random. 'Ah. I see here a wounded Royalist soldier's last words are "What I wouldn't give right now for a $1 Eat-Till-It-Hurts special at … Harga's … House … of … Ribs … Mother!" '

> 'I think it's very moving,' said Dibbler, behind him. 'There won't be a dry eye in the house, you'll see.'
>
> 'Uncle—' Soll began.
>
> Dibbler raised his hands. 'I said I'd raise the money somehow,' he said, 'and Sham Harga's even helping us with the food for the barbecue scene.'
>
> 'You said you weren't going to interfere with the script!'
>
> 'That's not interfering,' said Dibbler stolidly. 'I don't see how that could be considered interfering. I just polished it up here and there. I think it's rather an improvement. Besides, Harga's All-You-Can-Gobble-For-A-Dollar is amazing value these days.'
>
> 'But the click is set hundreds of years ago!' shouted Soll.
>
> 'We-ell,' said Dibbler. 'I suppose someone could say, "I wonder if the food at Harga's House of Ribs will still be as good in hundreds of years' time —" ' (*Moving Pictures*, 209–210)

The quote begins with an allusion to a famous phrase from the epic historical romance film *Gone with the Wind* (1939), because a little earlier in the novel Dibbler has awoken in the middle of the night with the inspiration, originating from the wild idea of Holy Wood, to write the script for a film called *Blown Away*, which notably resembles *Gone with the Wind*. But, since Dibbler's true instincts are those of a businessman rather than an artist, he combines the artistic results of his creative burst with the comically exaggerated efforts to advertise the film's sponsor, Harga's House of Ribs.

In our Roundworld, there is a technique of embedded marketing called "product placement", where commercial brands or products are shown or referred to in movies or television programs for advertising purposes. Since the film industry in Holy Wood has not yet invented ways to record sound for movies, the dialogues are shown as texts, in the similar way as in the silent Hollywood films, and this allows Dibbler to embed Sham Harga's advertisements into the dialogue cards. Dibbler's attempts to use product placement also find other expressions—in a knight's heraldic banner and in fireworks designed to spell out words in the middle of a scene portraying a burning city—as this technique of advertising becomes a running gag in the following pages (217–219).

It is made clear to the reader that Dibbler's embedded advertising crudely interferes with the director Soll's artistic vision of the movie. The advertisements interrupt and twist the meaning of the famous phrase from *Gone with the Wind*, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn", in a similar manner as they stick out from the other dialogues. Dibbler's argument that the advertisement amplifies the pathos

of the wounded soldier's last words is comically preposterous, as is his anachronistic suggestion at the end of the quote, which would obviously spoil the historical atmosphere that the film strives to create. From the viewpoint of the authorial audience, these intrusive advertisements can be understood as the comic device of bathos, the failed stylistic elevation. Thus, Pratchett makes it obvious to the reader why the viewpoints of Soll and his uncle clash violently, and the comedy of the scene results partly from this comic incongruity of viewpoints. The parodic allusion to *Gone with the Wind* and the satiric allusion to commercialism and product placement in our Roundworld add layers of comic meanings to this comedy of clashing viewpoints.

2.4.2.3 Subliminal advertising

After several attempts to embed advertising into the films, which the director Soll fends off, Dibbler learns from Gaffer the cameraman some details about film editing that arouse his interest.

> 'So what would happen', he said slowly, 'if, say, just one picture in the whole click was different.'
>
> 'Funny you should ask,' said Gaffer. 'It happened the other day when we were patching up *Beyond the Valley of the Trolls*. One of the apprentices had stuck in just one picture from *The Golde Rush* and we all went around all morning thinking about gold and not knowing why. It was as if it'd gone straight into our heads without our eyes seeing it. Of course, I took my belt to the lad when we spotted it, but we'd never have found out if I hadn't happened to look at the click slowly.'
>
> He picked up the paste brush again, squared up a couple of strips of film, and fixed them together. After a while he became aware that it had gone very quiet behind him.
>
> 'You all right, Mr Dibbler?' he said.
>
> 'Hmm? Oh.' Dibbler was deep in thought. 'Just one picture had all that effect?'
>
> 'Oh, yes. Are you all right, Mr Dibbler?'
>
> 'Never felt better, lad,' Dibbler said. 'Never felt better.' (*Moving Pictures*, 221)

This inside knowledge of editing films inspires Dibbler to invent a novel and unforeseen concept for marketing, subliminal advertising, which Soll's keen eyes nevertheless manage to detect before the film that Dibbler has edited goes to the theaters.

> Further along the row Soll leaned across to his uncle and dropped a small coil of film in his lap.

> 'This belongs to you,' he said sweetly.
>
> 'What is it?' said Dibbler.
>
> 'Well I thought I'd have a quick look at the click before it got shown—'
>
> 'You did?' said Dibbler.
>
> 'And what did I find, in the middle of the burning city scene, but five minutes showing nothing but a plate of spare ribs in Harga's Special Peanut Sauce. I know why, of course. I just want to know why this.'
>
> Dibbler grinned guiltily. 'The way I see it,' he said, 'if one little quick picture can make people want to go and buy things, just think what five minutes' worth could do.' (*Moving Pictures*, 280–281)

These two quotes are separated by sixty pages in the novel, but still the reader can easily discern here the classical joke structure, where the dialogue in the first quote acts as a setup for the punch line at the end of the second quote. The same comic contrast as in the previous quote, between Soll's artistic and Dibbler's commercial viewpoint, provides narrative tension and comic incongruity that are available to the reader in the narrative audience, just like Dibbler's comically twisted logic in the last quote.

Joining the authorial audience, the reader can furthermore appreciate the satiric aspect of Dibbler's business stratagems. Dibbler is made the evident butt of Pratchett's comedy inside the fictional story world, while satire takes its targets from the real world. At first, when Dibbler composes movie posters with emotive rhetoric and envisions what the movie audience wants to see, his business sense, combined with the creative insights that the wild idea of Holy Wood feeds him with, serve to represent Dibbler in a more positive light than the unimaginative Silverfish. However, Dibbler is shown in a less complimentary light when he applies the ideas of product placement and embedded advertising in a comically intrusive manner, spoiling the fictional immersion that most movies strive to create. The comically dislocated logic that Dibbler uses in the last quote, in his effort to make subliminal advertising more effective, is so obviously flawed that it represents Dibbler's commercial endeavors—as well as their equivalents in our Roundworld—in an unequivocally critical light.

A hypothesis that I argue for throughout this dissertation is that viewpoints can serve both comical and rhetorical functions: humorists design unusual viewpoints in order to create comic incongruities, and viewpoints can also be deployed rhetorically to express positive or negative attitudes toward the things represented in fiction. When we attend the narrative audience of the *Discworld* novels and immerse ourselves

in the story world, we can appreciate the comedy of the Dean's music-inspired rebellion and C.M.O.T. Dibbler's failing advertising schemes. We may also marvel at those strange creatures, Critters and clichés, that prowl in the recesses of L-space. When we attend the authorial audience, we can appreciate the cultural resonance between the Discworld and our Roundworld that creates Pratchett's satire of rock music, literary critics, and the commercial aspects of the movie business.

I have in this chapter 2.4 focused my analyses on satire, but the humor in many of the quotes discussed above is hyperdetermined. In the quote from *Soul Music*, the satire of the rebellious teenage culture of rock music and James Dean is combined with parodic allusions to the film *Rebel Without a Cause*. In addition to these contextual comic devices, there are also structural comic devices in this quote, such as the Dean's bathetic rebellion (when he refuses to fold his clothes before going to bed) and the joke that his constant James Dean-like mumbling sets up. There are also some stylistic comic devices, such as the hyperbolic simile "he felt like a lifelong tundra dweller when he wakes up one morning with a deep urge to go water-skiing" and the punch line to the mumbling joke, "a rebel without a pause", which combines a parodic allusion with punning.

In the *Guards! Guards!* quote, the satire of literary critics is combined with a pun that associates Critters with critics.

In the quotes from *Moving Pictures*, the satire of commercialism in films is combined with parody of movie conventions, parodic allusions to *Gone with the Wind*, and absurd logic (why Dibbler expects his extended subliminal advertising to be effective). In addition to these contextual and situational comic devices, there are also structural comic devices, such as figgins (or running gags), bathos (when intrusive advertisements sink the pathos in the film), and antithesis (juxtaposing Dibbler's commercial ideas about films with Silverfish's technical and Soll's artistic ideas), as well as at least one immediately notable stylistic comic device, Victor's sarcastic pun on spectacles. These quotes consist mainly of the characters' dialogues, while Pratchett typically deploys stylistic comic devices in the narrator's discourse.

In the following chapter, I will study some structural comic devices that depend on the order of representation for their comic effect.

3 STRUCTURAL COMIC DEVICES: PLAYING WITH THE READER'S EXPECTATIONS

In this chapter, I will discuss how Pratchett arranges the subject matter to create comedy that plays with the reader's expectations. Namely, my focus in this chapter will be on four structural comic devices: paraprosdokian, bathos, figgin, and comic footnote.

Paraprosdokian is a comic device that at the end of a sentence introduces a "twist-in-the-tail"—an unexpected viewpoint to what has just been said. This order of presentation echoes the conventional joke structure, where the setup is followed by a punch line, and consequently the paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail frequently acts as the main comic element in jokes.

Bathos is another comic device that plays with the reader's expectations. It establishes expectations of stylistic elevation, which it subsequently disappoints.

Recurring jests—which are called "figgins" among Pratchett's fandom—are running gags that introduce slight modifications with each recurrence. These variations add new and unexpected comic elements to the recurring jest, and thus the figgin simultaneously provides us with the pleasure of recognizing something familiar and the pleasure of discovering something new and unexpected.

The fourth comic device that I will discuss in this chapter, the humorous footnote, typically functions as the narrator's aside, a deviation from the main narration. Because it takes a moment for us to move our gaze from the main text to the footnote, footnotes can be understood as a device that uses short pauses and comic timing to enhance the comic effect. Occasionally there are footnotes to footnotes, which extend jests with additional jesting.

3.1 Paraprosdokian: an unexpected twist-in-the-tail

According to Peter Rabinowitz (1987), we always apply our knowledge about narrative conventions as we move through the text, making guesses about what will happen later in the novel. When, often without conscious processing, we recognize a narrative convention in a novel, the convention triggers certain expectations in us.

For authors, narrative conventions are rhetorical tools that allow them to guide readers' expectations. Authors can, for example, create a sense of resolution (by completing patterns that the convention leads us to expect), create surprises (by reversing expectations, by deflecting them, or by fulfilling them in an unexpected way), or they can irritate the reader (by purposefully failing to fulfill our expectations) (ibid., 111).

Paraprosdokian is a comic device that depends for its comic effect not on gratifying, but rather on disappointing the anticipations that the preceding sequence has aroused in the reader. Thus, it is fitting that paraprosdokian is often translated as "the unexpected".[38] Phillip Harding (1994, 197) describes paraprosdokian as a "twist-in-the-tail" and points out that "the unexpected" was recognized as a comic technique already in ancient Greece—it is listed in *Tractatus Coislinianus* as one of the means to arouse laughter in comedies. Aristotle's example of this kind of unexpected twist-in-the-tail goes like this: "On his feet he wore… blisters", where the audience is led to expect that the last word of the sentence would be "sandals" (Aristotle 1991, 1412a; Conley 2004, 277).

Although jokes are perhaps the most extensively researched structural technique of verbal comedy (R. A. Martin, 2006, 15), I have not been able to find any detailed theoretical discussion on the exact nature of paraprosdokian. However, if we treat Aristotle's example as a prototype of how "the unexpected" works as a comic device, then paraprosdokian seems to require the reader to reframe or reinterpret what has been represented before the unexpected twist-in-the-tail appears. This unexpected twist may perhaps be understood simply as an unexpected twist in the meaning of the sentence, but—since one of my main arguments in this dissertation is that Terry Pratchett's witcraft is often based on comically unusual viewpoints—I prefer to consider paraprosdokian as an unexpected twist of the viewpoint.

3.1.1 Unexpected views on a messy room, words for snow, and a bird-friend

Rincewind, the inept wizard, is introduced to the reader as a protagonist in the first two *Discworld* novels, *The Colour of Magic* (1983) and *The Light Fantastic* (1986). He returns to the series as a protagonist of the fifth and ninth novels, *Sourcery* (1988) and *Eric* (1990). In the seventeenth novel, *Interesting Times* (1994), Rincewind appears again as one of the protagonists. After spending a long time as a castaway on a

[38] The Greek phrase *para prosdokia* means literally "contrary to expectation" (Harding 1994, 197). On defining paraprosdokian, see also Howard 2010, 151 and Raskin & Ruch 2008, 533.

tropical paradise island, Rincewind begins to feel acutely homesick, and when the wizards of Unseen University make a spell that transfers him to the familiar University grounds, Rincewind becomes sentimental and wants to see the room where he used to live. The following description of Rincewind's old room ends with a paraprosdokian twist of viewpoint.

> He pushed open a door.
>
> The place inside *had* been his room. It was a mess. There was a large and battered wardrobe, and that was about the end of it as far as proper furniture was concerned unless you wanted to broaden the term to include a wicker chair with no bottom and three legs and a mattress so full of the life that inhabits mattresses that it occasionally moved sluggishly around the floor, bumping into things. The rest of the room was a litter of objects dragged in from the street—old crates, bits of planking, sacks…
>
> Rincewind felt a lump in his throat. They'd left his room just as it was. (*Interesting Times*, 51)

Here the narration is focused first on Rincewind's perceptions, and then on his emotional response. This subjectively restricted viewpoint guides the reader's expectations and acts as the necessary setup for the paraprosdokian twist of perspective at the end of the quote. To construct this unexpected twist-in-the-tail, the narrator misleads the reader by using emphatic italics to mark the past perfect tense, in the first sentence of the second paragraph, which creates an apparent dichotomy between the past and the present state of the room. When the narrator reveals Rincewind's response to what he sees, the dichotomy between the past and the present turns out to be false, and we are forced to reinterpret the whole preceding description of the room.

As we read this passage for the first time, the dichotomy between the verb tenses guides our expectations and leads us to think that Rincewind's room has changed drastically since he last saw it, and that it has been used as some kind of storage room. But when Rincewind's reaction is revealed, we need to adjust our understanding of Rincewind's viewpoint and acknowledge not only the fact that the room was a similar mess when Rincewind used to live there, but also that—at least in his current nostalgic state of mind—Rincewind in fact likes to live in that room despite its broken furniture, unhygienic mattress, and the litter dragged in from the street. Our initial attitude, that no-one would like to live in such a messy room, is a conventional viewpoint, and hence our expectation of Rincewind's emotional response is easily misled by the narrator's subtle trickery with the verb tenses. Since Rincewind's actual reaction is unconventional, and thus unexpected, this

paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail creates a comic incongruity between our conventional and Rincewind's unconventional viewpoints.

Even though this quote clearly plays with two incongruous viewpoints, the comedy of this paraprosdokian is equally based on the arrangement and order of representation: the unexpected comical viewpoint is revealed at the very end of the description, while the preceding description of the room acts as a setup for this punch line. The humor in this quote is hyperdetermined, since it also includes a stylistic comic device, the comically hyperbolic image where Rincewind's old mattress is so full of life that it moves around the floor and bumps into things.

Another comic paraprosdokian appears in the following climatic description from *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), the sixth *Discworld* novel:

> Winter in the Ramtops could not honestly be described as a magical frosty wonderland, each twig laced with confections of brittle ice. Winter in the Ramtops didn't mess about; it was a gateway straight through to the primeval coldness that lived before the creation of the world. Winter in the Ramtops was several yards of snow, the forests a mere collection of shadowy green tunnels under the drifts. Winter meant the coming of the lazy wind, which couldn't be bothered to blow around people and blew right through them instead. The idea that Winter could actually be enjoyable would never have occurred to Ramtop people, who had eighteen different words for snow.*
>
> * All of them, unfortunately, unprintable. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 60)

Here the rhetoric of Pratchett's humor appears to convey the Ramtop people's negative attitude toward snow and winter, although I think that it betrays at the same time the author's Romantic affinity to depict the wild and untamed forces of nature rather than peaceful and domesticated pastoral scenes. Consequently, the explicit rhetorical blame of the harshness of winter is combined with an implicit praise for the power of winter.

This implicit praise is manifested in several stylistic tricks that make the description impressive and emotionally intensive: parallelism of similar sentence-openers ("Winter in the Ramtops"); composing a strong antithetical contrast (describing what the winter *was not* like before describing what it actually *was* like); plenty of poetic modifiers ("a magical frosty wonderland", "confections of brittle ice", "the primeval coldness that lived before the creation of the world", "collection of shadowy green tunnels under the drifts"); personifications of winter ("didn't mess about", the capital initial letter) and wind ("lazy", "couldn't be bothered to blow"); metaphor ("a gateway"), and hyperbole ("blew right through them"). This stylistic extravaganza acts as an eloquent amplification of the emphatic statement that the

Ramtop people did not find winter enjoyable, although, at the same time, it also functions as a comic setup for the paraprosdokian punch line, which is delivered in the footnote. While these stylistic devices use language playfully, I think that their main poetic function is to create elevating pathos which the footnote sinks, and thus Pratchett combines here the paraprosdokian with another structural comic device, stylistic anticlimax, which is also known as bathos.

In constructing the paraprosdokian, the narrator alludes to the cultural cliché in our Roundworld that people who live in the north[39] famously have specific words for various kinds of snow, while the people who live in warmer climates manage with only one word for snow. When the narrator tells that the Ramtop people have many words for snow, most readers can detect the allusion to this cliché, which guides the reader's expectations. However, Pratchett disappoints these expectations by revealing in the footnote the comically unconventional reason why the Ramtop people have multiple words for snow. By moving this paraprosdokian twist into a footnote, Pratchett separates the punch line from the preceding setup, and hence devises the conventional joke structure. Also, the time it takes for readers to jump from the main text to the footnote constructs a similar pause that typically precedes the punch line in orally delivered jokes, such as in stand-up comedy.

The fifth *Discworld* novel, *Sourcery* (1988), depicts a war between wizards—and thus in the tenth novel of the series, Moving Pictures (1990), the wizards of Unseen University, the premium academy of magic in Ankh-Morpork, have decided that they need a period of stability. Consequently, they invite Ridcully the Brown, a country wizard, to become their new Archchancellor. Ridcully's epithet alludes to a minor character in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955), Radagast the Brown, whose original name Aiwendil is in Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales* (1980) told to signify "bird-friend", while the name Radagast means "tender of beasts". In these books, Radagast is described as a wizard who cares more about the well-being of wild animals than for the affairs of humans. Via this intertextual allusion, the epithet sets up expectations for readers who are familiar with Tolkien's oeuvre.

However, detecting the allusion to Tolkien's novels is not a necessary requirement for enjoying Pratchett's comedy when the narrator introduces the new Archchancellor. By revealing the Unseen University staff's expectations of Ridcully, Pratchett guides the reader's expectations and anticipations about what the new Archchancellor will be like.

> He looked ideal.

[39] Such as Inuits (who were formerly known as Eskimos) and Finns.

> 'Just the chap,' they all said. 'Clean sweep. New broom. A country wizard. Back to the thingumajigs, the roots of wizardry. Jolly old boy with a pipe and twinkly eyes. Sort of chap who can tell one herb from another, roams-the-high-forest-with-every-beast-his-brother kind of thing. Sleeps under the stars, like as not. Knows what the wind is saying, we shouldn't wonder. Got a name for all the trees, you can bank on it. Speaks to the birds, too.'
>
> A messenger had been sent. Ridcully the Brown had sighed, cursed a bit, found his staff in the kitchen garden where it had been supporting a scarecrow, and had set out.
>
> 'And if he's any problem,' the wizards had added, in the privacy of their own heads, 'anyone who talks to trees should be no trouble to get rid of.'
>
> And then he'd arrived, and it turned out that Ridcully the Brown *did* speak to the birds. In fact he shouted at birds, and what he shouted was, 'Winged you, yer bastard!'
>
> The beasts of the field and fowls of the air *did* know Ridcully the Brown. They'd got so good at pattern-recognition that, for a radius of about twenty miles around the Ridcully estates, they'd run, hide or in desperate cases attack violently at the mere sight of a pointy hat. (*Moving Pictures*, 19)

The narrator's description of how Ridcully contradicts the Unseen University wizards' expectations continues for several more paragraphs, but what is most relevant for the current discussion is the paraprosdokian *metanoia*[40] in the last two paragraphs of the above quote. The lengthy joke structure—a setup followed by a comic punch line—allows Pratchett to build a stark contrast, as well as a strong comic incongruity, between the opposing viewpoints that the paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail reveals.

The setup part of the joke structure is represented to us by the University staff's collective speech, which apparently brings together several unanimous comments from many wizards into one speech representation. This collective speech echoes similar sentiments as the allusion to Tolkien's Radagast the Brown by guiding the reader to expect that Ridcully the Brown is a bird-friend and tender of beasts. Then follows the extended punch line, with a paraprosdokian twist of viewpoint, when the narrator reveals that Ridcully is an unconventional wizard, in many ways the opposite of what the reader was led to expect.

Between the setup and the punch line there is also a short pause in the progress of the narrative—formed by two short paragraphs where, respectively, the narrator tells us how Ridcully reacts to his new assignment and allows us to peek into the Unseen University wizards' secret thoughts. In oral joke-telling, similar narrative

[40] Metanoia means "correction" in Greek, and it is the rhetorical figure of "qualifying a statement by recalling it and expressing it in a different way" (Lanham 1991, 100, 193).

pauses enhance the rhythm and timing of the joke by allowing the information provided in the setup part to "sink in" and settle in the audience's minds before the punch line comically disappoints the previously established expectations. The narrator also uses two successive metanoias or corrections, which add further emphasis to the paraprosdokian twist of viewpoint: they redefine what speaking to birds actually means in Ridcully's case and what roaming the forests with beasts means from a hunter's perspective. This unexpected twist-in-the-tail also makes the allusion to Tolkien's novels parodical.

3.1.2 Anecdotes of the oldest wizard on the Disc and a man's best friend

The word "joke" is, in common parlance, often understood as a general term that can signify all kinds of informal verbal quips that amuse people. However, in humor research "joke" usually refers to a specific form of humor: a short amusing narrative, an anecdote that ends in a comic punch line. Theorists of humor divide jokes into two structural parts: the setup and the punch line, where everything in the joke that precedes the punch line is considered the setup. This kind of formal joke is sometimes called a "canned joke", because it is a "context-free and self-contained unit of humor that carries within itself all the information needed for it to be understood and enjoyed" (R. A. Martin, 2006, 12). The punch lines of such formal jokes are frequently rendered comical by applying the paraprosdokian twist of viewpoint, and in some narrative digressions of the *Discworld* novels Pratchett uses paraprosdokian in this joke-like manner, combining it with humorous anecdotes.

The Light Fantastic (1986), the second novel in the *Discworld* series, includes a brief narrative digression from the main story, an anecdote about an unexpected twist of viewpoint that surprises and upsets the oldest wizard on the Disc.

> Which is a good time to get back to the rambling buildings of Unseen University and in particular the apartments of Greyhald Spold, currently the oldest wizard on the Disc and determined to keep it that way. He has just been extremely surprised and upset.
>
> For the last few hours he has been very busy. He may be deaf and a little hard of thinking, but elderly wizards have very well-trained survival instincts, and they know that when a tall figure in a black robe and the latest in agricultural handtools starts looking thoughtfully at you it is time to act fast. The servants have been dismissed. The doorways have been sealed with a paste made from powdered mayflies, and protective octograms have been drawn on the windows. Rare and rather smelly oils have been poured in complex patterns on the floor, in designs which hurt the eyes and suggest the designer was drunk or from some other dimension or, possibly, both;

> in the very centre of the room is the eightfold octogram of Withholding, surrounded by red and green candles. And in the centre of that is a box made from wood of the curly-fern pine, which grows to a great age, and it is lined with red silk and yet more protective amulets. Because Greyhald Spold knows that Death is looking for him, and has spent many years designing an impregnable hiding place.
>
> He has just set the complicated clockwork of the lock and shut the lid, lying back in the knowledge that here at last is the perfect defence against the most ultimate of all his enemies, although as yet he has not considered the important part that airholes must play in an enterprise of this kind.
>
> And right beside him, very close to his ear, a voice has just said: DARK IN HERE, ISN'T IT? (*The Light Fantastic*, 58–59)

This anecdote is not explicitly represented as a joke, but in several respects it fulfills the conventional requirements for a formal joke. As a narrative digression, it does not contribute in any way to the main story of the novel, since this oldest wizard on the Disc does not appear as a character elsewhere in the novel. Hence, the amusing anecdote is context-independent—Pratchett could have placed it anywhere in the novel, and even its total omission would have had no noticeable effect on the story of *The Light Fantastic*.

Another joke-like feature is the comic punch line at the end of the anecdote, when Death, whose speech is in the *Discworld* novels always capitalized, makes his appearance. Here the paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail in fact precedes this punch line, because the last clause of the third paragraph already reveals to the reader why Death will soon appear for Greyhald Spold, and the punch line of the succinct fourth paragraph serves merely to extend the paraprosdokian twist of viewpoint and to add comic emphasis to it. This paraprosdokian also reveals situational irony, or irony of actions, where the result of one's efforts is the exact opposite of what was intended: in his intricate efforts to escape Death, the old wizard has in fact invited Death into the magically impregnable and airtight shelter he has built for himself.

In addition to this combination of paraprosdokian, joke structure, comic irony of action, and an unusual viewpoint on seeking longevity, there are also some stylistic witticisms sprinkled along the anecdote. The narrator's description of the old wizard as "hard of thinking" echoes the more familiar idiom "hard of hearing" and suggests, via a euphemistic circumlocution, that old age has made the wizard a bit daft. The "tall figure in a black robe and the latest in agricultural handtools" is another circumlocution—a comic euphemism for the anthropomorphic personification of Death, who carries a scythe and is a recurring character in the *Discworld* novels. The second paragraph also includes a comic hyperbole when the narrator describes the oil patterns on the floor. All these stylistic comic devices prepare us for the

paraprosdokian punch line of the anecdote by communicating the narrator's humorous attitude and comic intent to the reader.

Our viewpoint and understanding of the old wizard's situation and actions are stealthily, and yet effectively, guided by Pratchett's representation of death as a personified natural phenomenon. Greyhald Spold's actions would seem quite absurd without this personification, but once we conceive—like the old wizard—that Death is a person, then there exists some sort of absurd logic in trying to hide from him. However, without such personification, the wizard's attempt to live longer by hiding in a box would not make any sense. A more sensible course of action to prolong life would perhaps include a healthy diet, some physical exercise, and a sufficient amount of sleep. Nevertheless, here the personified Death and Greyhald Spold's comically unusual viewpoint on how a person can achieve longevity function as the necessary logical prerequisites for Pratchett's joke-like anecdote and its paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail.

The following anecdote, which ends with an unexpected twist of viewpoint, is told by a dog. As I have already mentioned in my discussion on comically absurd logic above, the tenth *Discworld* novel, *Moving Pictures* (1990), introduces a dog character named Gaspode who can talk and think like humans. Pratchett sets up a comic antithesis in the novel between Gaspode, whose intelligence is hidden behind the scruffy back-alley mutt appearance, and another dog character, Laddie,[41] who looks cinematic and heroic but is not a great thinker. Laddie acts like a normal pet dog who is eager to please humans, while Gaspode's ability to think leads him to rebel against the conventional role of the dog as man's best friend.

> Victor threw the stick again.
>
> 'Tell me,' he said, 'who was the famous Gaspode you're named after?'
>
> 'You never heard of him?'
>
> 'No.'
>
> 'He was dead famous.'
>
> 'He was a dog?'
>
> 'Yeah. It was years and years ago. There was this ole bloke in Ankh who snuffed it, and he belonged to one of them religions where they bury you after you're dead, an' they did, and he had this ole dog—'

[41] The name Laddie is a parodic intertextual allusion to Lassie, the heroic dog character first portrayed in Eric Knight's novel *Lassie Come Home* (1940) and subsequently made world-famous by several Hollywood movies and popular TV series.

'—called Gaspode—?'

'Yeah, and this ole dog had been his only companion and after they buried the man he lay down on his grave and howled for a couple of weeks. Growled at everybody who came near. An' then died.'

Victor paused in the act of throwing the stick again.

'That's very sad,' he said. He threw. Laddie tore along underneath it, and disappeared into a stand of scrubby trees on the hillside.

'Yeah. Everyone says it demonstrates a dog's innocent and undyin' love for 'is master,' said Gaspode, spitting the words out as if they were ashes.

'You don't believe that, then?'

'Not really. I b'lieve any bloody dog will stay still an' howl when you've just lowered the gravestone on his tail,' said Gaspode. (*Moving Pictures*, 167–168)

While the comic anecdote of the oldest wizard on the Disc is told by the narrator, here the anecdote is narrated by a character. And while the purpose of the story of the old wizard is clearly to amuse the reader, Gaspode does not intend to amuse his audience with the anecdote—although the paraprosdokian twist of perspective at the end, which forces us to reframe our understanding of the grieving dog's behavior, acts as a punch line that turns the anecdote into a joke which Pratchett has designed in order to amuse his readers.

The tale that Gaspode recounts is a cultural cliché that resonates with many similar stories in our Roundworld.[42] The foundation of such stories of the dog as man's best friend seems to lie in our very human tendency to project our own feelings and experiences onto others, which steers us toward the potentially false humanization of animals, since we do not really know how the human-dog relationship is experienced from the dog's viewpoint. Gaspode's anecdote can be interpreted as Pratchett's satire of this cultural cliché. The rhetorical situation where Gaspode's narrative takes place also includes comic situational irony—the apparent intention of Gaspode's anecdote is to demonstrate his defiant attitude to the human idea of the dog as man's best friend, while at the same time Laddie confirms this stereotype by happily fetching the stick that Victor keeps throwing.

[42] It is also not a new story. Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of The Baskervilles* (1902), for instance, includes an allusion to this kind of story, which seems to have been a cultural cliché already at the time when Doyle wrote his story. In the novel (chapter 13), Sherlock Holmes quips to Watson that the boy he has hired as his assistant "would certainly have pined away at the door of my hut, as a dog does at his master's grave, if I had not set his mind at rest about my safety".

I have discussed above how Pratchett invites us to reconsider our conventional expectations by designing comically unexpected twists-in-the-tail. The humor in all these quotes is hyperdetermined. In addition to a paraprosdokian, the quote about Rincewind's old room contains a hyperbole when the narrator describes Rincewind's old mattress to be so full of life that it moves around. The footnote in the quote about the Ramtop people's 18 different words for snow combines paraprosdokian with bathos. The quote that introduces Archchancellor Ridcully includes a parodic allusion to Tolkien's country wizard. The anecdote about the oldest wizard on the Disc sets up a joke structure where the punch line combines paraprosdokian with situational irony and absurd logic, while the setup part includes two euphemisms and a hyperbole. The anecdote of the dog as man's best friend combines joke structure and a paraprosdokian punch line with satire, since it resonates with a cultural cliché about a grieving dog dying on its master's grave, and there is also situational irony when the rhetorical message of Gaspode's story is undermined by the stick-fetching Laddie, who is happy to please humans.

The humor in all these quotes includes comically unusual viewpoints. Rincewind's attachment to his old messy room provides a comically unconventional perspective, and also the reason why Ramtop people have 18 different words for snow is based on a comically unusual viewpoint. Archchancellor Ridcully's approach to birds and other beasts creates a comically unusual viewpoint on the conventional representations of country wizards in fantasy fiction. The anecdote of the oldest wizard on the Disc creates a comically unusual viewpoint on the possible methods for seeking longevity, while Gaspode's anecdote provides a comically unusual viewpoint on why the grieving dog has stayed on his master's grave.

Perhaps the most striking rhetorically evaluative element in the quote about Rincewind's messy room is his appreciative emotional response, which coincides with the unexpected revelation of Rincewind's comically unusual viewpoint on his old room. Also the Ramtop people's various words for snow clearly spring from their evaluative emotional responses. In the quote that introduces Archchancellor Ridcully, the main target of rhetorical evaluation is the conventional idea of country wizards in fantasy fiction. In addition, the satiric critique of the cultural cliché of the dog as man's best friend is clearly rhetorically evaluative. The characters' emotional responses tend to indicate rhetorical evaluations of things that exist inside the story world, although occasionally these evaluations have a dual target, when the critiqued phenomenon in the Discworld exists also as a cultural cliché in our Roundworld.

Next, I will discuss another comic device that relies for its comic effect on the authorial manipulation of the reader's expectations: bathos.

3.2 Bathos: failed elevation

Rhetoricians have traditionally instructed that in order to gain the greatest rhetorical effect on the audience's emotions, orators should arrange the listed items in their speech to proceed from the less important to the more important, saving the most important item to the end. This ascending order is called climactic arrangement, and the corresponding rhetorical figure is called *climax* (Corbett & Connors 1999, 393–394). The opposite rhetorical figure, *anticlimax*, consists of arranging the subject-matter in the order of descending importance, proceeding from the more important ideas to the less important (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 24). Anticlimax does not create the elevating emotional effect of the climactic arrangement; instead, it often achieves a comic effect by undermining the dignity and seriousness of the topic under discussion.

In the 18th century, Alexander Pope used the Greek word for "depth", bathos, to name the literary device he had invented, which performs a similar function as the anticlimax: "The term Bathos has, since Pope's *Peri Bathous*, sometimes been used to describe the emotional appeal that, intentionally or not, evokes laughter rather than transport, which sinks rather than soars" (Lanham 1991, 111). Anticlimax and bathos are commonly defined as synonymous terms, although in his essay *Peri Bathous: The Art of Sinking in Poetry* (1727), Pope points out anticlimax as only one of the several available ways to create the bathetic effect in poetry. Pope's essay parodies Longinus's[43] treatise *On the Sublime*, which argues that pathos, emotional appeal, can be evoked in the audience when a poem represents a noble subject-matter in an elevated style by using rhetorical figures, as well as by arranging the images and ideas of the discourse in an order of ascending importance (Longinus 1907, Chapter VIII). In his parody, Pope uses the term bathos to signify comically failed attempts to evoke poetic pathos.

While *On the Sublime* describes what techniques poets have used in order to create an emotionally elevating response in the audience, Pope's essay on bathos advises how the opposite effect can be achieved. According to Pope, an analogy that diminishes the topic of discussion is one of the available means to create the bathetic effect of sinking in poetry. For example, the poet can describe a stormy sea by using a metaphor that associates it with a ruffled bed (Pope 2006, 202). In addition to describing impressive topics by using commonplace imagery, Pope also points out

[43] *On the Sublime* (*Peri Hypsous* in Greek) was written sometime during the first few centuries of the common era. This treatise has been traditionally attributed to Longinus, and sometimes to "Pseudo-Longinus" since scholars affirmed that the actual author of this treatise is unknown.

illogical thoughts and prolixity—either through periphrasis or the stylistic amplification—as devices that the poet can deploy to produce confusing and incongruous images which fail to move the audience's emotions.

On the Sublime instructs how many rhetorical figures can be used to achieve stylistic elevation in poetry. In a similar vein, Pope suggests that various rhetorical figures can be used as stylistic means in the art of sinking poetic pathos: figures that variegate, confuse, or reverse (catachresis, metonymy, synecdoche, aposiopesis, metaphor, incompatible images, jargon, antithesis); magnifying figures (hyperbole and periphrasis); and diminishing figures (anticlimax, the vulgar, the infantile, inanity, the expletive, macrology, pleonasm, and tautology). Mixing an elevated style with a vulgar and low subject-matter is yet another bathetic device that Pope identifies in *Peri Bathous*.

Drawing from Pope's insights on the art of bathos, I will here discuss two comic techniques that Terry Pratchett deploys in the *Discworld* novels to produce comically failed elevation: anticlimactic shift in style and descending arrangement of the subject-matter. Striving for pathos has been an unquestioned literary convention since Antiquity. Pope's parodic instructions for using bathos in poetry revise this convention, and his discussion on bathos is funny precisely because this revision constructs a comically unusual viewpoint on the poetic convention of using rhetorical figures to create stylistic pathos.

3.2.1 Bathos in swanlike movement, wooing, and Death's job interview

Pope introduced the concept of bathos as a parody of the conventional stylistic devices used in poetry, and parody of poetic conventions can be also found in the *Discworld* novels. This kind of bathetic parody in the *Discworld* novels is typically manifested as a stylistic shift from the poetic register to colloquial language. *Equal Rites* (1987), the third novel in the series, includes an example of such bathos when Eskarina Smith, a young girl who has accidentally inherited a wizard's staff, arrives in a small town on a busy market day and unwittingly stirs confusion because magic keeps leaking out from her staff.

> According to the standard poetic instructions one should move through a fair like the white swan at evening moves o'er the bay, but because of certain practical difficulties Esk settled for moving through the crowds like a small dodgem car, bumping from body to body with the tip of the staff waving a yard above her head. […]
>
> Esk, in fact, moved through the fair more like an arsonist moves through a hayfield or a neutron bounces through a reactor, poets notwithstanding, and the hypothetical

> watcher could have detected her random passage by tracing the outbreaks of hysteria and violence. (*Equal Rites*, 101–103)

Here the narrator explicitly refers to an established poetic convention and quotes the lyrics of "She Moved Through the Fair", a popular English folk song. By deploying three hyperbolic similes, the narrator contrasts the idyllic pastoral imagery—which is amplified by the archaically poetic syncope "o'er"—of the folk song with the urban, modern images of a dodgem car and a nuclear reactor, and then reinforces the vigorousness of these images with the image of an arsonist moving through a hayfield. In order to emphasize the energetic mental associations of these hyperbolic similes, he then summarizes the outcome of Esk's movements with the phrase that indicates the characters' strong emotional responses, "outbreaks of hysteria and violence". The resulting anticlimactic shift from poetic to prosaic imagery creates emphatic bathos, since the imagery and diction of the folk song strives to elevate the reader's emotions to lyrical pathos, while the stylistic choices of Pratchett's similes express prosaically hectic activity. Without the contrast that the poetic allusion sets up, the effect of Pratchett's hyperbolic similes would have been less amusing. And since Esk is ignorant of the mayhem she creates, while the narrator invites the reader to observe it, there is comic dramatic irony in the description that makes its humor more hyperdetermined.

In addition to the shift in style that creates a bathetic contrast, Pratchett introduces a comically unusual viewpoint when the narrator suggests that the imagery of a folk song offers people the conventional instructions of how a maid should actually move through the fair. From the rhetorical perspective, authors use conventions to guide the reader's expectations (Rabinowitz 1987, 110–140), and from the perspective of humor analysis, conventions often function in a similar manner: as a setup for introducing unusual viewpoints that comically contradict the expectations that the conventions have established. In this case, Pratchett establishes something that appears to be a convention—although in fact it is not—which he can then comically violate when Esk moves through the fair in a very singular and unswanlike manner. This comically unusual viewpoint intensifies the bathetic effect that the anticlimactic shift from poetic to prosaic imagery creates.

The sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), includes a similar anticlimactic shift in style when the Fool—a jester at the royal court of Lancre—attempts to woo one of the witch protagonists, Magrat Garlick, while they are watching a play written by Hwel, the Discworld's counterpart to Shakespeare. However, Magrat is concerned by the way the play portrays witches, and she leaves abruptly in the middle of the Fool's romantic speech.

> He hesitated, picking at the lichened stonework with his fingers; Before he'd left the city he'd asked Hwel for a few suitable words to say to a young lady, and he had been memorising them on the way home. It was now or never.
>
> 'I'd like to know if I could compare you to a summer's day. Because—well, June 12th was quite nice, and … Oh. You've gone …' (*Wyrd Sisters*, 212–213)

The first sentence of the Fool's speech is a parodic allusion to the opening line of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate." This intertextual resonance of the poetic simile foregrounds the Fool's attempt at stylistic elevation and lyrical tone. However, his second sentence invalidates the initial poetic effort by adding a prosaic detail, the precise date of a lovely summer's day, and the unimaginative, stylistically feeble qualifier "quite nice", which lacks the lyrically elevated tone in which the original poem praises the object of affection. The shift from poetic to prosaic style constructs a comic anticlimax.

Citing seductive love poems as a part of courting is a cultural cliché, and here the bathos can be interpreted to parody this convention. The stylistic anticlimax also foregrounds the recurring narrative motif that the Fool lacks skills in the art of courtship. In other words, at the same time as Pratchett deploys bathos in order to create a humorously unusual viewpoint on Shakespeare's sonnet, the bathos also serves the narrative function of characterizing the Fool as an inept lover, which reinforces the previously established readerly expectations of him as a comic character.

While moving through the fair is merely a brief and incidental situation in *Equal Rites*, the Fool's awkward attempts at wooing Magrat is a running gag in *Wyrd Sisters*. In both cases, the bathetic comedy depends on the literary convention that poetic language and imagery—especially the poetic simile—is intended to evoke pathos in the audience, while the comic bathos in the Fool's prosaic adaptation of Shakespeare's sonnet also parodies the literary conventions of romances. Esk's un-swanlike movement through the fair violates the expectations that the narrator sets up just before describing her manner of moving, but the Fool's violation of romantic conventions is precisely what the reader expects, because a similar pattern of romantic failures has been established previously in the novel.

In the fourth *Discworld* novel, *Mort* (1987), Death—the skeletal, anthropomorphic personification of death, whose speech is represented in capitals in the *Discworld* novels—takes on an apprentice, goes on holiday, and decides to try a new occupation. For this purpose, Death visits a job broker's office, where he is

interviewed. The discussion that follows includes different stylistic registers and a bathetic failure of the poetic register to move the audience's emotions.

> 'And what was your previous position?'
>
> I BEG YOUR PARDON?
>
> 'What did you do for a living?' said the thin young man behind the desk.
>
> The figure opposite him shifted uneasily.
>
> I USHERED SOULS INTO THE NEXT WORLD. I WAS THE GRAVE OF ALL HOPE. I WAS THE ULTIMATE REALITY. I WAS THE ASSASSIN AGAINST WHOM NO LOCK WOULD HOLD.
>
> 'Yes, point taken, but do you have any particular skills?'
>
> Death thought about it.
>
> I SUPPOSE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF EXPERTISE WITH AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS? he ventured after a while. (*Mort*, 183–184)

The eloquent metaphors in Death's reply elevate his speech stylistically, introducing pathos to it. Dying is such a profound and irrevocable phenomenon in human life that it elicits fear and reverence—hence people tend to discuss death using euphemistic circumlocutions, and here Death recites some of the more poetic ones as a description of his actual work.

A major part of the comic incongruity in this passage is created by placing the personified Death in an unaccustomed situation. An interview with an employment agency is a conventional and easily recognizable situation. However, representing Death in the client's position constructs a comically unconventional viewpoint on the familiar situation. The bathetically failing pathos of the poetic circumlocutions adds stylistic humor to this situational comedy. The situation also involves dramatic irony because the reader knows who Death is, while the job broker does not, since his subconscious protects him from seeing Death's actual appearance. Because Death uses the elevated sublime style in describing his work experience, the job broker misunderstands Death's reply as sarcasm, while the reader understands that Death's answer is sincere. This epistemic mismatch adds comic dramatic irony to the scene. Death's statement that he has some experience of using "agricultural implements"—referring to his scythe—is another comic circumlocution, although here the stylistic register, which differs from the everyday speech that the job interview situation calls for, is emphatically formal rather than poetic.

As the above-quoted passage continues in the novel, Death reveals his true identity to the job broker, who becomes stunned with the shock of actually facing Death. At the same moment another client, who has been employed as the Unseen University's cook, enters the job broker's office in order to complain about the unruly magical antics of the University students. Death feels obliged to deal with the cook's complaint because he has scared the job broker, and another comic conversation ensues.

> Death stared at her. He'd never before experienced an unsatisfied customer. He was at a loss. Finally he gave up.
>
> BEGONE, YOU BLACK AND MIDNIGHT HAG, he said.
>
> The cook's small eyes narrowed.
>
> 'Oo are you calling a midnight bag?' she said accusingly, and hit the counter with the fish again. 'Look at this,' she said. 'Last night it was my bedwarmer, in the morning it's a fish. I ask you.'
>
> MAY ALL THE DEMONS OF HELL REND YOUR LIVING SPIRIT IF YOU DON'T GET OUT OF THE SHOP THIS MINUTE, Death tried.
>
> 'I don't know about that, but what about my bedwarmer? It's no place for a respectable woman up there, they tried to—'
>
> IF YOU WOULD CARE TO GO AWAY, said Death desperately, I WILL GIVE YOU SOME MONEY.
>
> 'How much?' said the cook, with a speed that would have outdistanced a striking rattlesnake and given lightning a nasty shock.
>
> Death pulled out his coin bag and tipped a heap of verdigrised and darkened coins on the counter. She regarded them with deep suspicion.
>
> NOW LEAVE UPON THE INSTANT, said Death, and added, BEFORE THE SEARING WINDS OF INFINITY SCORCH THY WORTHLESS CARCASS.
>
> 'My husband will be told about this,' said the cook darkly, as she left the shop. It seemed to Death that no threat of his could possibly be as dire. (*Mort*, 186–187)

Again, much of the comedy in this conversation comes from the unconventional perspective that has been created by representing Death in an unusual situation, as well as from the comic dramatic irony where the cook fails to understand that she is talking to the personification of death. There is also comic dramatic irony in Death's unfamiliar situation, which the narrator points out to the reader by commenting that Death is not used to dealing with "unsatisfied customers" in his actual job. This unfamiliarity explains why Death makes the mistake of resorting to an elevated style

when he addresses the cook and, combined with the cook's colloquial style of speech and the mundane nature of her complaint, the ineffective pathos in Death's speech adds bathetic stylistic comedy to the conversation.

The phrase "black and midnight hag" alludes intertextually to Shakespeare's Macbeth, where Macbeth uses this phrase in addressing witches. Thus, Death seems to use in this conversation some impressive phrases that he recalls from other contexts of a somber nature—although here the only dire element is Death's apparent distress in this comically awkward situation. There is an additional anticlimactic turn in Death's persuasive efforts when he suddenly changes his approach and appeals to the cook's greediness in ordinary tones, which turns out to be rhetorically more effective than pathos. Also Death's final attempt at persuasion through the sublime style fails to give him the upper hand in the situation, and Death himself deems that the cook's threat, delivered in a plain matter-of-fact style, appears to be more serious than his own threats, which strive for an elevated style by using metaphor, hyperbole, and antiquated diction. The narrator adds stylistic comedy to the passage by describing the cook's reaction to the offer of money with two hyperbolic similes.

Although all these characters are comical, Death is perhaps the most evident butt of ridicule in this scene. However, ridicule is not only a tool for critique; it can also evoke our sympathies. In *Wyrd Sisters*, the Fool's repeatedly failing attempts to woo Magrat guide us to feel empathy for him, since his perseverance shows that his affection is real. The above scene from *Mort* serves a similar rhetorical function—Death responds emotionally to his comically embarrassing situation, which makes him a more human and sympathetic character.

3.2.2 Descent of a tree religion, the good life, and Trousers of Time

While bathos can be constructed by shifting from an elevated style to more mundane tones, the same comically anticlimactic effect can be achieved also by descending the dignity or importance of the discussed subject-matter. Both of these ways to create bathos depend on the order of representation, which makes bathos a structural comic device.

The second *Discworld* novel, *The Light Fantastic* (1986), includes the following passage, where the narrator recounts some unexpected consequences of a discussion that the inept wizard Rincewind has had with a talking tree in an enchanted forest.

> In fact Rincewind never spoke to this particular tree again, but from that brief conversation it spun the basis of the first tree religion which, in time, swept the forests of the world. Its tenet of faith was this: a tree that was a good tree, and led a clean, decent and upstanding life, could be assured of a future life after death. If it was very good indeed it would eventually be reincarnated as five thousand rolls of lavatory paper. (*The Light Fantastic*, 25)

In this quote, the narrator makes satiric fun of religions by personifying and humanizing trees and by modelling the tree religion to resemble human religions, although the promise of the afterlife in the tree religion is unconventionally materialistic and unspiritual. The order of representation is important here for creating the comically bathetic effect: the profane subject-matter of lavatory paper is introduced at the very end of the passage.

Part of this satire is the moral demand for a pious life, which also connects the tree religion with human religions—establishing moral norms is a commonly esteemed social function of religions. However, the moral norms can only be held in esteem as long as the promised reward of the afterlife is something worth pursuing. Since the ultimate reward of a morally virtuous tree life appears, at least from the human point of view, disappointingly unrewarding, this bathetic sinking of religious piety can also be viewed to include an element of situational irony. What perhaps makes this bathetic satire of religion more amusing than a random unmotivated blasphemy is the fact that many trees actually do "reincarnate" as lavatory paper in our Roundworld—regardless of how virtuous their life has been. In this respect, belief in the afterlife in this tree religion is supported by more concrete evidence than the equivalent belief in human religions. On the other hand, it is precisely the concrete and mundane nature of these facts which bathetically sinks the importance and dignity of the tree religion.

The Light Fantastic includes another dialogue that returns to the topic of lavatory paper, and also on this occasion Pratchett uses the mundane nature of this topic to construct bathetic comedy.

> The barbarian chieftain said: 'What then are the greatest things that a man may find in life?' This is the sort of thing you're supposed to say to maintain steppe-cred in barbarian circles.
>
> The man on his right thoughtfully drank his cocktail of mare's milk and snowcat blood, and spoke thus: 'The crisp horizon of the steppe, the wind in your hair, a fresh horse under you.'
>
> The man on his left said: 'The cry of the white eagle in the heights, the fall of snow in the forest, a true arrow in your bow.'

> The chieftain nodded, and said: 'Surely it is the sight of your enemy slain, the humiliation of his tribe and the lamentation of his women.'
>
> There was a general murmur of whiskery approval at this outrageous display.
>
> Then the chieftain turned respectfully to his guest, a small figure carefully warming his chilblains by the fire, and said: 'But our guest, whose name is legend, must tell us truly: what is it that a man may call the greatest things in life?'
>
> The guest paused in the middle of another unsuccessful attempt to light up.
>
> 'What shay?' he said, toothlessly.
>
> 'I said: what is it that a man may call the greatest things in life?'
>
> The warriors leaned closer. This should be worth hearing.
>
> The guest thought long and hard and then said, with deliberation: 'Hot water, good dentishtry and shoft lavatory paper.' (*The Light Fantastic*, 47–48)

This passage parodies a scene from the epic sword and sorcery film *Conan the Barbarian* (1982)—with the crucial difference that in Pratchett's version the barbarian hero, Cohen the Barbarian, is eighty-seven years old, and his answer reflects this divergence. For those readers who are familiar with the parodied movie, the contrast between the excessively muscular and masculine Conan, played by the bodybuilder-actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Pratchett's old and toothlessly lisping Cohen contributes to the comic incongruity. By giving his barbarian hero the Jewish name Cohen, Pratchett further parodies the movie's ethos and imagery, which glorifies Conan's physical strength and fighting skills. Jews, on the other hand, have been stereotyped in European culture as merchants and intellectuals rather than barbarian heroes.[44]

At one point in the above quote, the narrator directly guides the reader's antipathies to the barbarian warriors' boasting by calling it an "outrageous display", and there is also occasional ridiculing wordplay in the narrator's commentary. "Steppe-cred" is a playfully modified version of street credibility, or "street-cred". "Whiskery approval" is another humorous wordplay—linguists call this device the transferred epithet, and as a rhetorical figure it is called *hypallage*[45]. It does not, of

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[44] There is, of course, also the antisemitic stereotype of the Jew as a greedy money lender. Mika Loponen (2019, 94–123) argues that J. R. R. Tolkien has used some aspects of this antisemitic stereotype in characterizing dwarves as a folk who loves jewels and precious metals in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, as has J. K. Rowling in depicting goblins as bankers of the wizarding world in the *Harry Potter* novels.

[45] Richard Lanham defines hypallage as the "awkward or humorous changing of agreement or application of words" (Lanham 1991, 86).

course, refer to approval that has suddenly incarnated and grown whiskers. Instead, this playful expression stands for the "approval of whiskery men". Such transferred epithets are a commonly used stylistic device in P. G. Wodehouse's humor, especially in the Jeeves stories, where Bertie Wooster as the first-person narrator often uses transferred epithets as one of the numerous stylistic devices that make his discourse chattery and informal (Hall 1974, 86–87).

The barbarian chieftain's question and the first three answers build up solemn readerly expectations by discussing stereotypically masculine topics in poetically elevated images. The first answer refers to the pleasures of riding a horse, the second to the joys of hunting, and the third to the excitement of war. This arrangement of ascending activity in the answers suggests that there is a sort of on-going competition in machismo, and the reference to the guest's legendary fame builds up the expectation that Cohen's answer will continue the climactic arrangement by beating all the previous answers in masculine hyperbole. Against this setup, Cohen's answer disappoints the expectations comically and anticlimactically by referring to the small conveniences of civilization that are typically lacking in the life of barbarian heroes. The arrangement of this quote, where the setup is followed by a pause and the punch line, constructs the conventional joke structure, which contributes to the comic effect of Cohen's bathetically anticlimactic answer.

In *Guards! Guards!* (1989), the eighth *Discworld* novel, Pratchett introduces the concept of L-space to readers. The letter "L" apparently stands for "library", since L-space unites all the libraries of the past, present, and future, which also makes it a portal for time-travelling. In the following quote, the Librarian of Unseen University considers the possibility of catching a book thief by travelling backwards in time through L-space to the moment when the theft took place in the University library.

> But that would be interfering with the course of history. Horrible things could happen. The Librarian knew all about this sort of thing, it was part of what you had to know before you were allowed into L-space. He'd seen pictures in ancient books. Time could bifurcate, like a pair of trousers. You could end up in the wrong leg, living a life that was actually happening in the other leg, talking to people who weren't in your leg, walking into walls that weren't there any more. Life could be horrible in the wrong trouser of Time.
>
> Besides, it was against Library rules.[1]
>
> [1] The three rules of the Librarians of Time and Space are: 1) Silence; 2) Books must be returned no later than the last date shown; and 3) Do not interfere with the nature of causality. (*Guards! Guards!*, 201)

L-space is one of the numerous highly incredible Discworld phenomena that are rendered plausible by comically absurd and quasi-scientific reasoning.[46] Absurd logic is also deployed when the narrator explains the dangers of time-travelling by using the comic metaphor "Trousers of Time". This metaphor is the first of the bathetic degradations in this quote—or perhaps the second, if we conceive that the implied word "library" in "L-space" serves a similar bathetic function as the word "trousers" does in "Trousers of Time". By using the mundane image of trousers to describe the dangers of time-travelling, Pratchett deploys verbal imagery to stylistically sink an important topic in a similar manner as Pope does in his example of the bathetic simile, where the stormy sea is described with the commonplace image of an unmade bed (Pope 2006, 202).

The next comic anticlimax in this quote is constructed when the narrator, recounting the Librarian's thoughts, likens library rules to the laws of causality. From the Librarian's viewpoint, it is of course vitally important that no-one should break the library rules, but juxtaposing the seriousness of this offense with the serious consequences of breaking the time-space continuum, which forms the fabric of reality, at the same time elevates the importance of the human-made rules while it comically and bathetically degrades the importance of the universal laws. This bathos composes a joke-like structure, where the punch line is separated from the setup by moving it to the next paragraph, which also enhances the comic timing by creating a brief pause before the delivery of the punch line.

The rules in the footnote create a similar contrast in the importance of the listed items, but in this case the order of representation follows the conventional climactic arrangement, from the less important things to the more important. Library rules are a cultural cliché that guides the reader's expectations—the first two rules are in accord with these conventional expectations, while the third is incongruous and thus comically diverges from our expectations. The juxtaposition of the conventional library rules and the rule that forbids interfering with the nature of causality diminish the seriousness of the latter rule, and thus this apparently climactic arrangement in fact serves a bathetic function. At the same time, the bathos in the footnote ridicules the strict authoritativeness that we typically associate with library rules. As is the case with many footnotes in the *Discworld* novels, this comic footnote immediately follows the punch line of the joke in the main text, and thus it extends the jest in the main text by adding an extra comic twist to it.

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[46] On pp. 166–167, the narrator explains L-space like this: Knowledge equals power, power equals energy, energy equals matter, matter equals mass, and mass distorts space into polyfractal L-space.

While the order of representing things is an integral constituent in bathetic anticlimaxes, also unusual viewpoints play a role in how bathos creates humor by guiding readerly expectations. I have discussed above how Pratchett uses bathos to introduce a comically unconventional viewpoint on Death when he is represented as a comic character in an unaccustomed situation, a client in the job broker's office, which makes this potentially frightening figure more human and sympathetic. In a similar manner, the bathos of Esk's un-swanlike motion revises the poetic image of a folk song about how a maid moves through a fair. The bathetic descent of the first tree religion revises a cultural cliché by merging the conventional religious idea of afterlife with the idea of lavatory paper. The fundamental philosophical question about the good life is revised by juxtaposing it bathetically with the small pleasures of everyday life, and the concept of universal causal laws is revised by juxtaposing these laws bathetically with the human-made library rules. The unifying theme in these bathetic juxtapositions is that important and dignified ideas are contrasted with pragmatic and individualistic viewpoints of everyday life.

In all the quotes that I have analyzed above, Pratchett introduces comically unusual viewpoints on familiar cultural phenomena, and in most cases this cultural resonance also acts as an indicator of rhetorically evaluative attitudes, where the bathetic comedy is combined with parody or satire. Parody and satire are contextual comic devices, while the absurd logic that produces L-space and Trousers of Time is a situational comic device—as is also the comic dramatic irony in Esk's un-swanlike movement through the fair and in the scenes that depict Death in a job broker's office. The structural comic device of bathos is in these quotes often combined also with stylistic comic devices: hyperbolic similes that describe Esk's un-swanlike movement, euphemistic metaphors in Death's job interview, and wordplay ("steppe-cred" and "whiskery approval") in the scene that introduces Cohen the Barbarian. Such combinations of situational, contextual, structural, and stylistic comic devices make Terry Pratchett's witcraft hyperdetermined, semantically rich, and funny.

I have discussed above two structural comic devices, paraprosdokian and bathos, and next I will study another structural comic device, the figgin, which Pratchett deploys to create and guide the reader's expectations by repeating jests with slight modifications.

3.3 Figgins: running gags

According to Kenneth Burke (1968, 125) and Wayne Booth (1983, 127–128), repetition in fiction works as a formal means for authors to capture and maintain the reader's interest, because repetition constructs an artistic pattern that naturally arouses and fulfills readerly expectations. In *The Science of Discworld* (1999, 277), Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen write that the human brain is "a pattern-recognition device that has turned its attention to its own patterns", such as stories, and that this feature makes the human brain unique in the animal kingdom. To extend this idea, we also recognize patterns inside stories, such as repetitions. This obsession for detecting patterns is motivated by the fact that we expect the things we have seen occurring repeatedly in the past to appear also in the future, and thus recognizing patterns becomes a way to predict the future. A special application of the repetitive form in literature is the figgin, which, in the context of Pratchett studies, is a technical term that refers to a particular kind of comic device.

Finding a definition of the figgin from any ordinary dictionaries is unlikely, because the term initially appears as a neologism in a *Discworld* novel and has subsequently been given a new meaning by Pratchett's fandom. David Langford offers the following explanation for the term:

> Another name […] has become part of the private Pratchettian terminology used by insiders to discuss his work: the figgin. […] Thus a figgin in Discworld editorial discussion is shorthand for a running gag, with variations, to be repeated a magical three times at the least. What I tell you three times is true. (Langford 2004, 10–11)

The figgin can be defined accordingly as a recurring comic motif, a running gag, which occurs at least three times in the same novel and is typically slightly modified with each recurrence. Callbacks and running gags appear also as a notable feature in many stand-up comedians' performances.[47] In his book on stand-up comedy, Greg Dean (2000, 187, 190) explains that "callback" means "a joke that refers back to another joke performed earlier in the show, presented in a different context", while "running gag" refers to "multiple callbacks, a recurring joke in the same show". In callbacks and running gags. the importance of the gag's initial occurrence cannot be noticed by the reader, since only the second occurrence establishes the expectation of further recurrences. Thus, a third occurrence is needed to complete the pattern of a running gag and to satisfy the expectation that the second occurrence sets up.

[47] For an example of a running gag in stand-up comedy, see Ismo Leikola's performance on *The Late Late Show with James Corden* <https://youtu.be/JdZWlxMY6d4> [accessed 15 January 2023].

However, this does not mean that a running gag could not occur more than three times.

3.3.1 Do you want your figgin toasted or placed upon a spike?

Although running gags can be detected in most *Discworld* novels, the word "figgin" is introduced in the eighth novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), where a running gag is built around this word. Thus, the running gag that I discuss below is, in a sense, a prototype of the comic device called the figgin. The term "figgin" first occurs in a scene where a sinister secret society, with all the members clad in hooded gowns that hide their identities, holds its meeting somewhere in the Shades, the notorious old town of Ankh-Morpork.

> The Supreme Grand Master rapped his gavel for attention. The room shuffled into some sort of circle.
>
> 'I call the Unique and Supreme Lodge of the Elucidated Brethren to order,' he intoned. 'Is the Door of Knowledge sealed fast against heretics and knowlessmen?'
>
> 'Stuck solid,' said Brother Doorkeeper. 'It's the damp. I'll bring my plane in next week, soon have it—'
>
> 'All right, all *right*,' said the Supreme Grand Master testily. 'Just a yes would have done. Is the triple circle well and truly traced? Art all here who Art Here? And it be well for a knowlessman that he should not be here, for he would be taken from this place and his gaskin slit, his moules shown to the four winds, his welchet torn asunder with many hooks and his figgin placed upon a spike *yes what is it*?'
>
> 'Sorry, did you say *Elucidated* Brethren?'
>
> The Supreme Grand Master glared at the solitary figure with its hand up.
>
> 'Yea, the Elucidated Brethren, guardian of the sacred knowledge since a time no man may wot of—'
>
> 'Last February,' said Brother Doorkeeper helpfully. The Supreme Grand Master felt that Brother Doorkeeper had never really got the hang of things.
>
> 'Sorry. Sorry. Sorry,' said the worried figure. 'Wrong society, I'm afraid. Must have taken a wrong turning. I'll just be going, if you'll excuse me …'
>
> 'And his figgin placed upon a spike,' repeated the Supreme Grand Master pointedly, against a background of damp wooden noises as Brother Doorkeeper tried to get the dread portal open. (*Guards! Guards!*, 12–13)

Despite the Supreme Grand Master's efforts at emotional appeal by means of stylistic elevation, the reader's impression of the gathering is most likely comical rather than frightening. The Supreme Grand Master's antiquated and esoteric diction is counterbalanced by Brother Doorkeeper's mundane and jovial tones. The repeated shifts between the two styles, elevated and mundane, construct stylistic anticlimaxes, which—together with the comic events when the Door of Knowledge gets stuck and an accidental intruder unexpectedly emerges—bathetically deviate from our conventional cultural "script" of expectations about what is supposed to happen in a secret society's meeting. Thus, this scene combines bathos with satire of secret societies and their esoteric rituals.

The reader is here, just like the members of the secret society, left wondering what the terms "gaskin", "moules", "welchet", and "figgin" in the Supreme Grand Master's speech actually mean. However, the undefined threat of physical violence that these words seem to carry is in effect nullified when the intruder is politely guided to the door instead of being punished in the manner the Supreme Grand Master has just eloquently described. Nevertheless, the word "figgin" becomes emphasized and stylistically marked in this passage—first, because it is positioned as the last item on the list and, secondly, because it is repeated. It also appears to be particularly the threat of placing a knowlessman's figgin upon a spike that scares the intruder to reveal himself as belonging to a different brethren.

As the passage continues, the narration becomes increasingly focused on the Supreme Grand Master's thinking, and the word "figgin" recurs.

> With the slightly miffed air of one who has run their finger along a daughter-in-law's top shelf and found against all expectation that it is sparkling clean, the Grand Master got on with it.
>
> What a shower, he told himself. A bunch of incompetents no other secret society would touch with a ten-foot Sceptre of Authority. The sort to dislocate their fingers with even the simplest secret handshake.
>
> But incompetents with possibilities, nevertheless. Let the other societies take the skilled, the hopefuls, the ambitious, the self-confident. He'd take the whining resentful ones, the ones with a bellyful of spite and bile, the ones who knew they could make it big if only they'd been given the chance. Give him the ones in which the floods of venom and vindictiveness were dammed up behind thin walls of ineptitude and low-grade paranoia.
>
> And stupidity, too. They've all sworn the oath, he thought, but not a man jack of 'em has even asked what a figgin is. (*Guards! Guards!*, 13–14)

This passage demonstrates that figurative language and hyperbolic imagery are not restricted to the authorial narrator's voice in the *Discworld* novels. The analogy in the first paragraph belongs to the narrator's voice, but the hyperboles in the second paragraph as well as the parallelisms ("the ones") and metaphors in the third paragraph represent the Supreme Grand Master's internal monologue, which can be conceived as an authorial design that characterizes the Supreme Grand Master by revealing to the reader his emotional responses and attitudes. The psychological plausibility that this internal monologue creates gives the Supreme Grand Master a distinctive personality, and thus it adds literary interest to the story of Guards! Guards!, where the Supreme Grand Master is the main villain.

Both the bombastic title he has chosen for himself and the stylistic elaboration in his internal monologue suggest that the Supreme Grand Master has a tendency to entertain grandiose ideas, which is confirmed as the plot unfolds: he has organized the Elucidated Brethren for the purpose of summoning a dragon and is using it in his scheme to become the ruler of Ankh-Morpork. And as the plot reveals the Supreme Grand Master's political ambitions to the reader, the satire of secret societies also becomes a satirical critique of political demagogy: how political leaders can manipulate the strong negative emotions—such as fear and resentment—of their audiences for their own purposes.

While the first occasion where the word "figgin" occurs is aimed at intimidating the brethren, this second occasion appears in the Supreme Grand Master's thoughts when he observes that the other members still remain ignorant of what the word actually means. A character's ignorance often functions as a cue to the reader about potential dramatic irony, but this clearly is not the case here, because the reader is equally ignorant. At this point in the story, we can only conjecture that the Supreme Grand Master has used the words "gaskin", "moules", "welchet", and "figgin" as euphemisms for certain vulnerable parts of the human body. As I have already pointed out, the above quotes are funny because they contain several comic devices (bathos, satire, simile, hyperbole, and conceit), but if we find the word "figgin" comical in these occurrences, the comedy probably comes from guessing what the euphemism refers to—in other words, what particular part of a knowlessman's body the Supreme Grand Master threatens to place upon a spike.

What figgin actually signifies inside the story world is finally revealed to the reader a couple of pages later, in a footnote.

> But when I rule the city, the Supreme Grand Master said to himself, there is going to be none of this. I shall form a new secret society of keen-minded and intelligent men, although not too intelligent of course, not *too* intelligent. And we will overthrow the cold tyrant and we will usher in a new age of enlightenment and fraternity and

> humanism and Ankh-Morpork will become a Utopia and people like Brother Plasterer will be roasted over slow fires if I have any say in the matter, which I will. *And* his figgin.[1]
>
> [1] A figgin is defined in the *Dictionary of Eye-Watering Words* as 'a small short-crust pasty containing raisins'. The Dictionary would have been invaluable for the Supreme Grand Master when he thought up the Society's oaths, since it also includes welchet ('a type of waistcoat worn by certain clock-makers'), gaskin ('a shy, grey-brown bird of the coot family'), and moules ('a game of skill and dexterity, involving tortoises'). (*Guards! Guards!*, 20–21)

Making the hero a point-of-view character typically invites the reader to identify with the hero-protagonist, but there are also good reasons for allowing the villain-antagonist to occasionally become a point-of-view character. One such reason is that when the reader gets to observe the villain's thoughts, this can be used by the author to reveal the villain's antipathetic personality traits, such as the Supreme Grand Master's manipulativeness and delusions of grandeur in the above quotes. It also acts as an economical way to provide the reader with important pieces of information—like the fact that the Supreme Grand Master is plotting to usurp Patrician, the ruler of Ankh-Morpork.

Since the Elucidated Brethren's oath relies on an elevated style for its intimidating effect, the mundane everyday meanings which the *Dictionary of Eye-Watering Words* provides bathetically undermine the pathos of the oath. The dictionary definitions satisfy the reader's curiosity, which Pratchett has built up by delaying the explanation of the mysterious words to the third occasion where the word "figgin" is mentioned, several pages after the first occurrence. At the same time, these definitions comically disappoint the reader's anticipations about what the strange words might mean. Also the eccentric title of the dictionary contributes to the comic effect of the footnote.

The anticlimactic revelation of what the word "figgin" actually means constructs a comic culmination of this running gag, but it is not the last time that the word "figgin" occurs in the novel. When we proceed about fifty pages forward, the figgin recurs briefly, and this time the reader can enjoy the comic dramatic irony, with knowledge of the word's actual meaning: "He led their stumbling, terrified voices through it, noting with approval the strangled way they said 'figgin'." (*Guards! Guards!*, 77) The next occurrence takes place in a less esoteric setting, when the all-round salesman Cut-Me-Own-Throat Dibbler—who appears as a minor character in several *Discworld* novels—advertises his merchandise on the streets of Ankh-Morpork, shouting "Peanuts! Figgins! Hot sausages!" (*Guards! Guards!*, 153) There is nothing particularly comical in this seemingly incidental occurrence of "figgin", except that it reminds us of the running gag. By now, the word "figgin" has

accumulated comically ambiguous connotations, which can make it amusing even when it occurs in a non-comical situation.

The running gag about the figgin is extended to its second comic culmination when the dragon, which the Elucidated Brethren have managed to summon, has burned down their secret meeting place and the City Watch has brought Brother Fingers, a professional thief and the only surviving member of the brethren besides the Supreme Grand Master, to their headquarters for questioning.

> 'What did you do with our suspect?' said Vimes.
>
> 'Him? Oh, he done a runner, Captain,' said the sergeant, looking embarrassed.
>
> 'Why? He didn't look in any shape to run anywhere.'
>
> 'Well, when we got back here, we sat him down by the fire and wrapped him up because he kept on shivering,' said Sergeant Colon, […]. […]
>
> 'Go on.'
>
> 'Well,' said Colon awkwardly, 'he kept on shivering, sort of thing, and groaning on about dragons and that. We felt sorry for him, to tell the truth. And then he jumps up and runs out of the door for no reason at all.'
>
> Vimes glanced at the sergeant's big, open, dishonest face.
>
> 'No reason?' he prompted.
>
> '*Well*, we decided to have a bite, so I sent Nobby out to the baker's, see, and, well, we fought the prisoner ought to have something to eat …'
>
> 'Yes?' said Vimes encouragingly.
>
> '*Well*, when Nobby asked him if he wanted his figgin toasted, he just give a scream and ran off.'
>
> 'Just that?' said Vimes. 'You didn't threaten him in any way?'
>
> 'Straight up, Captain. Bit of a mystery, if you ask me. […]' (*Guards! Guards!*, 196)

This is possibly the funniest instance of this running gag. Apparently the City Watch officers are only familiar with figgin in the sense that was given in the dictionary, while Brother Fingers knows figgin only in the sense in which the Supreme Grand Master has used it in their meetings. Readers, however, know both senses, and, hence, we also see the comic misunderstanding that springs from this ambiguity. In addition, the author invites us here to share his superior epistemic position in relation to both Brother Fingers and the Watch officers and thus constructs comic dramatic irony, where the "character unknowingly acts in a way we recognize to be grossly

inappropriate to the actual circumstances" (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 167). Consequently, a notable part of the comedy in this quote comes from dramatic irony, but another equally important comic element arises from the ambiguous and comically incongruous meanings that the word "figgin" has gathered in the course of its previous occurrences.

Captain Vimes has a good reason to suspect that Sergeant Colon and Corporal Nobby Nobbs might have mistreated Brother Fingers, since they are both represented as morally questionable characters—of which the narrator's sly paraprosdokian quip about Colon's "big, open, dishonest face" (while, more commonly, big and open faces tend to be associated with honesty) acts as a reminder. However, in this case, Nobby, who typically shows no scruples in doing something immoral or illegal, manages to threaten the prisoner even without being aware of it. In this case, Nobby's threat is unintended, but it is nevertheless very much characteristic for his comically immoral personality.

In her discussion on how neologisms function as a means of language expansion, Jeanne Fahnestock (2011, 43) points out that "[w]hile most special nonce creations disappear after a single, original use, some become widely used if they fill a need". It appears that Pratchett's fandom needed a name for a frequently used comic device in Pratchett's novels, running gags, and hence the fandom has adopted Pratchett's neologism, which otherwise would have survived only as an ephemeral jest in *Guards! Guards!*, and applied it so that we can discuss Pratchett's humor more analytically.[48] Considering the definition offered in the *Dictionary of Eye-Watering Words*, figgin seems like a fitting name for a comic device, because also another literary device that can be used for comic purposes, pastiche, has its etymological roots in a pasty or pie made of various ingredients (Rose 1995, 73), while the comic device of satire has similarly been etymologically associated with food: a platter of diverse fruits (*lanx saturae*) or a stuffed sausage (*farcimen*) (Knight 2004, 20–25).

In the above quotes, the comedy of the running gag emerges from the ambiguous meanings of the word "figgin". In the course of its repetitions, only the meaning of the word changes, not the word itself. Next, I will discuss how the same comic device works in another novel, where a recurring comic motif gains an increasing degree of comic exaggeration with each occurrence.

[48] Similar "private Pratchettian terminology" used among Pratchett's fandom includes "sherbet lemons" (extra gags that Pratchett added after the first draft had been sent to the publisher) and "cigarettes" (denouements where the narrator ties up the loose ends of the story) (Burrows 2021, 153).

3.3.2 Duke Felmet literally puts matters in hand

One of the several running gags that Pratchett has crafted into *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), the sixth *Discworld* novel, introduces a comic motif where Duke Felmet has murdered King Verence of Lancre and afterwards tries in vain to get rid of the condemning evidence, which might in fact exist only in his guilty imagination—at least, initially. Although the hand that stabbed the King with a dagger belongs to Duke Felmet, the courage and willpower behind the murder belong to Lady Felmet, who domineers her husband.

> 'That doesn't matter.'
>
> 'Of course not.'
>
> 'Put matters in hand.'
>
> 'Yes, my love.'
>
> Matters in hand. He'd put matters in hand all right. If he closed his eyes he could see the body tumbling down the steps. Had there been a hiss of shocked breath, down in the darkness of the hall? He'd been certain they were alone. Matters in hand! He'd tried to wash the blood off his hand. If he could wash the blood off, he told himself, it wouldn't have happened. He'd scrubbed and scrubbed. Scrubbed till he screamed. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 35)

Duke Felmet's situation echoes Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606), where King Duncan's blood on Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's hands appears as a thematic motif that symbolizes their guilt. In Shakespeare's play, it is Lady Macbeth who has trouble washing the blood off her hands, but despite this slight discrepancy the above quote replicates both the motif and its symbolism from Macbeth. Duke Felmet is here represented as the point-of-view character, which helps Pratchett reveal the duke's guilty thoughts to the reader. This choice of narrative perspective invites the reader to follow Duke Felmet's mental association from Lady Felmet's idiomatic expression "put matters in hand" to his growing obsession with the blood on his dagger-hand. This association involves interpreting an idiomatic metaphor literally, which is a commonly used method for rendering metaphors comical.

In this scene, Pratchett plays with the symbolic meanings of several idiomatic expressions, since washing blood from one's hands combines two additional idiomatic metaphors that involve hands: the metaphorical expression of having someone's blood on one's hands means that the person is responsible for someone's death, while washing one's hands of something means absolving oneself or refusing to take responsibility for something. Duke Felmet's idea that the murder which he

has already committed could be undone if he manages to wash the blood off his hand involves comically absurd logic, which suggests that his sanity is crumbling under the burden of guilt.

Pratchett serves this figgin with additional comic toasting in its second occurrence, when the idioms about the matter in hand and scrubbing blood off the hand are repeated a little later in *Wyrd Sisters*.

> The duke reached a decision. The way to progress, he'd found, was to find weak spots. He tried to shut away the thought that these included such things as a king's kidneys at the top of a dark stairway, and concentrated on the matter in hand.
>
> …hand. He'd scrubbed and scrubbed, but it seemed to have no effect. Eventually he'd gone down to the dungeons and borrowed one of the torturer's wire brushes, and scrubbed and scrubbed with that, too. That had no effect, either. It made it worse. The harder he scrubbed, the more blood there was. He was afraid he might go mad… (*Wyrd Sisters*, 45–46)

Duke Felmet's obsession with his bloody hand and his crumbling sanity are emotional responses that characterize the duke evaluatively. His thought, conveyed by the narrator, that he is afraid he *might* go mad becomes in this context a comic understatement, since it is clear to the reader that a sane person would not try to remove blood from his hand with a wire brush. Exaggerating the duke's madness to absurd proportions is a stylistic comic device, and it also turns the intertextual allusion to *Macbeth* into parody, which was not yet obvious in the first occurrence of this figgin. There is also comic dramatic irony, when the actions that the duke takes to clean his hands of blood have the opposite effect to what he intends.

As the story of *Wyrd Sisters* proceeds, the hand-scrubbing motif recurs several times, receiving extra comic toasting with each serving.

> 'My lord, I cannot ride!'
>
> For the first time that morning Lord Felmet smiled.
>
> 'Capital!' he said. 'We will give you a horse that can't be ridden. Ha. Ha.'
>
> He looked down at his bandages. And afterwards, he told himself, I'll get the armourer to send me up a file. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 57)
>
> 'It's the witches,' whispered the duke, to no-one in particular. 'We must tell the world about the witches. They're evil. They make it come back, the blood. Even sandpaper doesn't work.' (*Wyrd Sisters*, 67)
>
> 'Jolly good, well done,' said the duke. He raised his hands, or at least his hand. The other still ached. He'd tried the grater again last night, but it hadn't worked. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 121)

In these quotes, Duke Felmet's insanity continues to get worse, as readers can infer from the mad laughter and his paranoia about the witches. Several villains in the *Discworld* novels are mentally unstable, and Pratchett often deploys the stereotypical cultural convention of mad laughter to represent insane villains. The hand-scrubbing motif becomes increasingly exaggerated as the duke scrubs his hand with various utensils: file, sandpaper, and grater. As this comic motif is repeated, it soon becomes apparent that the recurrences are arranged into an escalating design, which creates readerly expectations about what tool the duke is going to try in the next occurrence of the figgin. Therefore, the narrative rhetoric of this figgin can be viewed to deploy not only the repetitive form, but also the kind of authorial design that Wayne Booth (1983, 128) calls "promised" qualities, where the introduction of one aesthetic quality implies a promise to the reader that more of the same kind will follow.

3.3.3 Washing hair becomes a weapon on the battlefield of romance

Wyrd Sisters contains several running gags, of which the above-discussed jest about Duke Felmet putting matters in hand is but one. Another figgin, where Magrat Garlick repeatedly tells that she needs to wash her hair, is intertwined with one of the novel's storylines that tells about a budding romance between Magrat and the Fool. Magrat is a young witch, who has not yet established a similar public respect in the small kingdom of Lancre as her two older witch colleagues, while the Fool holds the lowly position of a court jester in the Royal Castle of Lancre. The novel represents both of them as painfully shy characters, who appear to be metaphorically and literally virgins in the matters of romance. Thus, these two characters seem to be socially as well as psychologically a potential romantic match. Although they are clearly attracted to each other, their timidity and poor communication skills make the romance comically awkward.

Romance is a conventional thematic motif in narratives, and it holds a special interest for readers because it is a pattern of behavior that takes place also outside of fiction, in our social interactions. Real-life romances can also involve awkward silences and misunderstandings of the other person's intentions, although in Magrat's and the Fool's romance these obstacles are comically exaggerated. In addition to such emotional responses that make the characters more life-like, and thus more interesting, there is also the authorial design of "progressive form", as Kenneth Burke (1968, 124) calls it, in fictional romances. That is, when we detect a romance in narrative fiction, we become interested in how the romance will pan

out—whether there will be a happy ending or an unhappy one. Because of these readerly interests and conventional expectations that the author controls, romance can be viewed as an inherently rhetorical thematic motif.

The romance is sparked when Magrat and the Fool accidentally meet on a meadow. The recurring motif of washing hair emerges already at the end of this first meeting.

> Further down the passage the Fool was capering after Magrat.
>
> 'Can I see you again?' he said.
>
> 'Well … I don't know,' said Magrat, her heart singing a smug song.
>
> 'How about tonight?' said the Fool.
>
> 'Oh, no,' said Magrat. 'I'm very busy tonight.' She had intended to curl up with a hot milk drink and Goodie Whemper's notebooks on experimental astrology, but instinct told her that any suitor should have an uphill struggle put in front of him, just to make him keener.
>
> 'Tomorrow night, then?' the Fool persisted.
>
> 'I think I should be washing my hair.' (*Wyrd Sisters*, 119)

Here the narrator's comments invite readers to view the situation from a position that is epistemically superior to the Fool's: we know that Magrat would be happy to meet the Fool again, but the Fool is left uncertain about Magrat's feelings. Literary scholars have associated epistemic superiority with dramatic irony, but here the ignorant character, the Fool, is not made a butt of situational irony, which would be the additional requirement of dramatic irony (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 167). And although Magrat in this quote clearly deceives the Fool by telling white lies, deceptions in fiction do not necessarily involve dramatic irony.

When Magrat says that she needs to wash her hair, she resorts to a stereotypical and unimaginative excuse for avoiding a date with an undesirable admirer. This particular excuse has become a cliché in popular culture,[49] and the reader of *Wyrd Sisters* is clearly expected to be familiar with this piece of cultural knowledge. Pratchett turns this cultural cliché into a figgin by repeating it several times in the novel. From the rhetorical viewpoint, the stereotypical and representative quality of this cliché gives it cultural resonance, but it also involves the verisimilitude of

[49] The *TV Tropes* website refers to "I have to wash my hair" as a typical case of this kind of excuses <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/INeedToGoIronMyDog> [accessed 15 January 2023].

emotional responses because similar excuses can happen in the real world, when love is treated as a game and romance becomes a battlefield between the players of this game. Verisimilitude of emotional responses tends to make stories more interesting to the reader and thus helps the author to guide our approval and disapproval. As readers, we see that Magrat approaches her romance as a game, and we might feel sympathy for the Fool because he is unaware of Magrat's deceptive game.

The hair-washing motif recurs in their dialogue when the Fool tells Magrat that he must travel to the faraway city of Ankh-Morpork on Duke Felmet's order. Magrat suspects that the duke, a usurper who has murdered the former King of Lancre, is planning a scheme against the witches and that the Fool's errand has something to do with this plan. Hence, Magrat tries to persuade the Fool to disobey his orders, but the Fool remains loyal to his master.

> Magrat came close to stamping her foot, but didn't sink so low.
>
> 'Just when we were getting to know one another!' she shouted. 'You're pathetic!'
>
> The Fool's eyes narrowed. 'I'd only be pathetic if I broke my word,' he said. 'But I may be incredibly ill-advised. I'm sorry. I'll be back in a few weeks, anyway.'
>
> 'Don't you understand I'm asking you not to listen to him?'
>
> 'I said I'm sorry. I couldn't see you again before I go, could I?'
>
> 'I shall be washing my hair,' said Magrat stiffly.
>
> 'When?'
>
> 'Whenever!' (*Wyrd Sisters*, 158)

The secret purpose of Magrat's explicitly stated intention to wash her hair was initially, in the beginning of their romance, to make the suitor keener by placing obstacles in his way, but here Magrat uses the hair-washing motif for a different purpose, as a punishment for the admirer who refuses to obey her wishes. This repetition of the hair-washing motif, with a change in its function, is designed to trigger in the reader a remembrance of the motif's previous occurrence. This kind of discovery of recurring motifs can produce a specific kind of pleasure for readers, as we are invited to participate in the construction of the motif by recognizing its previous occurrences. Detecting intertextual allusions can provide a similar sense of participation, while recurring motifs can be conceived to function as intratextual allusions, which provide the reader with an alternative way of making connections between the story events.

Noticing recurring motifs requires us to shift our stance as readers. When our attention is focused on following the development of Magrat's and the Fool's romance, we become immersed in the story world; but when we recognize that a motif has occurred earlier in the novel, we momentarily shift our mode of reading from immersive to analytical, and this stance-shifting allows us to appreciate Pratchett's authorial designs. Peter Rabinowitz (1987, 97–104) calls these stances the narrative and authorial audience, and he argues that both of these readerly roles are different from our stance as the actual audience—as flesh-and-blood readers with our own personal beliefs, attitudes, and values which affect what we like and dislike, approve and disapprove, in the novels we read.

The third occurrence of the hair-washing motif, which turns it into a figgin, takes place when the Fool has returned from Ankh-Morpork and meets Magrat on the same meadow where their romance began. In their dialogue, the Fool reveals to Magrat that he has brought with him a group of theater players to perform a play that Duke Felmet has ordered. The Fool has missed Magrat while being away, but Magrat is not in a romantic mood. Instead, she is in a hurry to tell the other witches that the duke plans to organize a theater play, which will falsely represent the duke as a righteous and legitimate ruler and the witches as evil hags.

> '[…] I really would like to see you after the show, you know. I brought—'
>
> 'I think I might be washing my hair,' said Magrat vaguely. 'Excuse me, I really ought to be going.'
>
> 'Yes, but I brought you this pres—' said the Fool vaguely, watching her departing figure.
>
> He sagged as she disappeared between the trees, and looked down at the necklace wound tightly between his nervous fingers. It was, he had to admit, terribly tasteless, but it was the sort of thing she liked, all silver and skulls. It had cost him too much.
>
> A cow, misled by his horns, stuck its tongue in his ear.
>
> It was true, the Fool thought. Witches *did* do unpleasant things to people, sometimes. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 206)

In this quote, Magrat's purpose for bringing up the hair-washing motif again is slightly different from the previous two occurrences: she just wants to end her conversation with the Fool quickly. Thus, she uses her old excuse as a conversation stopper.

Throughout the novel, the Fool's life as a jester is represented as a miserable one—his apprenticeship in the Fools' Guild has consisted of harsh discipline

without any leisure, and in the castle everyone treats him like a door mat, as someone whose feelings do not count. In fact, Duke Felmet has allowed him, as a special reward for his useful advice, to sleep behind his door, so that the Fool concretely becomes a human draught excluder on the windy castle floors. Tansy Rayner Roberts, in her collection of essays on the female characters of Discworld, observes that the Fool is one of Pratchett's "interesting and complex male characters who work against the traditions of masculine heroes":

> Everyone else in the story is taking part in a comedy, up to and including the ghost of the dead king, but the Fool is in a tragedy, carrying an abusive past and a more recent emotional burden along with his unwavering, committed loyalty to Duke Felmet, the villain of the piece. Even when he is funny—and he is very funny—he's utterly miserable. The romance between Magrat and the Fool, with its many wrong turns and awkward silences, is one of the most egalitarian and sincere love stories I have come across in fantasy fiction. (Roberts 2018, 8)

Roberts clearly reads the novel mainly in the narrative audience, where we are guided to feel sympathy for the Fool's sufferings in life and love, and to a lesser extent in the authorial audience, where the "many wrong turns and awkward silences" are designed to represent this romance as a comedy. Reading in the narrative audience, the treatment that the Fool receives from Magrat guides our pity and sympathy toward him, and in the above-quoted meeting this readerly sympathy is amplified by representing Magrat's indifferent welcome from the Fool's viewpoint. When Magrat departs, the narrator lingers with the Fool and allows us to steal a glimpse at his depressed thoughts. However, when we join the authorial audience, the Fool clearly functions as a comic character in the novel, which lessens the empathy that we may occasionally feel for him, since we are equipped with the conventional knowledge that although comic characters typically suffer various misfortunes, they also tend to have the resilience and ability to bounce back unaffected.

Pratchett adds a novel comic aspect to this running gag by introducing an amorous cow, which seems to indeliberately mock the Fool's disappointed romantic intentions. There is a strong comic incongruity when the Fool seeks affection from Magrat and receives it only from a misled cow. Consequently, I interpret this situation as an instance of cosmic irony, in which "a deity, or else fate, is represented as though deliberately manipulating events so as to lead the protagonist to false hopes, only to frustrate and mock them" (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 167). Here the Fool's romantic endeavors are frustrated by the god-like author, who leads them to the opposite result than what the Fool hopes and expects. The amorous cow acts here as a representative of the cosmos that seems to mock the Fool's misfortune in

love, although the cow's action is in fact the result of Pratchett's comic authorial design. What allows us to see authorial designs and realize the cosmic irony is our ability to momentarily subordinate our role in the narrative audience and make our stance in the authorial audience the dominant role.

The next occurrence of the hair-washing motif appears when the witches have arrived at the castle to watch the play that the duke has ordered. This play resembles Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in its antipathetic representation of witches. Also the main story of Pratchett's novel echoes *Macbeth*, with the notable difference that it turns the witches into protagonists and represents them in a positive light, as sympathetic point-of-view characters.

> The older witches brushed past. The Fool grabbed Magrat's hand.
>
> 'I know where we can get a good view,' he said.
>
> She hesitated.
>
> 'It's all right,' said the Fool urgently. 'You'll be perfectly safe with me.'
>
> 'Yes, I will, won't I,' said Magrat, trying to look around him to see where the others had gone.
>
> 'They're staging the play outside, in the big courtyard. We'll get a lovely view from one of the gate towers, and no-one else will be there. I put some wine up there for us, and everything.'
>
> When she still looked half-reluctant he added, 'And there's a cistern of water and a fireplace that the guards use sometimes. In case you want to wash your hair.' (*Wyrd Sisters*, 207–208)

Here Pratchett gives the hair-washing figgin a new comic twist, when the Fool has accepted Magrat's frequent need to wash her hair as an unavoidable part of their romance. In the previous occurrences of this motif, Magrat has used it repeatedly for the purpose of avoiding the Fool's courting efforts, but here the Fool uses the same motif for the opposite purpose—to advance their romance. When the recurrences of the hair-washing motif are viewed as a continuum, the Fool's comically unusual perspective introduces a comic paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail into this running gag. Since this paraprosdokian shift of viewpoint reveals its comic aspect only to those readers who have paid attention to the recurrence of the hair-washing motif, it invites us to join the authorial audience and to appreciate the comic authorial design of the figgin, where the motif's previous occurrences serve as the setup for this paraprosdokian punch line.

The final occurrence of the hair-washing figgin is introduced when the witches have convinced the people of Lancre that the Fool, in fact, is the rightful heir to the throne—although a private conversation between the two old witches reveals to the reader that the actual matter of facts might be a little bit more complicated (pp. 249–250).[50] Nevertheless, the meddling of the witches has the result that the Fool, who has the same name as the previous king, is crowned as King Verence II.[51] After the coronation ceremony, the two old witches, Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg, meet their younger colleague, expecting that the romance between Magrat and the Fool has taken a step forward after his unexpected career promotion. However, this does not appear to be the case.

> There was another long, terribly polite pause. Then Granny said, 'We were a bit surprised you weren't there, Magrat.'
>
> 'We thought you'd be up at the top of the table, kind of thing,' said Nanny. 'We thought you'd have moved in up there.'
>
> Magrat stared fixedly at her feet.
>
> 'I wasn't invited,' she said meekly. […]
>
> 'It's a very good thing he's paying so much attention to getting the kingdom working again,' said Granny, soothingly. 'It shows proper consideration. I daresay he'll get around to everything, sooner or later. It's very demanding, being a king.'
>
> 'Yes,' said Magrat, her voice barely audible. […]
>
> [Granny] squinted at Magrat as the moon drifted out from behind its cloud.
>
> 'Here,' she said. 'Your hair looks a bit grubby. It looks as though you haven't washed it for a month.'
>
> Magrat burst into tears. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 242–243)

The first three occurrences of the hair-washing motif appear in Magrat's speech, the fourth in the Fool's speech, and this final recurrence appears in Granny

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[50] The former King and Queen of Lancre have a son, whom the witches help at the beginning of *Wyrd Sisters* to escape an assassination attempt by Duke Felmet's soldiers. This real heir to the throne is later in the novel adopted by a group of theater players, and when he grows up, he becomes a talented actor who is not interested in ruling kingdoms. The Fool's features have a strong family resemblance to this real heir, which gives the witches a reason to believe that the actual heir and the Fool have the same father. However, the witches also believe that this father was not the former King of Lancre, because the former Royal Fool of Lancre, the father of the Fool who loves Magrat, was very popular among women, including the former Queen of Lancre.

[51] Crowning a fool as the king is a rather obvious allusion to the medieval European carnival tradition, which Mikhail Bakhtin (1995) has discussed in his study on Rabelais and his world.

Weatherwax's speech. While in all the other occurrences the speaker has a specific purpose in using the motif, here Granny is unaware of the multiple functions that this figgin has served in the course of its previous occurrences. Magrat is, of course, well aware of these functions, as is the reader. Thus, the elements of dramatic irony—the reader's epistemically superior position and the ignorant character's action, which produces an outcome that is ironically opposite to the intended result—appear to be present in this quote. However, despite her ignorance, Granny Weatherwax does not here become the butt of irony. Instead, the ironized target is Magrat, who is acutely aware of the irony that, despite all the talk about washing hair, her hair still looks unwashed. Or, in a more profoundly ironic sense, Granny's remark reminds Magrat painfully that her constant use of the hair-washing excuse might be precisely the reason why she has not been invited to King Verence's coronation celebrations.

Karen Sayer (2004, 144) has observed that Pratchett usually positions Magrat as the "more innocent point-of-view character and the reader's representative". However, the occurrences of this hair-washing figgin are mostly represented from the Fool's viewpoint, and although Magrat in the above quote shares the same information about the hair-washing motif as the author and the reader, her position in the narrative situation is drastically different: Magrat is deeply involved in the situation, while the reader has the option to view the situation from an emotionally disengaged angle, as a new twist in the comic romance. Of course, the reader can also become emotionally engaged and feel empathy for Magrat.

These two options, to view the situation as a comedy or as an unhappy romance, are characterized by our two roles as members of authorial and narrative audiences. In the narrative audience, we are invited to believe that what we read in novels is true, while in the authorial audience we view the story events and characters as artistic constructions (Rabinowitz 1987, 100). Thus, all the obstacles and stumbling-stones on the path of love that make this romance comical—the Fool's unhappiness when Magrat does not seem to respond to his feelings and Magrat's unhappiness when the Fool, after becoming King Verence, appears to have lost interest in her—can be interpreted either as emotional responses that make the characters more life-like, and thus guide the reader to identify with them, or as comic authorial designs that parody the conventions of romances. In both cases, the reader's interest is guided by the conventional thematic expectation of romances—that is, our desire to see a happy ending for the romance.

The above-quoted dialogue introduces two authorial designs, which Aristotle in his *Poetics* (1987, 52a22–52b8) has named "reversal" (*peripeteia*) and "recognition"

(*anagnorisis*). Reversal means a change of events to their opposite, while recognition signifies a character's change from ignorance to knowledge. In this case, the Fool's apparent change of mind in courting Magrat marks the point of a plot reversal, while the moment of recognition consists of Magrat's realization that her repeated use of the hair-washing excuse may have ruined her romance. Aristotle states that anagnorisis evokes pathos in the audience most effectively when it happens at the same time as peripeteia—and here these plot devices coincide.

Pamela Regis (2003, 30–38) has outlined "eight essential elements" in the plot formula of romance novels: (1) society defined, (2) meeting, (3) barrier, (4) attraction, (5) declaration, (6) point of ritual death, (7) recognition, (8) betrothal. Most of these stereotypical events can be detected in the above quotes that track the running gag of Magrat's hair-washing, except the first and the last step: defining the characters' social position and betrothal. The first quote shows their meeting, and a recurring motif in most of the quotes is that Magrat's excuse sets up barriers and stumbling blocks on the path of her own romance. The mutual attraction of both parties is made clear in the quotes, even though the Fool is more active in showing his attraction. The gift that the Fool has bought to Magrat and his arrangements for a romantic meeting can be viewed as declarations of love, while the last quote contains both the point where the romance seems to have ended and Magrat's recognition of her own role in this apparent death of romance. The betrothal and marriage of Magrat and King Verence II takes place in another *Discworld* novel. Thus, the running gag allows us to follow this comic romance along steps that proceed according to the conventional romance formula.

While the characters' emotional responses, along with our cultural knowledge of romance conventions, call us to join the narrative audience and to hope for a happy ending for this romance, the comic devices—such as the running gag and situational irony—invite readers to participate in the authorial audience and persuade us, in a less sentimental way, toward the same rhetorical goal. Viewing the romance as comedy disengages the reader from the characters' sorrows and concerns[52] while, at the same time, it allows us to view the romance from a wider perspective and to sympathize with the characters' comic difficulties in communicating their true emotions. In a sense, comic romances can be considered as more realistic than the idealized ones, since communicating emotions is often difficult also in the real life.

I have discussed above three different kinds of figgins—comic ambiguity in a recurring word's meaning, escalating exaggeration of a recurring comic motif, and constantly changing functions of a running gag. I have also demonstrated how

[52] John Morreall (2009, 52–54) argues that our sense of humor depends on emotional disengagement.

repetition of comic motifs, on the one hand, guides the reader's expectations by creating alternative intratextual links between story events and, on the other hand, combines the pleasure of recognizing something familiar (the repeated gag) with the pleasure of discovering something unexpected (a new context and a modification of the gag).

There are some contextual comic devices in these running gags, which make the humor of this structural comic device hyperdetermined: satire of secret societies, parody of *Macbeth*, and parody of the conventions of romance. In addition, there is a situational comic device, dramatic irony, both in Nobby's inadvertent threat to have Brother Fingers's figgin toasted and in Duke Felmet's attempts to remove the blood from his hand, while the amorous cow and Magrat's apparent failure in her romance add situational irony to the hair-washing figgin. A structural comic device, bathos, plays a part in making both the Elucidated Brethren's meeting and the meaning of the word "figgin" comical. In addition, there are stylistic comic devices in the quote that includes the Supreme Grand Master's internal monologue—a simile, two hyperboles, and a conceit.

In the course of this dissertation, I have argued that emotional responses and cultural resonance function as potential indicators of evaluative attitudes, which can be interpreted as the author's attempts to persuade the reader to adopt similar attitudes, although the characters' emotional responses also function as a characterization device. The Supreme Grand Master's emotional responses to the other members of the Elucidated Brotherhood characterize him as both a grandiloquent manipulator and the villain of the story. Duke Felmet's exaggerated guilt characterizes him as a madman, while the Fool's and Magrat's emotional responses invite the reader to feel empathy for them.

In the *Discworld* novels, cultural resonance also often indicates comically unusual viewpoints on things that are familiar to the reader. Pratchett's satire of occult societies provides a critical and comically unusual viewpoint on what could happen in their secret meetings and rituals. Similarly, Pratchett's parody of *Macbeth* introduces a comically unusual viewpoint on how excessive guilt might be manifested in a mentally unstable murderer's behavior, while the parody of various conventions of romance offers us a comically unusual viewpoint on the conventional intrigues of romance.

I have so far analyzed instances of three structural comic devices that appear frequently in the *Discworld* novels: paraprosdokian, bathos, and running gags. Next, I will investigate how comic footnotes in the *Discworld* novels typically work either in

the same manner as theatrical asides or as an equivalent of the stand-up comedians' routine of extending jests.

3.4 Comic footnotes: digressive asides and stand-up comedy

One of the most prominent features of Terry Pratchett's humor are his comic footnotes, which are often mentioned in reviews of the *Discworld* novels. Footnotes are seldom used in mainstream literary fiction, such as fantasy novels—most likely because they interrupt the flow of text and thus disturb immersive reading. However, footnotes can be found more frequently in experimental novels, where the focus is on the form rather than on the content and where the reader's immersion in the story world is thus of lesser importance. In contrast to mainstream novels, footnotes are a well-established convention in scholarly writings, but the purpose of scholarly notes is typically not to amuse the reader. The contrast to these literary and scholarly conventions of using footnotes makes comic footnotes a salient feature of the *Discworld* novels, as Pratchett transforms the convention of scholarly texts into a comic device. This salience is manifested in the titles of *Once More* *With Footnotes* (2004), a collection of Pratchett's miscellaneous short writings, and his official biography, Rob Wilkins's Terry Pratchett: *A Life With Footnotes* *The Official Biography* (2022), both of which foreground this comic device by explicitly pointing it out.[53]

In *The Art of the Footnote* (1996), Francis Burkle-Young and Saundra Rose Maley write that the footnote was historically established as a typographical convention in book-printing. It has been used by academic writers, editors, and translators to provide source references, critical comments, and additional information that explains and elaborates the topics discussed in the main text. Footnotes are typographically separated from the main text by placing them at the bottom of the page and by printing them in smaller font. A convention of six specific signs was developed by printers to indicate the order of footnotes on the same page: asterisk (*) for the first note, and for the subsequent notes obelisk or dagger (†), double dagger (‡), section sign (§), parallel (‖), and paraph (¶) (ibid., 10).

However, the Corgi paperback versions of the *Discworld* novels, which I use as reference in this dissertation, do not follow this convention. In fact, the system of indicating footnotes varies from one novel to another. Sometimes the Corgi books

[53] In both books, the title not only mentions footnotes but also imitates them, since it is separated into two parts, marked with asterisks, and the latter part of the title is presented at the bottom of the title page.

use a single asterisk for each footnote, regardless of how many notes there are per page, but sometimes the second note on the same page is marked with two asterisks, while sometimes an obelisk or a double dagger marks the second note. In some novels, the footnotes are not marked with asterisks or other special signs, but rather with a sequential per page numbering, and sometimes the sequential numbering of footnotes runs not per page but, instead, through the whole novel.

Although the use of footnotes is a common practice in academic writing, in contemporary novels it is relatively uncommon. Steven Moore (2013) has studied the shaping of the novel between years 1600 and 1800, and of the roughly two hundred novels in English that he discusses, fifteen include footnotes. Most of these footnoted novels were published in the first half of the 1700's, when the literary conventions of fictional novels had not yet been fully established. In his history of scholarly footnotes, Anthony Grafton (1999, 110) observes that in the Enlightenment Europe the pseudo-scholarly footnote, which aimed to make fictional narratives appear factual, enjoyed popularity as a literary device.

James Joyce's experimental novel *Finnegans Wake* (1939) includes over a hundred footnotes, but this novel is an exception in his otherwise non-footnoted oeuvre. Of the authors of comic fiction, Douglas Adams includes two footnotes in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979) as humorous asides, in the same manner as Pratchett does in the *Discworld* novels. Jasper Fforde's *Thursday Next*-novels (2001–2012) introduce a densely intertextual and metafictional world, BookWorld, where footnotes are used as a communication device, footnoterphone. What distinguishes Terry Pratchett from the above-mentioned authors is that he has made comic footnotes a trademark of his humor by using them extensively in practically all *Discworld* novels.

In the first *Discworld* novel, there is only one footnote, but the second novel in the series has five footnotes. The third novel includes again only one footnote, while the fourth has no less than 12 footnotes, and the rate of footnotes per novel stays high subsequently. Thus, it appears that Pratchett's use of footnotes in the first three novels was more or less coincidental, comparable to the few random footnotes in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but from the fourth novel onwards it seems that Pratchett started to use footnotes persistently as a comic device. I counted the footnotes in the first seventeen *Discworld* novels and found out that they contain 349 footnotes in all; the fourteenth novel *Lords and Ladies* has the highest number of footnotes, 45. Several of the *Discworld* novels include footnotes to footnotes, and I think that this unusual use of the device further foregrounds the fact that comic footnotes are an essential feature of Terry Pratchett's witcraft.

I have not found any taxonomies of footnotes in the field of literary studies. I would guess that the reason for this omission is that a large number of footnotes rarely appear in works of literary fiction, and hence the need for a taxonomy has not arisen. In the aforementioned *Art of the Footnote*, Burkle-Young and Maley (1996, vii) divide the use of footnotes in academic texts into twelve categories, which attempt to map out the various functions and topics commonly found in scholarly footnotes: (1) bibliographical notes; (2) biographical notes; (3) geographical notes; (4) notes that describe unfamiliar objects or cultural practices; (5) notes that expand information on a secondary topic; (6) notes that gloss unusual words or expressions; (7) notes that document contrasting views; (8) asides and commentaries; (9) notes that explain relationships and associations; (10) translations from another language; (11) cross-references; (12) notes that express acknowledgments and thanks.

Some of these functions and topics of scholarly footnotes can be also found in Pratchett's comic footnotes: they can function as asides, extended jests, metacomments, or absurd digressions. Using footnotes as asides matches the category "asides and commentaries" in the taxonomy above; extending jests from the main text in footnotes resembles "notes that expand information on a secondary topic", although the Burkle-Young and Maley's definition of this category is so general that it arguably matches practically all kinds of footnotes. Metacomments are similar with Burkle-Young and Maley's category "contrasting views", since the narrator's footnoted metacomments in the *Discworld* novels typically correct or qualify, and sometimes refute, statements that he has just made in the main text. Rhetoricians have classified such self-corrections as the rhetorical figure called metanoia. In addition to these functions, I will also discuss absurd digressions, since while all footnotes can be viewed as narrative digressions, many of such digressions in the *Discworld* novels are comically absurd.

After discussing these functions, I will review some topics of Pratchett's comic footnotes: Discworld's history, Discworld's fauna, strange Discworld phenomena, and translations from Discworld's ethnic languages.

3.4.1 Footnoted asides: metacomments, absurd digressions, and tags

"Asides and commentaries" is one of the categories in *The Art of the Footnote*, which defines footnotes used as asides like this:

> [The aside] or commentary is the place where the author can address her reader personally on some point which she would like to add, but which is really an addendum to the discussion or entirely divorced from it. Using this kind of note

> allows the author to make direct, conversational connections to the reader without interrupting the flow of the essay.
>
> In such a note, it is common to change the tone of the discourse, which can be an opportunity for the author to add whimsicality or amusement to material which might otherwise be dry. (Burkle-Young & Maley 1996, 87)

The points made in this definition are manifested in most of Pratchett's footnotes, although I disagree with the idea that footnotes do not interrupt the flow of discourse in the main text.[54] In the *Discworld* novels, the narrator uses comic footnotes to temporarily interrupt the flow of the story in order to make a personal comment to the reader. Hence, such asides that take place in footnotes tend to create the illusion of a closer connection between the narrator and the reader. The observation that aside-footnotes provide an addendum to the discussion or narration in the main text, and can even be entirely divorced from it, seems to apply to all of Pratchett's footnotes. In this sense, practically all the footnotes in the *Discworld* novels work like theatrical asides, where the progress of the play is temporarily halted while the actor speaks directly to the audience.

Another noteworthy point in the above quote is that authors can change their tone in aside-footnotes in order to adopt a more conversational and whimsical attitude, which might not be the appropriate tone in the main text. Every now and then, the comic footnotes in the *Discworld* novels add unexpected comedy to the narration of some serious scene, although it is also not uncommon for Pratchett to use comic footnotes to extend jesting that has already began in the main text.

Occasionally the narrator uses footnotes to comment on or correct what he has just said in the main text. This kind of self-reflexive notes can be described as metacomments. Here is an example of comic metacommenting in footnotes, taken from the second *Discworld* novel, *The Light Fantastic* (1986):

> The sun rose.

---

[54] This appears to be the opinion also advocated by P. G. Wodehouse. In the foreword to his "autobiography with digressions", *Over Seventy* (1957), Wodehouse rants against footnotes, while sprinkling the six-page foreword with 20 unnecessary footnotes, in this manner:

"I see no need for the bally things.[8] I have just finished reading Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln, The War Years*, and Carl manages to fill four fat volumes without once resorting to this exasperating practice.[9] If he can do it, why can't everyone?[10]

[8] Footnotes.

[9] Bunging in a footnote every second paragraph.

[10] Answer me that." (Wodehouse 2014, 9)

> However, the sunlight didn't. What did happen was that the famous Discworld sunlight, which as has already been indicated travels very slowly through the Disc's powerful magical field, sloshed gently over the lands around the Rim and began its soft, silent battle against the retreating armies of the night. It poured like molten gold[1] across the sleeping landscape—bright, clean and, above all, slow.
>
> [1] Not precisely, of course. Trees didn't burst into flame, people didn't suddenly become very rich and extremely dead, and the seas didn't flash into steam. A better simile, in fact, would be 'not like molten gold'. (*The Light Fantastic*, 167)

Here the footnote consists of the narrator's self-correction, metanoia. The narrator deploys a poetic simile in the main text, but then, in the footnote, he comically refutes the correctness of the analogy. The main comic device in this footnote is the literal interpretation of a poetic simile, while this literal interpretation also creates a comically unusual viewpoint on the clichéd simile. Also the strange Discworld-specific phenomenon of slow light is comically unusual. Another comic feature in the footnote is that the narrator increases the magnitude of refutation in the course of the footnote, ending up with a bathetically anticlimactic reversal of the poetic figure.

This kind of metacomment-footnotes can be conceived as a subcategory of aside-footnotes since they have many qualities in common, but metacomments also create a particular kind of humorously narcissistic quality that distinguishes them from other footnoted asides. In this footnote, the narrator draws the reader's attention self-reflexively to his own stylistic choices—primarily to the poetic simile he uses in the main text, but also to the practice of providing comic commentary in footnotes. Self-reflexive metacommentary in comic footnotes both constructs the narrator's ethos and foregrounds it: making comic corrections to one's own words is a type of self-deprecating humor that tends to characterize the jester positively, as a clever and sociable person who does not take oneself too seriously.

In addition to metacomments, also absurd digressions can be conceived as a type of footnoted asides. Practically all the footnotes in the *Discworld* novels are digressions from the story progression in main text, but often it is the absurdity of humor that makes the digressing footnotes in the *Discworld* novels so funny. A footnote with an absurd digression appears in the eleventh *Discworld* novel, *Reaper Man* (1991):

> Miss Flitworth scuttled past him, bent double under a load of corn.[1]
>
> [1] The ability of skinny old ladies to carry huge loads is phenomenal. Studies have shown that an ant can carry one hundred times its own weight, but there is no known

> limit to the lifting power of the average tiny eighty-year-old Spanish peasant grandmother. (*Reaper Man*, 204)

What is said in this footnote has nothing to do with the story of the novel, so it is clearly a digression. It is also comically absurd, which is achieved by the means of excessive exaggeration. However, the humor of this footnote does not rest entirely on the comic device of absurdly excessive hyperbole; the footnote also includes a comically unusual viewpoint, which mentally associates and juxtaposes two cultural clichés in a way that is comically incongruous. In building up the comically absurd effect, the first clichéd piece of cultural knowledge is that an ant can carry a load many times heavier than its own weight. And the image of an old peasant woman, in the Mediterranean Europe, carrying a burden on her back is another cultural cliché. The narrator combines these two clichés in order to make a rhetorically evaluative statement that praises the lifting power of old peasant women by exaggerating it to comically absurd proportions. This cultural resonance is made explicit by mentioning the Roundworld nationality of these superhumanly strong peasant grandmothers.

Extending jests is another method of making footnotes comical. When footnotes are used as extended jests, they also create a particular kind of comic rhythm and timing. This kind of extended jest—where a comic twist to jesting in the main text is delivered in a footnote—echoes the "tags" or "tag lines" of stand-up comedy, which refer to additional punch lines that do not require a new setup (Dean 2000, 191). In stand-up comedy, there is typically a pause between the initial punch line and a tag line, and in the *Discworld* novels such pauses are replicated by the time it takes for us to shift our gaze from the main text to the footnote. Sometimes Pratchett extends this kind of "tagging" further by commenting the initial footnote in an additional footnote.

In the thirteenth *Discworld* novel, *Small Gods* (1992), there is a description of a situation where Deacon Vorbis, the head of the Omnian Quisition,[55] apparently does not meet two visitors, and here the jesting that takes place in the main text is extended in the footnote.

> Neither man was in fact there. They were not talking to Vorbis. It was one of *those* kinds of meeting. Lots of people didn't talk to Vorbis, and went out of their way not to have meetings with him. Some of the abbots from the distant monasteries had recently been summoned to the Citadel, traveling secretly for up to a week across tortuous terrain, just so they definitely wouldn't join the shadowy figures visiting

[55] Quisition of the Omnianist Church, in the country of Omnia, where people worship the Great God Om, is the Discworld's equivalent of Inquisition of the Catholic Church in our Roundworld.

> Vorbis's room. In the last few months, Vorbis had apparently had about as many visitors as the Man in the Iron Mask.
>
> Nor were they talking. But if they *had* been there, and if they *had* been having a conversation, it would have gone like this:
>
> 'And now,' said Vorbis, 'the matter of Ephebe.'
>
> Bishop Drunah shrugged.[1]
>
> [1] Or would have done. If he had been there. But he wasn't. So he couldn't. (*Small Gods*, 28–29)

This footnote is a playful aside, and it also extends jesting from the main text to the footnote; this jesting is further intensified in the main text by the simile that contains an intertextual and interworldly allusion ("Man in the Iron Mask").

While the footnote in the quote where Miss Flitworth carries a load of corn demonstrates how absurdity can be created through excessive exaggeration, here the comic devices that build up the absurdity are verbal irony—where the narrator says something, while indicating that he means the opposite—and paradoxical logic. In the footnote, the narrator constructs a logical argument to prove his point, but he takes as a premise of his argument the double-coded meaning of the ironic statement that the meeting arranged by Vorbis ostensibly did not take place, although actually it obviously did. Following this comically absurd logic, the narrator ends up refuting in the footnote a statement that he makes in the main text, while this metanoia, or self-correction, also makes this footnote a metacomment.

The absurd logic and ironic statements emerge from a humorously unconventional viewpoint, where the narrator simultaneously tries to agree with the official explanation that the meeting did not take place and also to report to the reader what happened in this seemingly non-existent meeting. The narrative purpose of this comically circumlocutional and complicated way of representation is to underline that the meeting was a highly secret one. A lot of stylistic comedy arises from imaginative ways of saying things in a humorously circumlocutional manner. The footnote does not add any new information to the narrative situation, so its function is simply to amuse the reader with a footnoted aside that is simultaneously a comically absurd digression, a metacomment, and an extension to jesting in the main text.

3.4.2 Expanding the fantasy world: history, fauna, and strange phenomena

A frequent function of footnotes in the *Discworld* novels is to expand the fantasy world by adding details to the setting of the story. Some footnotes provide readers with brief explorations into Discworld's history, and some footnotes describe the strange fauna of the Discworld. Some notes explain unusual phenomena which exist in the Discworld but not in our Roundworld, while some notes offer translations from Discworld's languages that are used in the main text. Many of these culturally resonating footnotes foreground Pratchett's humorously unusual viewpoints on familiar cultural phenomena in our Roundworld.

3.4.2.1 Discworld's history

The fourth *Discworld* novel, *Mort* (1987), tells a brief historical anecdote in a footnote and extends it in a footnote to the footnote. The specific topic of these footnotes—the historical, religious, and geographical significance of pizza in the Discworld—is prompted by a digressive incident in the main text, which interrupts the progression of the story, and thus the anecdote in the footnote becomes a further digression from the main story of the novel.

> Cutwell pulled out a chair and sat down. He squirmed a little. A thoughtful expression passed over his face. He stood up, reached behind him and produced a flat reddish mass which might have once been half a pizza*. He stared at it sorrowfully.
>
> * The first pizza was created on the Disc by the Klatchian mystic Ronron 'Revelation Joe' Shuwadhi, who claimed to have been given the recipe in a dream by the Creator of the Discworld Himself, Who had apparently added that it was what He had intended all along. Those desert travelers who had seen the original, which is reputedly miraculously preserved in the Forbidden City of Ee, say that what the Creator had in mind then was a fairly small cheese and pepperoni affair with a few black olives** and things like mountains and seas got added out of last-minute enthusiasm as so often happens.
>
> ** After the Schism of the Turnwise Ones and the deaths of some 25,000 people in the ensuing jihad the faithful were allowed to add one small bayleaf to the recipe. (*Mort*, 109)

The associative juxtaposition of the Discworld's geography and pizza can be conceived as a case of failed elevation, or bathos, which creates the most notable comic incongruity in the first footnote. The ostensibly elevating elements in the first footnote are the role of pizza in the creation of Discworld and the mystic's

revelation, which makes the first pizza created on the Disc a religious relic. However, there are also a few elements in the footnote that bathetically undermine these elements of elevation. A mystical revelation received in a dream is clearly an unreliable source of truth. Also, the mystic's nickname suggests that he is a charlatan. The narrator distances himself stylistically from the legend by using the hedging adverbs "apparently" and "reputedly", thus indirectly hinting to readers that the plausibility of the legend is questionable.

Furthermore, pizza is a decidedly mundane dish, which contrasts bathetically with its elevated association with the Discworld's creation. This contrast is intensified by suggesting that such major features of the Disc's geography as mountains and seas were merely last-minute additions. The story event in the main text, which triggers the footnote, is comical and degrading in a similar manner as the stereotypical case of degrading comedy, where a dignified person suddenly loses the dignity by slipping on a banana peel. The cosmological construction of Discworld, which echoes some outdated conceptions of our Roundworld as the flat Earth, is based on a comically unusual viewpoint on the shape of worlds, since all planets are more or less spherical in the real universe.

Also the second footnote includes elements of both elevation and bathetic degradation. A religious schism that leads to thousands of deaths seems like a tragic historical event, but the insignificant result of this schism contrasts bathetically with the apparent tragedy. This bathetic contrast can be interpreted as a satirical critique of religious schisms and jihads, just as the first footnote can be interpreted as a satirical critique of myths about the creation of the world, mystical revelations and religious relics. In this satire, Pratchett guides the reader's attitudes toward religious mysticism rhetorically by evaluating it critically.

In the main text, the demands of a continuous story progression usually set limits to the absurdity of comedy, but in footnotes Pratchett can use absurd humor without restraints. This is one of the features that make his footnotes so funny. Historical footnotes create the illusion that the Discworld is an actual world, which has its own history. However, since the main purpose of these notes is to amuse the reader, these historical anecdotes in footnotes are typically comically absurd. This creates the impression that anything can happen in this comical fantasy world, although in fact the stories in the main text create a much more stable and predictable setting than what these footnotes suggest.

3.4.2.2 Discworld's fauna

Some footnotes in the *Discworld* novels expand the fantasy world by describing its strange animals. The main text of *Pyramids*, the seventh *Discworld* novel, introduces logically fast tortoises, while the two footnotes that extend this parodic allusion to the sophist Zeno's paradoxes describe the Discworld's fastest animals: the Ambiguous Puzuma that is nearly as fast as light—which means that if you see it, it is not there anymore—and the .303 bookworm, which "can eat through a shelf of books so fast that it ricochets off the wall" (Pyramids, 237). The comedy in these descriptions is based on absurdly excessive exaggeration.

Describing an animal called vermine is a recurring topic in footnotes. It appears in three *Discworld* novels: the fifth, the sixth, and the eleventh—*Sourcery* (1988), *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), and *Reaper Man* (1991). Vermine is the Discworld's equivalent of our Roundworld's lemming, although the word "vermine" also constructs a mental association with both ermine and vermin.

In *Sourcery*, a footnote offers the following description:

> The vermine is a small black and white relative of the lemming, found in the cold Hublandish regions. Its skin is rare and highly valued, especially by the vermine itself; the selfish little bastard will do anything rather than let go of it. (*Sourcery*, 29)

A footnote in Wyrd Sisters describes the vermine like this:

> The vermine is a small black and white furry creature, much famed for its pelt. It is a more careful relative of the lemming; it only throws itself over small pebbles. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 62)

In both novels, the vermine are mentioned in the main text only as an incidental detail, which would not require any further explanations. Thus, the footnotes are comic digressions, where the comedy arises mainly from introducing comically unusual viewpoints. In the *Sourcery* note, the unconventional viewpoint is that the narrator considers the value of vermine's pelt from the animal's own perspective, while in the *Wyrd Sisters* note the unusual viewpoint is created by contrasting the behavior of the vermine with a relative species, whose behavior is already familiar to the reader. Thus, in both cases Pratchett takes a familiar and conventional viewpoint—that people wear fur clothes and that the lemming is a suicidal species—as the starting point for his jesting, and then he introduces a novel viewpoint, which is comically incongruous with our familiar perspective.

The vermine motif recurs in a footnote in *Reaper Man*.

> Vermine are small black-and-white rodents found in the Ramtop Mountains. They are ancestors of the lemming, which as is well known throws itself over cliffs and drowns in lakes on a regular basis. Vermine used to do that, too. The point is, though, that dead animals don't breed, and over the millennia more and more vermine were descendants of those vermine who, when faced with a cliff edge, squeaked the rodent equivalent of Blow that for a Game of Soldiers. Vermine now abseil down cliffs, and build small boats to cross lakes. When their rush leads them to the seashore they sit around avoiding one another's gaze for a while, and then leave early to get home before the rush. (*Reaper Man*, 198–199)

Just like the *Wyrd Sisters* note, also this footnote builds its comedy mainly on the similarities and contrasts between the lemming and the vermine, although here the characteristic and peculiar behavior of vermine is described in more detail. Hence, these footnotes can be conceived as one continuing jest, which is developed further with each occurrence. In this latest recurrence, an additional aspect of comedy comes from personifications that make vermine intelligent and human-like.

3.4.2.3 Strange Discworld phenomena

A number of strange phenomena in the *Discworld* novels are specific to this particular fantasy world, and footnotes provide a convenient platform for the narrator to describe and explain such phenomena. The phenomena that are explained in footnotes include Unseen University (which is larger from inside that it is from outside, *Equal Rites*), the Discworld's slow sunlight (caused by the magical field that surrounds the Discworld, *Mort*), knurd (extreme soberness or inverted drunkenness, *Sourcery*), reannuals and counterwise wine (plants that grow backwards in time and wine that casts its effects backwards in time, *Pyramids*), a bronze bell that tolls silences (*Eric*), anti-crimes (good deeds that cause outrage or humiliation to the victim, *Reaper Man*), antipasta (a dish that works backwards in time, in a similar manner as counterwise wine, *Reaper Man*), L-space (which connects all libraries in the multiverse, *Guards! Guards!*), and the pork futures warehouse (a warehouse for things which only exist potentially, *Men at Arms*).

The study of invisible writings in Unseen University is closely related to the concept of L-space. This peculiar branch of academic study is explained in a footnote in the fourteenth *Discworld* novel, *Lords and Ladies* (1992):

> The Archchancellor glowered.
>
> 'I don't even want you to begin to start explainin' that,' he said. 'You're probably goin' to go on about the universe bein' a rubber sheet with weights on it again, right?'

'Not exactly a—'

'And the word "quantum" is hurryin' toward your lips again,' said Ridcully.

'Well, the—'

'*And* "continuinuinuum" too, I expect,' said Ridcully.

The Reader in Invisible Writings, a young wizard whose name was Ponder Stibbons, sighed deeply.

'No, Archchancellor, I was merely pointing out—'

'It's not wormholes again, is it?'

Stibbons gave up. Using a metaphor in front of a man as unimaginative as Ridcully was like a red rag to a bu— was like putting something very annoying in front of someone who was annoyed by it.

It was very hard, being a reader in Invisible Writings.[1]

[1] The study of invisible writings was a new discipline made available by the discovery of the bi-directional nature of Library-Space. The thaumic mathematics are complex, but boil down to the fact that all books, everywhere, affect all other books. This is obvious: books inspire other books written in the future, and cite books written in the past. But the General Theory[2] of L-Space suggests that, in that case, the contents of books *as yet unwritten* can be deduced from books now in existence.

[2] There's a Special Theory as well, but no one bothers with it much because it's self-evidently a load of marsh gas. (*Lords and Ladies*, 54–55)

Here the main text that precedes the footnotes sets up a comic incongruity between the personalities and interests of the two wizards, with allusions to some terms and concepts of theoretical physics, while the narrator's comically literal simile at the end adds bathetic and stylistic humor to this comic dialogue. The reader in Invisible Writings, Ponder Stibbons, is, in *Lords and Ladies* as well as in many subsequent novels, experimenting with a new kind of scientific magic, which seems to resemble theoretical physics and which the Archchancellor, who prefers old-school magic, is both unable and unwilling to understand. In this quote, Pratchett deploys cultural resonance to associate L-space with theoretical physics, while he also associates it with books and libraries. This comically unusual viewpoint produces two strange and interconnected Discworld phenomena: L-space and the academic study of invisible writings.[56]

[56] While explaining the real-world scientific concept of "phase space", the second book in *The Science of Discworld* series, *The Globe* (2002)—where the chapters alternate between Pratchett's Discworld fiction and Ian Stewart's and Jack Cohen's nonfiction—quotes the first of these L-space footnotes in

L-space can also be interpreted as an authorial design that parodies the literary theories of textuality and intertextuality, which view texts as "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes 1977, 146). With the strange Discworld phenomenon of invisible writings, the same interconnectedness between writings becomes even more prominent. The study of invisible writings extends the literary theories of intertextuality toward a direction that even Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes never dared to suggest, although it can be viewed as a logical continuation of these theories. From our stance in the narrative audience, the narrator's account on the study of invisible writings is an actually existing discipline in Unseen University, but from our stance in the authorial audience we can conceive it as an artistic authorial design, a comically unusual viewpoint that revises and parodies theories of intertextuality.

The distinction between the general and the special theory in the two footnotes resonates culturally with the science of physics in our Roundworld, which includes theories of both general and special relativity. The allusions to theoretical physics in the main text support such interpretation. However, the theory of special relativity in our Roundworld physics is not contested, so the allusion is satiric and rhetorically evaluative—it imitates some aspects of our Roundworld science in order to create a comically absurd Discworld science. The main comic device in the second footnote (a footnote to a footnote) is bathos—while the narrator seems to discuss the Discworld science seriously in the first footnote, at least from our stance in the narrative audience, the second footnote brings this discussion to a comic anticlimax. The colloquial and idiomatic metaphor at the end of the second note complements the bathos with stylistic comedy.

3.4.3 Translations from Discworld's languages: Trollish and Dwarfish

The *Discworld* novels, especially the City Watch sequence, introduce characters who represent many different fantasy species. In the Discworld's greatest city, Ankh-Morpork, the largest communities of ethnic minorities are dwarfs and trolls, who live more or less peacefully alongside the human population, although they have their own subcultures and languages. The *lingua franca* of Discworld, Morporkian, is conveniently identical with English, and when words from other languages are used

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the main text of a nonfiction chapter, and then quotes the second L-space footnote in a footnote (thus making it a footquote), and suggests that a footnote to a footnote should be called metafootnote (Pratchett et al. 2002, 43).

in the main text, they are typically translated in footnotes. Providing translations in footnotes is a conventional practice also in academic writings (Burkle-Young & Maley 1996, 113-120).

In *Moving Pictures* (1990), the tenth *Discworld* novel, Pratchett comically merges two conventions, when Ruby, a female troll, entertains the crowd in a troll bar by singing in Trollish in the main text, while the lyrics of her song are translated in footnotes. I will analyze here only the first of these four footnotes.

> On the tiny stage, Ruby was crooning something in a voice like a ship in thick fog and bad trouble.
>
> 'GrooOOowwonnogghrhhooOOo—'[6]
>
> [6] SUB-TITLE: 'Vunce again I am fallink in luf (lit., experiencing the pleasant feeling of being hit over the head with a rock by Chondrodite, the troll god of love).' Note: Chondrodite must not be confused with Gigalith, the troll god who gives trolls wisdom by hitting them on the head with a rock, or Silicarous, the troll god who brings trolls good fortune by hitting them on the head with a rock, or with the folk hero Monolith, who first wrested the secret of rocks from the gods. (*Moving Pictures*, 111–112)

Pratchett constructs the main theme of the novel, which is also suggested in its title, by designing a large number of cultural and intertextual allusions to the Hollywood film industry. Ruby's song parodies the Hollywood film *Blue Angel* (1930), where Marlene Dietrich sings a song in a cabaret, with these lyrics: "Falling in love again / Never wanted to / What's a girl to do? / I can't help it." The movie allusion explains why these footnotes begin with the word "SUB-TITLE", since translations in films are typically provided in subtitles, which resemble footnotes in the sense that they are placed at the bottom of the screen. Hence, Pratchett merges here the academic convention of providing translations in footnotes with the cinematic convention of subtitles, which add another comic element to the parodic scene.

Other comic elements include the comically hyperbolic simile in the main text (when the narrator describes what Ruby's singing sounds like to human ears), the strong German accent of Ruby's phrasing in the subtitle-footnotes (another allusion to Marlene Dietrich), and the additional literal translation in the footnote—which is followed by a note to the footnote, explaining the comic details of troll mythology, where the prevailing method of communication seems to involve hitting others on the head with a rock. The literal translation reveals that the troll language is in fact quite metaphorical, since its expressions involve imagery of intervening gods. Adding comic notes to comic footnotes resembles the stand-up comedy routine of extending jests by adding tags to punch lines.

Another footnoted translation from the Discworld's ethnic languages can be found in the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), where Constable Carrot Ironfoundersson, a tall and muscular human who has been raised by dwarfs, ignores the frightened warnings of another human watchman, Corporal Nobby Nobbs, and enters a dwarf bar, where he addresses the drunken and reveling dwarf crowd in their native language.

> But Carrot had waded into the scuffling mass. He cupped his hands around his mouth and bellowed something in a language Nobby didn't understand. Practically any language including his native one would have fitted that description, but in this case it was Dwarfish.
>
> 'Gr'duzk! Gr'duzk! aaK'zt ezem ke bur'k tze tzim?'[1]
>
> The fighting stopped. A hundred bearded faces glared up at Carrot's stooped figure, their annoyance mingled with surprise.
>
> A battered tankard bounced off his breastplate. Carrot reached down and picked up a struggling figure, without apparent effort.
>
> 'J'uk, ydtruz-t'rud-eztuza, hudr'zd dezek drez'huk, huzukruk't b'tduz g'ke'k me'ek b'tduz t'be'tk kce'drutk ke'hkt'd. aaDb'thuk?'[2]
>
> No dwarf had ever heard so many Old Tongue words from the mouth of anyone over four feet high. They were astonished.
>
> [1] Lit: 'Good day! Good day! What is all of this that is going on here (in this place)?'
>
> [2] 'Listen, sunshine [lit: 'the stare of the great hot eye in the sky whose fiery gaze penetrates the mouth of the cavern'] I don't want to have to give anyone a smacking, so if you play B'tduz[3] with me, I'll play B'tduz with you. Okay?'[4]
>
> [3] A popular dwarfish game which consists of standing a few feet apart and throwing large rocks at one another's head.
>
> [4] Lit: 'All correctly beamed and propped?' (*Guards! Guards!*, 59–60)

These translations from Dwarfish show similar features to the previously discussed translation from Trollish. The third footnote includes hitting someone over the head, which is a conventional comic routine that can also be found in the traditional Punch and Judy doll shows, where puppets hitting each other on the head is designed to arouse laughter among the child audience. Another common feature—and this also applies to practically all the literal translations from indigenous languages in the *Discworld* novels—is that the literal translations, here especially in footnotes 2 and 4, reveal Dwarfish to be a highly idiomatic and poetically metaphorical language. This

characteristic allows Pratchett to use the rhetorical figure *periphrasis*, circumlocution, as a comic device.

In this quote, Carrot's actions are shown to the reader at first from Nobby's viewpoint (who does not understand Dwarfish), and then from the amazed dwarfs' viewpoint. Also the translations in the footnotes help the reader to understand how Carrot's speech and actions appear from the dwarfs' viewpoint. As Carrot is a constable in the City Watch, a police officer, his translated speech in the first footnote parodies the stereotypical greeting phrases of English constables, Bobbies. Also the English idiom "if you play ball with me, I'll play ball with you" is modified here by substituting the dwarfish game B'tduz for the ball game.

The main question I have sought out to answer in chapter 3.4 is: How does Pratchett make footnotes work as a comic device? This question arises because the convention of footnotes is not inherently comical, and footnotes are not typically used as a comic device in academic texts. I have pointed out that most of Pratchett's footnotes can be viewed as digressive asides, while some of them are also metacomments, absurd digressions, or extended jests. Metacomment-footnotes foreground the narrator's humorous ethos with their narcissistic self-centeredness that mixes clever wit with comic self-degradation. Another prominent way of making footnotes comical in the *Discworld* novels is Pratchett's deployment of absurd humor. According to my analysis, the primary comic devices for creating absurd humor in such footnotes are excessive exaggeration and paradoxical logic. Footnotes also allow Pratchett to play with a special kind of extended jesting, which imitates the structure and rhythm of stand-up comedy.

Pratchett uses footnotes frequently as a means to expand his fantasy world, which, due to the serial nature of the novels, acts as the setting for all *Discworld* novels. I have suggested above that much comedy in these footnotes arises from comically unusual viewpoints, which from our stance in the narrative audience appear as curious facts and strange phenomena in the Discworld, while attending the authorial audience we can see that many of these strange Discworld features resonate culturally with familiar Roundworld phenomena. Consequently, comically unusual viewpoints and cultural resonance are frequently combined in the *Discworld* novels.

Furthermore, cultural resonance tends to indicate rhetorically evaluative attitudes that can be satirically critical (as is the case with the mystical revelations and religious jihads associated with the first pizza recipe on the Disc), but this rhetorical evaluation can also be positive and approving. For example, Pratchett spins the cultural clichés about the carrying power of ants and Spanish peasant grandmothers into a comical idea of superhumanly strong old ladies. The careful relative of the lemming, the

vermine, is represented as a smarter version of its suicidal cousin. And while there is apparent parody of scientific and literary theories in the ideas of L-space and the study of invisible writings, they also inspire a new kind of scientific magic in the Discworld that deviates from the conventional magic of fantasy fiction.

The typographical placement at the bottom of the page makes Pratchett's footnotes a structural comic device, when the serious tones in the main text are interrupted by comically digressive aside-footnotes, and especially when the narrator deploys comic footnotes to extend jesting from the main text. Some situational and contextual comic devices contribute to the hyperdetermined humor of Pratchett's footnotes, such as absurd logic (when a lot of people apparently did not meet Vorbis) and occasional satire and parody. Bathos is the main comic device in several of Pratchett's footnotes, and some of the footnotes can be considered to contain a paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail. Some stylistic comic devices—such as hyperbole, simile, metaphor, and personification—appear in these footnotes and make their humor even more pronouncedly hyperdetermined.

I have discussed above several situational, contextual, and structural comic devices that are characteristic for Terry Pratchett's witcraft in the *Discworld* novels. In the following chapter, I will conclude my study on the poetics of Terry Pratchett's humor by analyzing his stylistic wit—comic imagery, puns, and euphemisms—in more detail.

4 STYLISTIC COMIC DEVICES: FIGURATIVE WIT

The stylistic comic devices that I will discuss in this chapter—hyperbole, simile, metaphor, personification, antanaclasis, paronomasia, and euphemism—have all been catalogued as rhetorical figures in the classical theory of rhetoric. These figures can be placed under two broader categories: comic imagery (hyperbole, simile, metaphor, and personification) and wordplay (antanaclasis, paronomasia, and euphemism). Most citations from humorists in various kinds of dictionaries and treasuries of quotations seem to contain rhetorical figures from one or both of these two categories.[57] This means that, in this chapter, I will not only have the chance to study Terry Pratchett's most quotable comic wit, but I also have, in rhetorical figures, the necessary analytical tools that helps me to determine what makes it quotable.

But does it really help us to understand stylistic humor if we dissect and sort it into artificial categories that were invented in ancient times? Brian Vickers (2002, 296) denies the claim that rhetorical figures are artificial and explains that "the eloquence of rhetoric is merely a systemization of natural eloquence". By this he means that rhetoricians have not invented the figures—they have simply identified and named various techniques of eloquence which skillful language users apply instinctively. The same observation is true of humorists. Skillful humorists can use rhetorical figures instinctively in constructing stylistic wit, which literary scholars can subsequently deconstruct into its ingredients by analyzing which rhetorical figures each humorist prefers to use. Furthermore, I suspect that a comparative study of literary humorists' stylistic wit would reveal that the repertoire of deployed rhetorical figures varies from one humorist to another.

Linguistics offers us a number of fine-grained categories for analyzing puns, but when we study imagery and vivid descriptions in humorous literature, similar fine-grained analytical tools can be found from the classical rhetorical figures. In what follows, I will demonstrate that such rhetorical figures as hyperbole, metaphor, simile, and personification enable us to discuss in detail the stylistic wit of the narrator's vivid descriptions in the *Discworld* novels.

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[57] Stephen Briggs has compiled a book of quotations from Terry Pratchett's novels, *The Wit and Wisdom of Discworld* (2007).

4.1 Comic imagery: analogies with outlandish but appropriate images

Although British literature has a long tradition for using comic imagery in humorous novels, starting from Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones* (1749), P. G. Wodehouse is perhaps the author who most notably resembles Pratchett in his use of imagery as a comic device. In his study *The Comic Style of P. G. Wodehouse* (1974), linguist Robert Hall offers the following commentary on Wodehouse's comic imagery:

> Best known of Wodehouse's SD's [i.e., stylistic devices], however, is his imagery, involving similes, metaphors, and other types of comparisons, using them in every instance to emphasize resemblances which at first glance seem highly incongruous (and hence provoking laughter), but which at the same time are highly appropriate to the particular person or situation described. His imagery—carefully planned, of course, like all the rest of his writing—is therefore particularly vivid and apposite. Certain of his similes recur frequently, e.g. *He made a noise like a dying duck in a thunderstorm*, or *The baby looked like a homicidal fried egg*. Other images occur only once, and it is hard to choose among them for exemplification. Each reader has his favorites; among mine are: [Then follows 13 quotes from Wodehouse's novels, most of them only one sentence long, each containing similes.] Such a list could be continued almost indefinitely; a whole volume could be compiled simply by excerpting all the imagery which Wodehouse uses in his stories.
>
> If such a volume were put together, its contents would have to be arranged in some way, probably according to the semantic sources of the images involved. (Hall 1974, 106–108)

Similar comments could be made of Pratchett's vivid descriptions. As Hall points out, one of the qualities that makes these similes and metaphors humorous is the far-fetched resemblance between the described things and the images which the comparison introduces—at first we think that the comparison is incongruous, but then we realize that it is nevertheless quite appropriate. Similarly to Wodehouse, Pratchett has his own manneristic similes and metaphors, which recur in several novels, but most of Pratchett's similes and metaphors are unique and only occur once. Another similarity with Wodehouse is that Pratchett's similes and metaphors are far too numerous to be discussed comprehensively.

Metaphors have in recent decades gained a lot of attention because linguists have, in a sense, followed Hall's advice. The current interest in the "conceptual metaphor" derives from George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's insight, presented in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), that thematic motifs can be discovered by mapping out the semantic

sources of metaphors. However, my own focus in the following discussion will be on how Pratchett makes these analogical images comical either by extending and elaborating them (as in extended metaphors) or by combining them with other comic devices (as in hyperbolic analogies and unexpected similes). This kind of hyperdetermination of humor, it seems to me, is an aspect of comic literary images that has received little attention by scholars—for instance, Hall ignores this kind of combinations in his study on Wodehouse's comic style.

I am not alone in thinking that Pratchett's humorous similes and metaphors resemble Wodehouse's. Also Gideon Haberkorn, in his article on Pratchett's "rhetoric of humor" (which he understands as the ability of humor to incite the reader's critical thinking, "debugging the mind"), states that there is notable similarity in the way that these two literary humorists use comic imagery:

> Another aspect which links Pratchett's writing with that of Wodehouse is the use of figurative language, specifically the use of metaphor and simile. Wodehouse writes of people moving "slowly off with bowed heads, like a couple of pallbearers who have forgotten their coffin and had to go back for it" [*Wodehouse Nuggets*], and describes somebody as "looking like a bereaved tapeworm" [*Wodehouse Nuggets*]. Pratchett describes geography as "physics slowed down and with a few trees stuck on it" [*Feet of Clay*], Nobby Nobbs as having "a certain resemblance to a chimpanzee who never got invited to tea parties" [*Guards! Guards!*], and summer as "a moving creature" which "likes to go south for the winter" [*Feet of Clay*]. Getting an education, to add a final example, is described in *Hogfather* as "a bit like a communicable sexual disease," in that "[i]t made you unsuitable for a lot of jobs and then you had the urge to pass it on" […]. If one thing is described by a comparison with something else, we expect a certain degree of similarity. The first moment of readjustment is caused, therefore, by the outlandish point of reference. A second is quite often caused by the realization that the comparison makes sense nevertheless. (Haberkorn 2014, 169)[58]

Haberkorn echoes here Hall's observation that what makes these metaphors and similes humorous is the incongruous resemblances that the images of similes and metaphors introduce. However, there are also several other qualities which make Pratchett's imagery both vivid and comical, as I will demonstrate below. I think that because the quotes which Hall and Haberkorn base their discussion on are very short, typically consisting of only one sentence, they fail to observe how combining various comic devices often makes the humor in Pratchett's and Wodehouse's comic imagery hyperdetermined.

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[58] *Wodehouse Nuggets* (1983) is a collection of Wodehouse quotes, compiled by Richard Usborne. *Guards! Guards!* (1989) is the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Feet of Clay* (1996) the nineteenth, and *Hogfather* (1996) the twentieth.

In addition to Pratchett and Wodehouse, I have noticed that also Raymond Chandler and Douglas Adams use imaginative and original imagery in the humorous narration of their novels. It might be only a coincidence, but all these authors are British. Chandler, though, is actually American-British—he was born in the USA and then spent his youth and received his education in England.[59] Thus, their use of comic imagery can perhaps be characterized as distinctively British.

Here are two of Raymond Chandler's idiosyncratic images, from *The Big Sleep* (1939):

> The General spoke again, slowly, using his strength as carefully as an out-of-work show-girl uses her last good pair of stockings. (Chapter 2)
>
> Dead men are heavier than broken hearts. (Chapter 8)

The General that the narrator describes is weary of old age and illness, while the second quote describes how it is not easy to carry a dead man, and thus the images of these similes are appropriate even though they are imaginatively far-fetched. What makes them comical is the contrast between the images and the described things—in the first quote, a powerful and rich old man is compared to a penniless showgirl, and in the second quote, a concrete physical object is compared to a metaphorical representation of an emotion.

And here are samples of Douglas Adams's comic imagery from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979):

> The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy *also mentions alcohol. It says that the best drink in existence is the Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster.*
>
> *It says that the effect of drinking a Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster is like having your brains smashed out by a slice of lemon wrapped round a large gold brick.* (Chapter 2)
>
> 'Please relax,' said the voice pleasantly, like a stewardess in an airliner with only one wing and two engines, one of which is on fire, 'you are perfectly safe.' (Chapter 9)

The first quote contains a hyperbolic simile, while the simile in the second quote is ironic, since the image communicates an opposite message to the pleasant voice's reassurances. Adams's humor, I think, is more ironic than Pratchett's, but they both use frequently comic hyperboles that are perhaps more absurdly extreme than Wodehouse's and Chandler's. It would be interesting to make a comparative study of these four authors' comic imagery, especially as comic imagery seems to be a

[59] Chandler and Wodehouse were both educated in Dulwich College, which Chandler attended just after Wodehouse had left (Butler 2007, 425).

somewhat neglected area in humor studies,[60] but it is not possible to do that in this dissertation. However, I hope that my analysis of Pratchett's comic imagery can provide a point of departure for such comparative studies in the future.

4.1.1 Vivid descriptions: bringing before the eyes

Classical rhetoricians have coined several terms for discussing vivid descriptions: *enargeia* (or *enargia*), *hypotyposis*, *ecphrasis*, *demonstratio*, and *descriptio*. There are also a number of rhetorical terms for more specific types of vivid descriptions, such as descriptions of persons, events, times, places, etc. (Fahnestock 2011, 334–336; Lanham 1991, 61, 64). Such terminological abundance indicates that rhetoricians have early on noticed the importance of vivid descriptions in speeches and writings. One phrase that crops up frequently when the ancient rhetoricians discuss vivid descriptions is "bringing before the eyes"[61]. This phrase, as well as the terms "image" and "imagery", which are commonly used in literary studies, suggest that vivid descriptions typically contain verbal representations of visual perceptions. However, this does not mean that other senses could not play a significant part in literary images.

4.1.1.1 Enargeia of a dog's wet nose

I will now look closely at one particular description, which appears in the tenth *Discworld* novel *Moving Pictures* (1990), and consider what kinds of qualities makes it vivid.

> The universe contains any amount of horrible ways to be woken up, such as the noise of the mob breaking down the front door, the scream of fire engines, or the realization that today is the Monday which on Friday night was a comfortably long way off. A dog's wet nose is not strictly speaking the worst of the bunch, but it has its own peculiar dreadfulness which connoisseurs of the ghastly and dog owners everywhere have come to know and dread. It's like having a small piece of defrosting liver pressed lovingly against you. (*Moving Pictures*, 194–195)

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[60] Salvatore Attardo (2014b, 505) has stated that "[o]verall, the analysis of humorous metaphors is still in its infancy".

[61] Jeanne Fahnestock (2011, 334–335) points out that this phrase appears in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and also in Quintilian's writings, and so it seems to have been in general use among the ancient rhetoricians.

In this quote, the narrator composes a vivid and elaborate description of a very small and brief event: a human is woken up by the touch of a dog's nose. This description begins with three evocative images, which are only remotely related to the actual event that the narrator wants to describe—one where the mob is breaking into the house, one where the house is on fire, and one where a person suddenly realizes that the weekend is over. All these images are incomplete—they consist of explicit and implied elements, of which the latter are left for the reader to complete. In fact, the first two images describe sounds, not visual perceptions, but they are "brought before the eyes" with the images of mob breaking the door and fire engines. Also the third image describes something other than a visual perception: a mental and emotional realization.

The fourth image consists similarly of explicit and implied elements—although only the dog's nose is mentioned, readers can infer that the nose does not exist independently of the dog, and thus we can reconstruct the image where a dog wakes up the sleeper with the touch of its cold and wet nose. Again, the image "brings before the eyes" an experience felt on the sleeper's skin rather than something one could observe visually, with eyes only. The narrator compares this fourth image explicitly with the three previous images, and a part of the comedy in this description comes from the anticlimactic order of the images, which moves from the lethally dangerous to the merely annoying. The hyperbolic claim that many people have learned to dread the unexpected touch of a dog's nose is comically incongruous in its elevation of a commonplace incident.

Thus, in this particular description, vividness has been constructed mainly by heaping up several evocative images, while the elements that make this description comical are hyperbole and the bathetic arrangement of the images. All the preceding images can be conceived as the comic setup for the final, fifth, image in the description, where the touch of the dog's cold and wet nose is compared to something that is similarly wet and very cold. However, a dog's nose can hardly be as cold as defrosting liver, and this exaggeration makes the simile hyperbolic. While packing several images into one description can create vividness, also descriptions of sense experiences create vividness, because the experiences that we receive through our senses appear to us as stronger and more concrete than abstract ideas. As this quote demonstrates, the "images" of vivid descriptions are not restricted to visual perceptions—they can also involve other senses, such as auditory and tactile perceptions.

Throughout this dissertation I have argued that Terry Pratchett's witcraft is based on humorously unusual viewpoints on familiar things, while the function of comic

devices is that they allow Pratchett to represent these humorous viewpoints in a skillful manner. In this quote, the humorous viewpoint consists of the unusual idea that an unexpected touch of a dog's nose can be a shocking experience. By representing this touch as an emphatically negative experience—with the emotionally loaded words "horrible", "dreadfulness", "ghastly", and "dread"—Pratchett is also manipulating our evaluative attitudes toward this phenomenon.

In addition, Pratchett uses the touch of the dog's nose as a plot device—a narrative motif—later in the novel, but in order to do that he first needs to establish the idea in the reader's mind that this kind of touch is such a startling experience that it can wake up a human character from the magical enchantment which the "wild idea" of the movie-making industry in Holy Wood casts on people. Therefore, this comical vivid description has a rhetorical function that is immediately apparent, and a hidden narrative function, which only becomes apparent to the reader much later in the novel.

The analogy in the simile is imaginative and original—as is the case with most of Pratchett's metaphors and similes. The narrator combines the simile with situational irony when he suggests that the dog's intention in poking its nose against the sleeper is affectionate, although the effect on the sleeper contradicts this intention. This combination of simile and situational irony has been placed at the end of the description in order to emphasize the comic incongruity between the final image and the preceding ones, which function as the comic setup in creating the comic incongruity. Combining images with structural comic devices, especially paraprosdokian and bathos, is a common way of introducing additional comic incongruity into similes and metaphors in the *Discworld* novels.

4.1.1.2 Energeia of Music With Rocks In

Even though Pratchett uses vivid descriptions frequently as a comic device, their typical function in literary fiction is to evoke pathos in the reader, and Pratchett deploys vivid descriptions also for this more conventional purpose. Because my focus in this dissertation is on Pratchett's humor, my analyses tend to ignore how the narrator evokes the reader's emotions by creating drama, tensions, conflicts, excitement, and sentimentality, although these are equally important features in the *Discworld* novels. Vivid descriptions can serve all these functions—pathos, dramatic intensity, and comedy—although usually one of these functions is more prevalent than others.

The classical theory of rhetoric has a concept that is closely associated with vivid descriptions, and it often plays a major role in building dramatic intensity. This concept is *energeia* (or *energia*), which should not be confused with the term for vivid descriptions, *enargeia* (or *enargia*). According to Lanham (1991, 64–65), energeia is a "general term for vigor, vividness, energy in expression", and it is discussed in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as well as in Quintilian's *The Orator's Education*. Thus, energeia's meaning overlaps with enargeia, but Lanham suggests that energeia could be used as the special term for stylistic vigor in vivid descriptions.

The above-discussed description of a dog's wet nose contains several vivid images, but the style is not remarkably vigorous. Therefore, I will next analyze a vivid description from the sixteenth *Discworld* novel, *Soul Music* (1994), where the function of creating dramatic intensity prevails and is amplified by notable stylistic vigor. It is a description of a rock concert, and the serious undertones of the described scene come from the narrative motif that rock music, in the Discworld, is a magical entity that is alive and takes control of people, forcing them to live fast and die young. This "wild idea" of Music With Rocks In It has possessed a young harp-player, Imp y Celyn[62], and it gives him the ability to enthrall his audience—not unlike the "wild idea" of Holy Wood's movie-industry in the tenth *Discworld* novel *Moving Pictures* (1990), which compels the cinema audience to an evil enchantment—while at the same time it also drains out his life.

> *Whaaauum.*
>
> Imp stood like a discus thrower as the chord filled across the noisy room.
>
> It rang like an iron bar dropped on a library floor at midnight.
>
> Echoes bounced back from the corners of the room. Each one bore its own load of harmonics.
>
> It was an explosion of sound in the same way that a Hogswatchnight rocket explodes, each falling spark exploding again …
>
> Imp's fingers caressed the strings, picking out three more chords. […]
>
> This was music that had not only escaped but had robbed a bank on the way out. It was music with its sleeves rolled up and its top button undone, raising its hat and grinning and stealing the silver.

---

[62] According to a Terry Pratchett and Discworld fansite, *The L-Space Web*, Imp y Celyn is a Welsh transliteration of "bud of the holly" and thus alludes to Buddy Holly <https://www.lspace.org/books/apf/soul-music.html> [accessed 15 January 2023]. A running gag in the novel is that Imp is repeatedly said to look "elvish" (as resembling an elf), which associates him also with Elvis Presley.

> It was music that went down to the feet by way of the pelvis without paying a call on Mr Brain. (*Soul Music*, 113)

This description might be called ekphrasis, although this term usually refers to verbal descriptions of visual works of art (Preston 2007), while this is a verbal description of music. It begins with an onomatopoeic word that is italicized for emphasis. The narrator adds extra emphasis to this sound-imitation by making it the only word in the paragraph, which separates it from the other text and forces the reader to take a short pause after it, while the gaze moves to the next paragraph. The whole quote consists of short paragraphs, containing only one or two sentences each. This intermittent method of narrating gives the sentences much more emphasis than if they were joined into one long paragraph, and thus it is a way of adding stylistic vigor, energeia, to the description. The image of the simile in the second paragraph is static, which is then immediately contrasted by the energetic images of the similes in the third and the fifth paragraph: a sudden loud noise echoing inside a large, silent building and an exploding firework. The image of firework transforms a musical sound to its visual equivalent, thus "bringing it before the eyes".

In the last two paragraphs, the narrator adds stylistic vigor both with energetic images and by using anaphoric repetition ("This was music that…", "It was music with…", "It was music that…"), which manipulates the pace and rhythm of the narration in a similar manner as the short paragraphs, although in the opposite direction—short paragraphs separate the sentences and create pauses between them, while anaphora joins sentences with each other by its rhythmic pattern. Repetitions like anaphora generate a chanting rhythm, which can create a mesmerizing effect on the reader. The described music begins with a single chord, which echoes for a while and is then followed by three more chords, before the music picks up a rhythm that goes straight into the audience's feet. The structure of the narrator's description can be conceived to loosely imitate the described music, as it also picks up the pace and rhythmic flow in the two final paragraphs of the quote.

In the penultimate paragraph, the narrator creates an elaborate personification of the music and describes its abstract qualities by transforming them into tangible images of a human being, a charismatic rogue. The last paragraph describes the music's effects on the physical bodies of its audience—this physicality adds concreteness to the image. The description also includes a brief personification of the audience's conscious mind, as "Mr Brain". Although these hyperbolic personifications are clearly humorous, the purpose of this vivid and stylistically vigorous description is to communicate to the reader the soul and essence of rock music, and what it feels like to hear this new and wild music for the very first time.

As the description of the rock concert continues, Pratchett adds more comedy into it, without abandoning the functions of evoking pathos and dramatic intensity.

> Imp's fingers danced over the strings, but the sound that came from them was no relative to the tones of harp or lute. The guitar screamed like an angel who had just discovered why it was on the wrong side. Sparks glittered on the strings.
>
> […] And still the music flooded out. […]
>
> It made you want to kick down walls and ascend the sky on steps of fire. It made you want to pull all the switches and throw all the levers and stick your fingers in the electric socket of the universe to see what happened next. It made you want to paint your bedroom wall black and cover it with posters. (*Soul Music*, 114)

The image of the hyperbolic simile in the first paragraph is outlandish enough to be funny, but, at the same time, this image of an angel who suddenly wants to switch sides communicates effectively the emotional impact that the "screaming" guitar sounds extraordinary and exciting. It underlines what the narrator says in the preceding sentence: apparently the instrument that Imp plays is some sort of harp or lute, so it should not sound like an amplified electric guitar. Inside the story world, this sound comes from the magical "wild idea" of rock music, and if the exploding sparks of a firework in the previous quote were metaphorically visualized descriptions of the guitar's sound, here they appear to be non-metaphorical sparks of magic, which make the strings glitter visibly.

The last paragraph gains stylistic vigor from piling up images and from anaphora ("It made you want to…"). Kicking down the walls is a clichéd image in rock lyrics, and although I am not aware of any lyrics about ascending the sky on steps of fire, there is a renowned rock song titled "Stairway to Heaven", and fire is a recurring element in rock lyrics. These are powerfully visual images and hyperboles that represent intense emotions rather than physical actuality. The same applies to the main metaphorical image of the next sentence—there is no such thing as "the electric socket of the universe", but thematically this poetic metaphor can be conceived as an associative extension of the preceding allusion to the sound of electric guitar, since it creates the impression that the music has an electrifying effect on its listeners. While the preceding paragraphs concentrate mainly on describing the music, in this anaphoric paragraph all the images describe the effects of this music on the audience's state of mind.

In the theory chapter about literary interests (1.3.2.1), I have discussed how representing the characters' emotional responses to story events makes them more life-like and interesting for the reader, inviting us to identify ourselves with the

characters. The narrator of the *Discworld* novels tends to use similes and metaphors when he describes the characters' emotional responses to story events, and in this description of rock concert the narrator uses metaphors to describe the emotional effects of rock music on its audience. Because these effects are described vividly and with stylistic vigor, this description guides the reader to conceive the music approvingly, as something new and exciting that goes straight to the feet and makes you want to behave in an uncustomary manner.

The hyperboles and images of this vivid description serve the function of building dramatic intensity and communicating emotional excitement, but the last sentence serves mainly the comedic function. It ends the description with bathos, when the level of elevation that the short paragraphs, anaphoric repetitions, and piled metaphoric images have built up sinks comically. Painting your bedroom black and covering its walls with posters are rather mundane acts, while the preceding images describe extraordinary feats. Decorating one's own room in the described manner is a cultural cliché associated with rock music—but it is associated mainly with teenagers. One of the narrative motifs in *Soul Music* is that rock music makes even old wizards act like teenagers, and hence the function of this motif is prevalently comedic. Rock music conceived as a living and partially personified entity, a "wild idea", constructs a humorously unconventional viewpoint on a familiar phenomenon: Why do people do all those silly things that are associated with rock music? Could the explanation be that they act under the influence of some kind of magical enchantment?

In my analyses above, I have demonstrated that Pratchett makes the narrator's descriptions in the *Discworld* novels vivid by piling up comic imagery and by involving experiences of different senses, and that he occasionally adds stylistic vigor to these vivid descriptions by deploying stylistic devices that alter the conventional syntax, flow, and rhythm of language. Next, I will continue my discussion on Pratchett's comic imagery by studying how he uses hyperbole, often in combination with metaphor or simile, as a means to make the imagery of his vivid descriptions comical.

4.1.2 Comic hyperboles: absurdly excessive exaggerations

Hyperbole is a classical rhetorical figure, a trope that can signify both stylistic exaggeration[63] and exaggeration of the subject matter[64]. This is mostly a heuristic distinction, but I point it out merely because it is possible to exaggerate the subject matter without using stylistic overstatements. In their glossary of literary terms, Abrams and Harpham (2009, 149) point out that hyperbole "may be used either for serious or ironic or comic effect". It is the comic effect that is my main focus in this dissertation, although I cannot entirely ignore hyperbole's ability to express serious emotional responses, because such emotions often indicate positive or negative attitudes, which are essential constituents of narrative rhetoric.

Because there can be different degrees of exaggeration, from slight to absurdly excessive, it is sometimes difficult to judge whether someone is exaggerating or not, but the absurdly excessive hyperboles typically introduce an easily recognizable comic incongruity between truth and exaggeration. The distinction between truth and exaggeration is especially difficult to judge in fantasy fiction, where the existence of magic makes the laws of nature in a fantasy world different from the real world. On the other hand, humorous exaggerations allow fantasy fiction to deviate from reality even more than what the existence of magic would normally allow. For example, the Discworld is a pizza-shaped world that is carried by four elephants and a turtle. Such comically absurd world construction would most likely not be possible in non-comical fantasy fiction.

I have already mentioned above, in the chapter about Pratchett's satire of commercialism in movies (2.4.2), how in *Moving Pictures* Cut-My-Own-Throat Dibbler uses hyperboles, such as "a thousand elephants", for advertising the spectacle movies in which there actually are no elephants. This resonates with our Roundworld's culture, where hyperboles often appear in various kinds of advertisements. This highlights the inherently rhetorical nature of hyperbole, since the primary purpose of marketing and advertising is to guide the audience's attitudes toward the advertised product by representing it in a positive light (Corbett & Connors 1999, 2–5; Määttä 2017).

As hyperboles work by calling the reader's attention to some detail by exaggerating and magnifying it, this trope can be conceived as a kind of stylistic

[63] Hyperbole has been defined as "exaggerated or extravagant terms used for emphasis and not intended to be understood literally" (Lanham 1991, 86) and as "bold overstatement" (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 149).

[64] Hyperbole has also been defined as "self-conscious exaggeration" (Lanham 1991, 86) and "the extravagant exaggeration of fact or of possibility" (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 149).

magnifying glass. Christina Alm-Arvius (2003, 136) provides some examples of hyperbole in everyday speech: "All he wants to do is chase women." "You're always leaving your key in the lock." "You are never at home." "There's absolutely nothing on the telly tonight." These hyperboles are simple generalizations and overstatements, and their function is to express the speaker's strong emotional responses. Although such hyperboles are not meant to be understood literally, they are clearly not metaphors or similes, because they lack the underlying analogy which defines those tropes. It is also clear that, unlike most of Pratchett's hyperboles, these examples of everyday hyperboles are not intended to be humorous.

Here are two samples of comic hyperboles from the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989). In the first quote, Sergeant Colon of the City Watch demonstrates his skills in archery, while the second quote reveals the secret of Colon's long and happy marriage.

> He grunted, and loosed the arrow.
>
> Several things happened so fast that they will have to be recounted in stop-motion prose. Probably the first was the bowstring slapping into the soft inner part of Colon's wrist, causing him to scream and drop the bow. This had no effect on the path of the arrow, which was already flying straight and true towards a gargoyle on the rooftop just across the road. It hit it on the ear, bounced, ricocheted off a wall six feet away, and headed back towards Colon apparently at a slightly increased speed, going past his ear with a silky humming noise.
>
> It vanished in the direction of the city walls. (*Guards! Guards!*, 261)
>
> Sergeant Colon owed thirty years of happy marriage to the fact that Mrs Colon worked all day and Sergeant Colon worked all night. They communicated by means of notes. He got her tea ready before he left at night, she left his breakfast nice and hot in the oven in the mornings. They had three grown-up children, all born, Vimes had assumed, as a result of extremely persuasive handwriting. (*Guards! Guards!*, 51)

Part of the fun in the first quote is that Colon has been bragging that he was a master archer in his younger days, but when he gives a demonstration, it becomes clear that Colon has no skills at all in archery. When the results of action are the opposite of what was intended, this is called situational irony. This quote also contains a hyperbolic analogy—a comparison between a technique of writing and a cinematic special effect. The cinematic special effect is typically used for making fast events visible by slowing them down, and something similar is achieved in this quote when the narrator gives a detailed report of what happens right after Colon looses the arrow. This "stop-motion prose" creates the impression that the narrator's

description slows down the fast pace of events, while at the same time it also manages to exaggerate this speed.

What is exaggerated in the second quote is fact that Sergeant Colon and his wife cannot spend much time together, because Colon works in the nighttime and his wife in the daytime. However, they apparently do manage to spend some time together, because procreation via writing notes would be implausible even in a fantasy world. The comedy of the description also depends on the narrative structure of the quoted passage—it is an anecdote with a paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail, which makes it a joke. In addition, the anecdote contains the humorously unconventional viewpoint that the reason why Sergeant and Mrs. Colon's marriage is happy is that they never seem to meet each other. Elaboration of this unconventional viewpoint constructs a narrative setup for the punch line, where hyperbole is combined with a paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail, forcing us to rethink how a marriage where all communication happens via writing notes might work.

Comic hyperboles are often constructed by speculating on some exaggerated hypothetical events. Here are two quotes from the twelfth *Discworld* novel, *Witches Abroad* (1991), where Pratchett combines hyperbole with hypothetical speculation:

> Desiderata was a kindly soul. Fairy godmothers develop a very deep understanding about human nature, which makes the good ones kind and the bad ones powerful. She was not someone to use extreme language, but it was possible to be sure that when she deployed a mild term like 'a bee in her bonnet' she was using it to define someone whom she believed to be several miles over the madness horizon and accelerating. (*Witches Abroad*, 16)

> The point was that a good Genuan cook could more or less take the squeezings of a handful of mud, a few dead leaves and a pinch or two of some unpronounceable herbs and produce a meal to make a gourmet burst into tears of gratitude and swear to be a better person for the rest of their entire life if they could just have one more plateful. (*Witches Abroad*, 170)

In the first quote, there is an analogy between growing madness and speculation about some kind of fast-moving flying object, perhaps an aircraft or a rocket, rising ever higher while still accelerating. The expression "madness horizon" can be conceived as a metaphor that establishes a resemblance between horizon and the threshold of madness. Also here, as in the "stop-motion prose" hyperbole, the exaggerated explanation of what the phrase "a bee in her bonnet" means seems to make the explained phrase both an understatement and overstatement at the same time. Thus, although overstatement and understatement are supposed to be polar opposites, there nevertheless clearly exists some kind of interconnection between these two tropes, and sometimes I find it difficult to distinguish them from each

other. Although the exaggeration in this hyperbole is comically extreme, the main comic incongruity in the quote takes place in the contrast between the understatement in the character's phrase and the overstatement in the narrator's explanation. The hyperbolic image describes the fairy godmother's emotional response, and from a rhetorical perspective this mildly expressed but strongly felt attitude adds a sense of verisimilitude to her character, which makes it easier for the reader to identify with her.

There are two hyperboles in the second quote and they are both hypothetical rather something that has actually happened. The first exaggeration concerns the ability of Genuan cooks to make tasty meals out of simple ingredients, and the hypothetical gourmet's strong emotional response is also clearly an exaggeration. There is also a humorously unusual viewpoint in this hyperbole, since Pratchett invites us to appreciate how the skills of a truly excellent cook display nearly magical qualities. Genua is the Discworld's equivalent of New Orleans, which is famous for its cuisine, and thus this quote resonates with a phenomenon that is familiar from our Roundworld's culture. As this quote demonstrates, excessive exaggeration can serve as a means to construct comically unusual viewpoints.

Hyperboles typically become comical when the exaggeration is magnified to absurd proportions, as is the case in the following vivid and stylistically vigorous description, taken from the fifth *Discworld* novel *Sourcery* (1988), of an exceptionally skillful thief:

> The thief, as will become apparent, was a special type of thief. This thief was an artist of theft. Other thieves merely stole everything that was not nailed down, but this thief stole the nails as well. This thief had scandalised Ankh by taking a particular interest in stealing, with astonishing success, things that were in fact not only nailed down but also guarded by keen-eyed guards in inaccessible strongrooms. There are artists that will paint an entire chapel ceiling; this was the kind of thief that could steal it.
>
> This particular thief was credited with stealing the jewelled disembowelling knife from the Temple of Offler the Crocodile God during the middle of Evensong, and the silver shoes from the Patrician's finest racehorse while it was in the process of winning a race. When Gritoller Mimpsey, vice-president of the Thieves' Guild, was jostled in the marketplace and then found on returning home that a freshly-stolen handful of diamonds had vanished from their place of concealment, he knew who to blame.* This was the type of thief that could steal the initiative, the moment and the words right out of your mouth.
>
> * This was because Gritoller had swallowed the jewels for safe keeping. (*Sourcery*, 43)

What is extravagantly exaggerated throughout this quote with several hyperboles is the statement made in the second sentence, that the described thief is "an artist of

theft". The first paragraph builds a climactic order with anaphora ("This thief …") and an increasing degree of exaggerations, and it ends with an absurdly exaggerated feat of theft. In the second paragraph, the narrator continues heaping up absurdly exaggerated images of theft. Also these images are arranged in the climactic order of increasing exaggeration, while the full revelation of the last hyperbolic image is delayed by placing it into a footnote, which further heightens the climactic effect. The final sentence of the second paragraph makes a brief return to the promise made in the first sentence of the quote—that the narrator wants to describe "a special type of thief"—and then proceeds to conclude the description by bundling three idiomatic expressions about stealing. These idioms are, in comparison to the preceding absurd exaggerations, rather mild hyperboles, but their metaphorical nature, together with their condensed representation—three idiomatic images squeezed together into one sentence by using *zeugma*[65]—forms an eloquent final climax to this hyperbolic description.

In his treatise on rhetoric (1991, 1358b), Aristotle associates praise and blame especially with epideictic (i.e. demonstrative or ceremonial) oratory, but I think that these functions are essential to all kinds of rhetoric. Advertisements, for example, can be viewed as praises of the advertised products—and advertisements often combine their praising with hyperbole. In another quote discussed above, the narrator uses hyperboles in a similar manner to praise the skills of Genuan cooks. This description of an artist of theft constructs a hyperbolic praise of the thief's extraordinary skills. Although these comic hyperboles are so absurdly extravagant in their exaggeration that the described feats of theft are, even in a fantasy world, clearly impossible to achieve without resorting to magic, I think they nevertheless succeed in the narrator's rhetorical purpose: the reader is persuaded to admire this thief as a master, or perhaps a mistress, in the art of theft—it is worth noticing how the narrator carefully avoids mentioning the gender of the thief in this description, so that it can be revealed as a potential surprise.

A little bit later in *Sourcery*, a hooded figure, who turns out to be the thief of the earlier description, approaches Rincewind in a tavern and starts talking to him. The narrator uses several hyperbolic images to describe the effect of the thief's voice and appearance on Rincewind.

> [The thief's voice] was beautiful. It sounded like wild silk looks. […]

[65] Zeugma is the rhetorical figure where "one word, usually a verb, governs several congruent words or clauses" (Lanham 1991, 159).

> [T]hat voice would have made even a statue get down off its pedestal for a few brisk laps of the playing field and fifty press-ups. It was a voice that could make 'Good morning' sound like an invitation to bed.
>
> The stranger threw back her hood and shook out her long hair. It was almost pure white. Since her skin was tanned golden the general effect was calculated to hit the male libido like a lead pipe. (*Sourcery*, 45–46)

The simile in the first paragraph is unusual because it is synesthetic—it describes an aural sensation in terms of a visual one. It can be called an impressional simile, since using analogical images to describe what something sounds or looks like convey subjective impressions. In this case, these subjective impressions appear to be Rincewind's, represented by the narrator.

The second paragraph contains a hyperbole that uses the conditional mood to describe a hypothetical event that does not actually take place: a statue getting down off its pedestal and doing physical exercises. Doing strenuous physical exercises is a culturally clichéd way of expelling sexual thoughts from one's mind, and since a statue should be incapable to either think sexual thoughts or move around, the hyperbole is absurdly excessive. As there seems to be an analogy between the voice's effects on Rincewind and on the statue, the image can perhaps be conceived as a metaphor. The image also involves a personification, since the statue acts like a human being. The phrase "an invitation to bed" in the simile at the end this paragraph is, of course, a metonymic euphemism for an invitation to sexual intercourse.

The analogy in the third paragraph is a simile, since the comparison is made explicit by using the word "like". Although abstract psychological motivations, such as libidos, cannot be hit with solid objects, this simile's image of something being hit with a lead pipe gives the description an impression of a strong and concrete impact. The comic incongruity of the images in the last two paragraphs construct circumlocutional description of the thief's sex appeal and its powerful effect on Rincewind by combining hyperbole, metaphor, and simile with euphemisms.

This description, where the narrator combines hyperbole with similes in order to praise the thief's sex appeal, is rhetorical in the same manner as the hyperbolic description of her as an exceptionally skilled thief. While the narrator appears to describe the effects of the thief's voice and appearance on Rincewind, the actual target audience of this rhetorical praise are readers, and with this description Pratchett persuades us to view the thief in a positive light, not only as an artist of theft but also as an exceptionally beautiful and attractive woman.

To recap the discussion above, hyperboles deviate from truth by exaggerating things. Hyperboles are often deployed to express intense emotions, which can add a sense of verisimilitude to characters and invite the reader to identify with them. Hyperboles become comical when the degree of exaggeration becomes absurdly excessive, because this increases the comic incongruity between truth and exaggeration, while it also makes comic hyperboles easier to detect. In the *Discworld* novels, Pratchett tends to combine his comic hyperboles with metaphors, similes, and vivid descriptions of hypothetical events. The rhetorical use of hyperboles becomes especially clear when they are used for praising or blaming something.

Next, I will discuss how Pratchett deploys several strategies to make his metaphors and similes comical in the *Discworld* novels.

4.1.3 Metaphors and similes: images of similarity in difference

Just like hyperbole, also metaphor and simile are rhetorical figures that were recognized already by the ancient rhetoricians. Edward Corbett (1999, 443) defines metaphor as "an implied comparison between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common" and simile as "an explicit comparison between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common". In other words, both tropes can be viewed as analogies—metaphor as an implied analogy and simile as an explicit one. Corbett's definitions also help us in clarifying the difference between analogical and non-analogical comparisons. Comparing two things of similar nature to find out how they differ from each other is not an analogical comparison—for instance, if we compare two balls and point out that a tennis ball is smaller than a basketball. The analogy in simile is typically indicated explicitly by using the words "like" or "as", although there are also other ways to make the comparison explicit.

Simile is sometimes defined as an assertion of likeness and metaphor as an assertion of identity (Lanham 1991, 100). This consideration can be conceived as another way of pointing to the difference between explicit and implied comparison, since an explicit comparison makes it clear that despite some similarities the compared things are not identical, while the assertion of identity excludes the need for an explicit comparison.

Rhetoricians have traditionally argued that rhetorical figures, especially tropes, have expressive and persuasive functions, because they can express the speaker's or writer's emotions and attitudes, which can subsequently affect the audience's

emotions, attitudes, and opinions.[66] From the standpoint of literary scholars, a notable feature of similes and metaphors is that their analogies typically introduce new verbal images; and from the standpoint of humor researchers, it is noteworthy that similes and metaphors can be turned into comic devices. Since it appears that there have not been extensive studies on the comical use of analogic images (Attardo 2014b, 505), my detailed investigation on Pratchett's comic imagery should shed new light on the various ways that humorists can use metaphors, similes, and personifications as comic devices.

In the following pages, I will look more closely at some combinations of comic devices that I think are most prominent in Pratchett's comic imagery. At first, I will look at how Pratchett constructs extended metaphors by combining analogies with each other. After that, I will discuss how Pratchett combines similes with structural comic devices in order to give the similes a comically unexpected twist-in-the-tail structure. Then I will consider the ways that some of Pratchett's similes and metaphors convey impressions. After discussing these specific ways to construct comic metaphors and similes, I will interpret the central theme of Guards! Guards! as being built around one hyperbolic metaphor.

4.1.3.1 Extended metaphors

Playing with comically extravagant and imaginative metaphors and similes is clearly a conscious artistic choice in the *Discworld* novels rather than an accident. This self-conscious use of analogical imagery as a comic device is demonstrated in the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), where Pratchett deploys metaphor as a plot element. In this novel Wonse Lupine, who works as the Patrician's secretary and secretly leads an occult society as its Supreme Grand Master, has summoned a dragon and used it to usurp the power in Ankh-Morpork from the Patrician. Eventually, the City Watch arrests Wonse, and as he is just about to summon another dragon, he accidentally gets killed by a metaphor.

> 'Throw the book at him, Carrot.'
>
> 'Right, sir.'
>
> Vimes remembered too late.
>
> Dwarfs have trouble with metaphors.

[66] See chapter "The Expressive Function of Rhetorical Figures" in Brian Vickers's book *In Defence of Rhetoric* (1998), where he reviews how rhetorical figures have been conceived in the past.

> They also have a very good aim.
>
> *The Laws and Ordinances of Ankh and Morpork* caught the secretary on the forehead. He blinked, staggered, and stepped backwards.
>
> It was the longest step he ever took. For one thing, it lasted the rest of his life.
>
> After several seconds they heard him hit, five storeys below.
>
> After several more seconds their faces appeared over the edge of the ravaged floor.
>
> 'What a way to go,' said Sergeant Colon.
>
> 'That's a fact,' said Nobby, reaching up to his ear for a dog-end.
>
> 'Killed by a wossname. Metaphor.'
>
> 'Dunno,' said Nobby. 'Looks like the ground to me. Got a light, Sarge?' (*Guards! Guards!*, 299)

When Wonse wakes up next time, he sees a hooded figure who resembles the cloaked members of his secret society.

> Wonse arose in a world of shades, icy confusion pouring into his mind. But all he could think of at the moment was the tall cowled figure standing over him.
>
> 'I thought you were all dead,' he mumbled. It was strangely quiet and the colours around him seemed washed-out, muted. Something was very wrong. 'Is that you, Brother Doorkeeper?' he ventured.
>
> The figure reached out.
>
> METAPHORICALLY, it said. (*Guards! Guards!*, 300)

Throwing the book at someone is an idiomatic metaphor that means reading criminal charges. Carrot, who has been raised by literal-minded dwarfs, has trouble understanding metaphors, and in the scene where he literally throws the book, this inability becomes a plot element. The images in metaphors typically make abstract things more concrete, and in this case the concrete image of the idiomatic metaphor also has very concrete and lethal consequences. Pratchett draws readers' attention to this play with the concept of metaphor by making the characters mention the word "metaphor" explicitly. At first, it appears in Captain Vimes's thoughts, which the narrator conveys to us. This first instance of mentioning metaphor explicitly is story-motivated, since it helps us to understand why Carrot acts the way he does. The second explicit mentioning of metaphor appears in Sergeant Colon's uncharacteristically observant and witty remark. This second occurrence is

unnecessary for the story, and thus it creates the impression, when we join the authorial audience, that Pratchett wants to amuse the reader by playing with the concept of metaphor. The third occurrence of the word, in Death's reply, confirms this impression.

According to I. A. Richards (1965, lecture V), metaphors can be divided into two parts, which helps us to discuss them in detail. The first part is the thing that the metaphor describes, i.e. its actual meaning (Richards calls this "tenor"), and the second is the image (Richards calls this "vehicle") which the metaphor associates with the described thing. When Vimes uses the metaphorical idiom, its actual meaning is reading criminal charges, while the image that the metaphor associates with this action is throwing a book. Since Carrot is literal-minded, he interprets the metaphor literally—he only understands the image of the metaphor, but not the thing that the metaphor describes.

Interpreting metaphors literally is one possible way of making them comical, but Colon's witty observation, in a sense, does the opposite. Carrot dissolves the metaphor by separating the image from the described thing, but Colon assembles the pieces again back together in order to state that what in fact killed Wonse was not that Carrot threw the book but his misunderstanding of the metaphor. Nobby adds another comically contrasting viewpoint by stating that what *actually* killed Wonse was not that a book was thrown at him, and not even the five-storey fall, but the impact when he hit the ground.

Colon's witty remark can be viewed as an extension of Vimes's metaphorical idiom, although in a rather distanced way, since in his remark he does not repeat the image of the metaphor, but only comments on it. Death's reply to Wonse, on the other hand, is an extension of Pratchett's humorous play with the concept of metaphor. It is not an extension to Vimes's metaphorical idiom, because it constructs a different metaphor altogether—one where Death positions himself as the metaphorical doorkeeper between life and death. Death, as an anthropomorphic personification of a natural phenomenon, is of course a symbolic figure also in another sense, since his appearance resonates with the conventional cultural metaphor of the reaper man.

Extended analogies are often used in aphorisms to give them a poetic tincture, and Pratchett deploys them in his aphorisms for the same purpose, as is exemplified in these quotes from the thirteenth *Discworld* novel, *Small Gods* (1992):

> Time is a drug. Too much of it kills you. (*Small Gods*, 8)

> Fear is strange soil. Mainly it grows obedience like corn, which grows in rows and makes weeding easy. But sometimes it grows the potatoes of defiance, which flourish underground. (*Small Gods*, 35)

In both quotes, the first sentence is a short metaphorical clause with a syntax where the be-verb equates two noun phrases. Usually the image (vehicle) of a metaphor substitutes the described thing (tenor), but this syntactic arrangement foregrounds both components at the same time. Combining metaphor with this kind of syntax creates an aphoristic effect (Tufte 2006, 12), and here this effect is amplified when the ideas of these cryptic metaphors are elaborated in the subsequent sentences. The second quote is more elaborate than the first, because it includes two additional metaphors, which turn the metaphor of the first sentence into a sustained one by extending both the described thing (fear) and the image (soil): Fear grows obedience and defiance, just like soil grows corn and potatoes.

The aphorism of the first quote is funny because it expresses the humorously unconventional viewpoint that the cause of death for some old people might be an overdose of time. The aphorism in the second quote can also be considered funny, but here the comedy comes from the story world context, where the religious leader of a country called Omnia rules with fear, and the political opposition has to keep their meetings in secret. Hence, the sustained metaphor mentally associates this opposition with defiant underground potatoes, which is a far-fetched and comically incongruous analogy.

As Abrams and Harpham (2009, 52) point out, elaborate literary images, such as the sustained metaphor in the second quote, are sometimes called "conceits": "Originally meaning a concept or image, 'conceit' came to be the term for figures of speech which establish a striking parallel, usually ingeniously elaborate, between two very dissimilar things or situations." Although conceits are more commonly associated with poetry, I think that Pratchett's elaborately extended comic analogies can also be aptly described as conceits, since his humorous prose is also often remarkably poetic. In many cases, this poetic quality acts as a setup for the burlesque juxtaposition of the elevated style and the mundane content—especially by mixing stylistically elaborate conceits with mundane images—but there is also a lyrical vein in Pratchett's comic conceits that seems to spring from the sheer aesthetic pleasure of crafting elaborate analogies.

One of the topics that repeatedly inspire Pratchett into philosophical reflection, humorously unconventional viewpoints, and vivid descriptions filled with analogical images is the nature of history, which the narrator ponders in these quotes from the

fifth, third, and fourth *Discworld* novels, *Sourcery* (1988), *Equal Rites* (1987), and *Mort* (1987):

> The truth isn't easily pinned to a page. In the bathtub of history the truth is harder to hold than the soap, and much more difficult to find … (*Sourcery*, 170)

> [I]t is well known that a vital ingredient of success is not knowing that what you're attempting can't be done. A person ignorant of the possibility of failure can be a half-brick in the path of the bicycle of history. (*Equal Rights*, 132)

> Mort thought that history was thrashing around like a steel hawser with the tension off, twanging backwards and forwards across reality in great destructive sweeps.
>
> History isn't like that. History unravels gently, like an old sweater. It has been patched and darned many times, reknitted to suit different people, shoved in a box under the sink of censorship to be cut up for the dusters of propaganda, yet it always—eventually—manages to spring back into its old familiar shape. History has a habit of changing the people who think they are changing it. History always has a few tricks up its frayed sleeve. It's been around a long time. (*Mort*, 128)

Metaphors in the first two quotes resemble each other—the analogy in the first quote equates history with a bathtub and in the second with a bicycle. In the first quote there does not seem to be another analogy, since truth is said to be different than soap, not similar or the same. However, even though the truth in history is more difficult to find than the soap in bath, this comparison still points out an aspect of similarity in difference, which makes it an analogy. The second quote states a comically incongruous and paradoxical idea with a humorously unconventional viewpoint, which the narrator claims to be a "well known" fact: that people can succeed in accomplishing impossible tasks as long as they are ignorant of the task's impossibility. A conceit follows this paradoxical statement—such person, ignorant of the possibility of failure, can change the course of history in a similar manner as a half-brick can change the course of a bicycle.

The possibility that an individual's actions can change the course of history is one of Pratchett's favorite thematic motifs in the early *Discworld* novels. This is the same motif which Leo Tolstoy pondered at length in *War and Peace* (1869)—the relationship between destiny and free will in the turning points of history. While Tolstoy's novel introduces the thematic motif of changing the course of history by assassinating Napoleon, in Mort the eponymous protagonist saves a princess who was destined to die of assassination, and this throws history off the rails—at least, for a moment. In the third quote, the narrator brings the disrupted history before the reader's eyes with two similes, by comparing it first with a loose steel hawser and then with an unraveling old sweater. The first simile is extended by describing how

the steel hawser metaphorically twangs and sweeps, and the second simile is extended in a similar manner by describing how the sweater of history has been metaphorically patched, darned, reknitted, and so on. Besides these verb metaphors, the second simile is also extended with two noun metaphors ("sink of censorship" and "dusters of propaganda"). When the individual metaphors that construct the sustained or extended metaphor are semantically unrelated, the resulting conceit is a mixed metaphor, and this long and winding conceit can perhaps be conceived as a mixed metaphor. The last three sentences personify history by representing it as an independently acting entity who is old and crafty, and therefore capable to resist any changes to its predestined course. The penultimate sentence introduces the idiomatic metaphorical expression of having a trick up one's sleeve—an image that is semantically related to the image of the main analogy, history as a sweater. All of these analogies—history as a bathtub, a bicycle, a steel hawser, and a sweater—introduce fresh and humorously unconventional viewpoints on the familiar phenomenon of history.

In the beginning of this discussion about extended metaphors, I studied how the literal-mindedness of dwarfs becomes a plot element in *Guards! Guards!*, and the following quote contains an early occurrence of the same comic motif. Carrot Ironfoundersson is a human foundling who has been brought up by dwarfs. When Carrot becomes a teenager, he becomes enamored with a dwarf girl. However, the girl's parents strongly oppose this ethnically mismatched romance, and Carrot's stepfather, a king of dwarfs, seeks guidance from a human farmer, Mr. Varneshi, who lives nearby.

> 'What you've got here, king, is a duck,' he added, in knowledgeable tones.
>
> 'I don't think I should tell him that. He's refusing to believe he's a human as it is.'
>
> 'What I mean is, a duck brought up among chickens. Well-known farmyard phenomenon. Finds it can't bloody well peck and doesn't know what swimming is.' The king listened politely. Dwarfs don't go in much for agriculture.
>
> 'But you send him off to see a lot of other ducks, let him get his feet wet, and he won't go running around after bantams any more. And Bob's your uncle.'
>
> Varneshi sat back and looked rather pleased with himself.
>
> When you spend a large part of your life underground, you develop a very literal mind. Dwarfs have no use for metaphor and simile. Rocks are hard, the darkness is dark. Start messing around with descriptions like that and you're in big trouble, is their motto. But after two hundred years of talking to humans the king had, as it were, developed a painstaking mental toolkit which was nearly adequate for the job of understanding them.

> 'Surely Bjorn Stronginthearm is my uncle,' he pointed out, slowly.
>
> 'Same thing.'
>
> There was a pause while the king subjected this to careful analysis.
>
> 'You're saying,' he said, weighing each word, 'that we should send Carrot away to be a duck among humans because Bjorn Stronginthearm is my uncle.' (*Guards! Guards!*, 29)

This quote underlines the fact that—contrary to the belief that metaphors are restricted to poetic and literary language—common people often use metaphors creatively in everyday conversations, even though these everyday metaphors tend to be clichéd and recycled. Pratchett's metaphors and similes, in contrast, tend to be original, imaginative, and comically far-fetched. Varneshi's statement that Carrot is a duck resembles syntactically the pithy metaphorical aphorisms that I discussed earlier, although this metaphor lacks the claim of universality that is typical for aphorisms. When Varneshi explains his metaphor with further metaphors, the original metaphor becomes extended—and when Varneshi advises the king about what he should do with the duck, the metaphor is extended to the extent that it transforms into a short allegory, which resembles the allegorical fairy tale of "Ugly Duckling".

Although making sense of this allegory is easy for the reader, it is much more difficult for the king, since he needs to work out what each of the metaphorical images stand for. Although the king eventually seems to get the general idea of Varneshi's allegory, the metaphorical meaning of the idiomatic phrase "Bob's your uncle" seems to escape him, and so he understands it literally. Literal understanding of metaphors is a common comic device, and here the king's unintentional use of this device creates a comic misunderstanding. Consequently, the main comic element of this dialogue is dramatic irony—where the author shares with the reader some essential information about the situation of which the character is ignorant—and the comic dialogue is concluded with a comically mixed metaphor that expresses the king's confused interpretation of Varneshi's allegory.

To summarize my discussion about extended metaphors, I have demonstrated above that Pratchett plays with the concept of metaphor and uses it as a plot element in Guards! Guards!. I have also studied how Pratchett often combines two or more metaphors together in order to construct extended metaphors, also known as conceits, which give the narrator's vivid descriptions a poetic tincture. I have pointed out that although making the images of metaphors far-fetched is perhaps the simplest way of making metaphors comical, their literal interpretation serves the

same function. I have also discussed how Pratchett tends to mix stylistically elaborate conceits with mundane images, which creates burlesque juxtaposition of the elevated style and the mundane content. In addition, I have studied how Pratchett uses extended metaphors to make his aphorisms and philosophical reflections poetic. Furthermore, I have discussed how many of Pratchett's comic conceits introduce humorously unconventional viewpoints on familiar phenomena.

Next, I will discuss Pratchett's comically unexpected similes, which he constructs by combining similes with structural comic devices.

4.1.3.2 Unexpected similes

Combining analogical images with structural comic devices that construct an unexpected ending—such as paraprosdokian and bathetic anticlimax—is an effective way to create stylistic wit. Sometimes comic similes with an unexpected ending also contain verbal irony and sarcasm. Yet another method of making similes and metaphors comical is to interpret them literally. Understanding poetic similes literally makes them anticlimactic, and making similes tautological can produce a similar comically anticlimactic effect. Anticlimax, on the other hand, is a way of creating a paraprosdokian structure—an unexpected twist-in-the-tail. This intertwining of various comic devices creates hyperdetermined humor, while at the same time this merging of comic devices also makes it difficult to pinpoint the exact ingredients that make this kind of "unexpected similes" funny.

On the early pages of the second Discworld-novel, *The Light Fantastic* (1986), Pratchett plays with literal interpretations of poetic images in a way that makes it clear for the reader that his deployment of comic similes is a deliberate and self-conscious practice.

> It was a still night, tinted with the promise of dawn. A crescent moon was just setting. Ankh-Morpork, largest city in the lands around the Circle Sea, slept.
>
> That statement is not really true.
>
> On the one hand, those parts of the city which normally concerned themselves with, for example, selling vegetables, shoeing horses, carving exquisite small jade ornaments, changing money and making tables, on the whole, slept. Unless they had insomnia. Or had got up in the night, as it might be, to go to the lavatory. On the other hand, many of the less law-abiding citizens were wide awake and, for instance, climbing through windows that didn't belong to them, slitting throats, mugging one another, listening to loud music in smoky cellars and generally having a lot more fun.

> But most of the animals were asleep, except for the rats. And the bats, too, of course. As far as the insects were concerned … (*The Light Fantastic*, 18)

This passage, which acts as a setup for the narrator's ponderings about the nature of poetic similes, begins when the narrator renders a metonymic[67] personification comical by interpreting it literally. After the clichéd image of a sleeping city, the narrator deploys metanoia, which leads to a lengthy digression from the actual story. The metanoia introduces a humorously unconventional and self-reflexive perspective—although this kind of clichéd images are not rare in fantasy fiction, it is quite unusual for narrators to deliberate at length on their own imagery.

The digression that starts with metanoia continues the humorous tone by being excessively long and unnecessarily detailed. The narrator begins it by confuting his own description; then the passage starting with "on the one hand" provides a counter-statement for the first counter-statement; this is again confuted by an "unless" qualification and another counter-statement that is introduced with the "on the other hand" statement. Then the narrator moves on from human citizens to considering some animal habitants of the city, and this series of statements which cancel each other is concluded by an *anapodoton*[68], when the narrator's attention turns toward insects. Pratchett experiments here briefly with the similar technique of comic digressions that Laurence Sterne uses excessively in Tristram Shandy (1759–1767).

The above passage from *The Light Fantastic* continues like this:

> The point is that descriptive writing is very rarely entirely accurate and during the reign of Olaf Quimby II as Patrician of Ankh some legislation was passed in a determined attempt to put a stop to this sort of thing and introduce some honesty into reporting. Thus, if a legend said of a notable hero that 'all men spoke of his prowess' any bard who valued his life would add hastily 'except for a couple of people in his home village who thought he was a liar, and quite a lot of other people who had never really heard of him.' Poetic simile was strictly limited to statements like 'his mighty steed was as fleet as the wind on a fairly calm day, say about Force Three,' and any loose talk about a beloved having a face that launched a thousand ships would have to be backed by evidence that the object of desire did indeed look like a bottle of champagne.

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[67] Metonymy is the figure of substituting a term with a closely associated term—like when one substitutes cause for effect, or content for container (or vice versa) (Fahnestock 2011, 102–103). In this particular case, the city of Ankh-Morpork can be conceived as the container and those who live in this city as the content.

[68] Anapodoton is the figure in which a main clause is suggested by the introduction of a subordinate clause, but that main clause never occurs (Lanham 1991, 11).

> Quimby was eventually killed by a disgruntled poet during an experiment conducted in the palace grounds to prove the disputed accuracy of the proverb 'The pen is mightier than the sword,' and in his memory it was amended to include the phrase 'only if the sword is very small and the pen is very sharp.'
>
> So. Approximately sixty-seven, maybe sixty-eight, per cent of the city slept. (*The Light Fantastic*, 18–19)

Here the narrator digresses further away from the main story, using *paradiegesis*[69], until he returns to his introductory statement about the sleeping city in the very last line of this quote, still pursuing the comically futile intent of making figurative language more accurate. The narrator constructs comic incongruity and bathos between a hyperbole ("all men spoke of his prowess"), a synecdoche[70] ("a face that launched a thousand ships"), and their mundanely literal interpretations.

"The pen is mightier than the sword" is a metonymic proverb—where the pen is an attribute of thoughts that are written with a pen, while the sword is an attribute of military action—and the literal interpretation of that metonymy creates comic incongruity between the two contrasting meanings of this phrase. Even though Ankh-Morporkian laws should not have any effect on the narrator's use of poetic images, the anecdote about Patrician Quimby II's legislation nevertheless inspires the narrator to further moderate his description of the sleeping city by making it less poetic and more accurate.

We typically expect the image of simile to be different from the described thing, but when this expectation is disappointed and the simile is tautological, it appears to us as comically anticlimactic. Here are examples of Pratchett's comically tautologic similes from the fifth, tenth, seventh, and eighth *Discworld* novels, *Sourcery* (1988), *Moving Pictures* (1990), *Pyramids* (1989), and *Guards! Guards!* (1989):

> There was no analogy for the way in which Great A'Tuin the world turtle moved against the galactic night. When you are ten thousand miles long, your shell pocked with meteor craters and frosted with comet ice, there is absolutely nothing you can realistically be like except yourself. So Great A'Tuin swam slowly through the interstellar deeps like the largest turtle there has ever been. (*Sourcery*, 13)
>
> Dwarfs and trolls normally fought like, well, dwarfs and trolls. (*Moving Pictures*, 104)
>
> But, he thought, […] you'd need massive amounts of magic. We'd be *bound* to spot that amount of magic. It'd stand out like … well, like a lot of magic. (*Moving Pictures*, 239)

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[69] Paradiegesis is the rhetorical figure of narrative digression that is used in introducing one's argument (Lanham 1991, 107).

[70] Synecdoche is the rhetorical figure of substituting part for whole, or vice versa (Lanham 1991, 148).

> The mask felt as heavy as lead because, well, it *was* lead. (*Pyramids*, 327)
>
> The fireball rose like a—well, a rose. (*Guards! Guards!*, 274)

The second and third of the quotes above contain simple tautologic similes without any explanation for this tautology, while the first and fourth quote also offer an explanation why the tautology is in those cases appropriate. Since the narrator's similes are in the *Discworld* novels typically imaginative and extravagant, this kind of sudden lack of imagination in constructing similes is comically unexpected. In all these quotes, except in the first, the narrator uses the word "well" to indicate momentary hesitation before he has to resort to tautology, and this hesitation contributes to the comic effect by foregrounding the fact that such sudden lack of imagination is uncustomary for the narrator.

The simile in the fifth quote is different from the other similes, since it only seems to be a tautologic simile, while actually it is not. In fact, the two "rose" words have different denotative meanings even though they are spelled identically, and thus this fake tautologic simile is in fact a homonymic pun, antanaclasis. Consequently, it can be conceived as an unusually clever demonstration of comic wit, since it combines several comic devices in only few words: comic simile, anticlimax, and punning.

One frequent feature in the humorous narration of the *Discworld* novels is the combination of simile, verbal irony, and sarcasm. Such ironic and sarcastic similes are often furthermore combined with a paraprosdokian structure, which gives them an unexpected twist-in-the-tail and turns them thus into unexpected similes. Sarcastic simile is a conspicuous comic device that has, of course, also been used by other skillful authors. Heta Pyrhönen (1989, 26–29) has observed that Philip Marlowe, the first-person narrator of Raymond Chandler's hardboiled detective novels, tends to combine irony with similes:

> She looked almost as hard to get as a haircut. (*The Little Sister*, 1949)
>
> We looked at each other with the clear innocent eyes of a couple of used-car salesmen. (*The High Window*, 1942)[71]

As Pyrhönen notices in her analysis, it is easy to get a haircut, and thus the words "hard to get" in the simile are ironic. Similarly, used-car salesmen are not typically associated with innocence. Pyrhönen pinpoints (verbal) irony as the main comic ingredient of these quotes, but I think that the unexpected twist-in-the-tail structure is also a noteworthy constituent in the hyperdetermined humor of these similes.

[71] Both quotes are from Pyrhönen 1989.

Another author who can craft ironic and sarcastic similes is Douglas Adams. The following examples are from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979):

> The ships hung in the sky in much the same way that bricks don't. (Chapter 3)
>
> 'Charming man,' he said. 'I wish I had a daughter so I could forbid her to marry one …'
>
> 'You wouldn't need to,' said Ford. 'They've got as much sex appeal as a road accident. […]' (Chapter 6)

Both of these similes have an unexpected twist-in-the-tail, and in the latter quote both speakers express sarcastic attitude toward the alien creature they discuss. Sarcasm is often confused with irony, since these two comic devices are frequently used in combination, but as a rhetorical figure sarcasm means "bitter gibe or taunt", and its direct translation from Greek is "mockery, sneering" (Lanham 1991, 135). Thus, sarcasm refers to the speaker's mocking and sneering attitude rather than to the ironic contradiction between what is said and what is intended. When Arthur Dent, the first speaker in the second quote, describes the Commander of Vogons as a "charming man", this statement is clearly sarcastically ironic. The simile in Ford Prefect's reply seems to suggest at first that Vogons have sex appeal, but the image of the simile comically contradicts the expectation that those preceding words create. Similarly, the image of the simile in the first quote contradicts comically our expectations, but in this case the expectation is created by our knowledge that similes conventionally compare two dissimilar things that nevertheless have something in common, while here there is nothing in common with the image (bricks) and the described things (spaceships).

Pratchett combines occasionally sarcastic similes with verbal irony and the unexpected twist-in-the-tail structure, which makes the sarcastic degrading funnier, as in the following examples.

> At last the magic caught, and [Granny Weatherwax] managed to vault clumsily on to [the broomstick] before it trundled into the night sky as gracefully as a duck with one wing missing. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 49)
>
> Rincewind had been generally reckoned by his tutors to be a natural wizard in the same way that fish are natural mountaineers. (*The Light Fantastic*, 23)
>
> And when it came to choosing nesting sites, the [swamp dragon] females had all the common sense and mothering instinct of a brick. (*Guards! Guards!*, 132)
>
> It was widely believed that, if Detritus could be taught to read and write sufficiently to sit down and do an intelligence test, he'd prove to be slightly less intelligent than the chair. (*Moving Pictures*, 45)

Granny Weatherwax's dysfunctional witch's broomstick is a similar characterizing minor gag in the *Discworld* novels as the oil-leaking and erratic Peugeot car driven by the eponymous police detective in *Columbo* television series. Here the word "gracefully" sets up expectations that are comically contradicted by the simile's mocking image, which reveals that the narrator used the word "gracefully" in ironic sense. Similarly, stating that Rincewind is a natural wizard creates the reader's expectation that the image of the simile will portray some natural skill, but the unexpected image turns the simile into a sarcastic paraprosdokian. The third quote contains a similar sarcastic simile with an unexpected twist-in-the-tail, when the narrator initially leads the reader to conceive that swamp dragon females have both common sense and mothering instinct, but then the simile's image contradicts this initial conception and turns the assumed praise into mocking. In the fourth quote, the combination of sarcastic simile and paraprosdokian works in the same way as in the preceding quotes. All the similes in these quotes can be conceived to be hyperbolic, which makes the sarcasm funny. Comic exaggeration works especially well in the fourth quote—the mocking comparison of the troll's intelligence with the intelligence of a chair would not be as funny if the narrator did not find the comparison favorable to the chair.

In an earlier chapter, I have argued that praising something—as the narrator does in *Sourcery*, when he uses hyperboles to praise the artist of theft and her sex appeal—is inherently rhetorical, because it guides our positive attitude toward the object of praise. A similar observation could be made of sarcasm, with the difference that it guides our negative attitude toward the object of mocking. However, using sarcasm to guide our antipathies toward something can also make the object of mocking comical, as is the case in all these four quotes. Constantly mocking Granny Weatherwax's dysfunctional broomstick makes it a characterizing minor gag in the *Discworld* novels. Similarly, swamp dragons are comic creatures because their survival skills are nonexistent, while deficiencies make both Rincewind and Detritus comic characters. As Aristotle points out in his *Poetics* (1987, 48a17–48a20), comedy represents characters who are worse than ordinary people.

A famous example of the sarcastic unexpected simile is the feminist slogan that a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle. Pratchett parodies this slogan in the eleventh *Discworld* novel, *Reaper Man* (1991), when a zombie activist founds a Fresh Start Club for the undead, and the same simile is also echoed in the fifteenth *Discworld* novel, *Men at Arms* (1993):

> 'You're right. A bogeyman needs a door like a fish needs a bicycle! Say it now and say it loud. […]' (*Reaper Man*, 253)

'Perhaps the city does *need* a king, though. Have you considered that?'

'Like a fish needs a … er … a thing that doesn't work underwater, sir.' (*Men at Arms*, 373)

Bicycles are not the kind of vehicles you would typically find in a fantasy world—at least not in the kind of fantasy worlds that Pratchett pastiches and parodies in the early *Discworld* novels. Hence, mentioning bicycle in the first quote seems anatopic, out of place, and I think that Carrot's difficulty in completing the simile can be explained by this fantasy context. In both quotes, the sarcastic unexpected simile appears in a character's speech, although in the *Discworld* novels it is more typically a feature of the narrator's stylistic wit. Both similes clearly parody the famous feminist slogan, but in Carrot's speech his lacking knowledge about bicycles provides the clichéd analogy with a fresh anticlimactic twist-in-the-tail.

I began this discussion on unexpected similes by pointing out how Pratchett treats poetic similes in a self-conscious manner in the second *Discworld* novel and parodies them by constructing a comically tautologic and anticlimactic simile. Then I analyzed how Pratchett uses the same comic device in other *Discworld* novels and pointed out how the anticlimactic ending of tautologic similes is only one of the many possible ways for adding an unexpected twist-in-the-tail structure to comic similes. Consequently, I have argued that the humor in these unexpected similes is hyperdetermined because they combine several stylistic comic devices—simile, verbal irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole—with such structural comic devices as bathetic anticlimax and paraprosdokian. After studying Pratchett's tautologic similes, I looked at some of Raymond Chandler's ironic similes and Douglas Adams's sarcastic similes, which also have the paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail structure. Then I analyzed some examples of Pratchett's unexpected similes, which can be typically found in the narrator's discourse and only exceptionally in the characters' dialogues.

A feature that I have not seen discussed elsewhere, but which nevertheless is quite conspicuous in his comic similes, is that Pratchett frequently uses similes to express subjective impressions, and in what follows I will take a look at some examples of such impressional similes.

4.1.3.3 Impressional similes

Vivid descriptions in the *Discworld* novels frequently contain phrases which indicate that the narrator expresses subjective and emotional impressions—such as "suggested", "looked like", "felt like", etc.—which can be either the narrator's own

impressions or a character's impressions, conveyed by the narrator. Often such phrases function as explicit indicators of analogical comparisons, and hence I will call such combinations "impressional similes". I have not found any other studies that mention this kind of similes, but, from the rhetorical perspective, everything in novels that expresses emotions and attitudes is worth paying attention to.

In the theory chapter of this dissertation, I discuss how Wayne Booth (1983, 125) and James Phelan (2005, 20) have suggested that considering literary characters as real people makes fictional stories more interesting for the reader. When we consider fictional characters to be like real people, we can identify with their emotional responses and destinies in the story world, so that the characters' emotions can touch our emotions. And this is where I see a connection between Booth's and Phelan's argument and impressional similes. When the narrator of the *Discworld* novels uses imagery to represent subjective and emotional impressions, such descriptions create a sense of verisimilitude and can thus be interpreted as Pratchett's rhetorical attempts to guide the reader's emotional attitudes.

But let us look at some examples to get a better idea of what I mean by impressional similes. At first, I will discuss how the narrator uses the word "suggested" in similes to communicate impressions, and, subsequently, other examples where the phrases "looked like" and "felt like" serve a similar function. The following quotes are from the third and fourth *Discworld* novels, *Equal Rites* (1987) and *Mort* (1987).

> There was also the distinctive river smell of the Ankh, which suggested that several armies had used it first as a urinal and then as a sepulchre. (*Equal Rites*, 244–245)

> 'How did you get here, little girl?' she said, in a voice that suggested gingerbread cottages and the slamming of big stove doors. (*Equal Rites*, 198)

> Her voice had sounded cracked and quavery before. Now it suggested musk and maple syrup and other things that set Mort's adam's apple bobbing like a rubber ball on an elastic band. (*Mort*, 83–84)

In the first quote, the word "suggested" is used as an explicit indicator of comparison, which makes the comparison a simile, while at the same time this word expresses an evaluative impression of what the river Ankh smells like. The important thing to notice about impressions is that they can never be objective—they are always someone's impressions, and therefore deeply subjective and personal. As impressions always introduce a subjective viewpoint, they are also often evaluative—either positive or negative, approving or disapproving. Here the narrator uses an impressional simile in order to guide our antipathy toward the described thing, while

the exaggerated images of the simile make it comical. In the *Discworld* novels, Ankh-Morpork reflects satirically cultural clichés about our Roundworld's big cities, and exaggerating the dirtiness of the river that runs through the city is a part of that satire.

While the first quote uses verbal images to bring a smell before our eyes, the second and third quote do the same synesthetic trick for the sound of human voice. The simile in the second quote compares the speaking female character to the stereotypical fairy tale witch who wants to put children into a stove. This kind of impression can be understood either as the narrator's evaluation of the speaking character or as the addressed girl's emotional response, conveyed by the narrator. It is not uncommon for the narrator of the *Discworld* novels to guide the reader's attitudes by commenting and evaluating the things he describes, just as he does in the first quote. Although the owner of the subjective viewpoint in the second quote is ambiguous, the narrator nevertheless clearly uses the impressional simile in order to direct the reader's antipathy toward the described character.

The third quote is a part of the description of what happens when the protagonist Mort, as Death's apprentice, witnesses how an old witch's ghost, immediately after she has died, transforms into a form that reflects her true nature. The impressional simile can be conceived as the narrator's evaluation of the ghost's new voice, but it can also be conceived as Mort's emotional response conveyed by the narrator—as the simile in the end of the third quote indicates, the ghost's changed voice has a strong emotive impact on Mort. The simile in this third quote contains several synesthetic elements, since its images describe a voice by associating it with the odour of musk and the taste of maple syrup. While the impressional simile in the first quote is quite straightforward, the ones in the second and third quote can be viewed as euphemistic, since the comparison to the fairy tale witch, in the second quote, is an indirect allusion, in a similar manner as the allusion to the ghost's dramatically increased sensuality in the third quote.

The most frequent type of impressional simile in the narration of the *Discworld* novels indicates explicit comparison by stating that something looks like something else.

> He stared around at the assembled wizards, but there was something about them that choked the words of outrage in his throat. They looked like sheep who had suddenly found a trapped wolf at exactly the same time as they heard about the idea of unity being strength. (*Sourcery*, 78)

> The post of Senior Wrangler was an unusual one, as was the name itself. In some centres of learning, the Senior Wrangler is a leading philosopher; in others, he's merely someone who looks after horses. The Senior Wrangler at Unseen University was a

> philosopher who looked *like* a horse, thus neatly encapsulating all definitions. (*Reaper Man*, 37)

In the first quote, the wizards have just magically summoned Patrician, the ruler of Ankh-Morpork, in order to tell him that from now on wizards will rule the city. The simile communicates an emotional impression about what the wizards look like, and it could be understood either as the narrator's subjective impression or Patrician's impression, conveyed by the narrator. The image of the simile seems comically far-fetched, since sheep are not known for attacking wolves, but it is also appropriate in describing Patrician's surprise, because if sheep suddenly threatened a wolf, it would most likely be surprised. The simile in the second quote expresses the narrator's evaluative impression of what the Senior Wrangler looks like. It showcases the narrator's comic wit, when it combines two incongruous job descriptions in one sarcastic impressional simile by playing with the similarity of two phrases: "looks after horses" and "looks *like* a horse". While the impressional simile in the first quote captures the Patrician's emotional response to the situation, and thus invites the reader to identify with him, the simile in the second quote includes a negative evaluation of Senior Wrangler's outlook, which establishes him as a comic character.

One of Pratchett's special skills is to describe verbally things that cannot be described, and using impressional similes is Pratchett's favorite method of constructing such impossible descriptions.

> The area around the tower of Al Khali, under the relentless magical bombardment, was already drifting beyond that reality horizon where time, space and matter lose their separate identities and start wearing one another's clothes. It was quite impossible to describe.
>
> Here is what it looked like.
>
> It looked like a piano sounds shortly after being dropped down a well. It tasted yellow, and felt Paisley. It smelled like a total eclipse of the moon. Of course, nearer to the tower it got *really* weird. (*Sourcery*, 200)

The first paragraph of this quote contains comic personifications of time, space, and matter, and it ends with the statement that the consequences of relentless magical bombardment, in a war between rival groups of wizards, are impossible to describe. Then the narrator goes ahead and describes them anyway—or, to be more precise, rather than describing the actual consequences he describes what kinds of impressions those consequences would evoke in an observer. This description consists of a series of impressional similes, where all the senses are involved—sight, sound, taste, feeling, and smell—and they are also synesthetically mixed with each

other. This synesthetic mixing of senses makes the impressional similes absurdly hyperbolic, and the comic exaggeration is intensified at the end of the quote, when the narrator suggests that these impressions are not extraordinary enough to describe what one would sense nearer to the bombarded tower.

In addition to the multitude of impressional similes involving sight (what something looks like), there are also a number of impressional similes in the narrator's discourse that describe what something feels like.

> Vimes stalked gloomily through the crowded streets, feeling like the only pickled onion in a fruit salad. (*Guards! Guards!*, 159)
>
> He felt as if he'd been shipwrecked on the *Titanic* but in the nick of time had been rescued. By the *Lusitania*.
>
> He felt as though he'd thrown a snowball on the spur of the moment and watched the ensuing avalanche engulf three ski resorts. (*Mort*, 97)
>
> Dios's hands opened and closed fitfully. He felt like a royalist might feel—a good royalist, a royalist who cut out pictures of all the Royals and stuck them in a scrapbook, a royalist who wouldn't hear a word said about them, they did such a good job and they can't answer back—if suddenly all the Royals turned up in his living room and started rearranging the furniture. (*Pyramids*, 247)

The impressional simile in the first quote describes Captain Vimes's feelings of loneliness when Ankh-Morpork celebrates the coronation of their new king and he seems to be the only republican in a town full of royalists. The second quote contains two impressional similes, which describe how Mort is feeling after he has inadvertently changed the course of the predestined history and, as the result, history starts unravelling. Although these similes clearly describe Mort's feelings, the fact that neither the mentioned ships nor ski resorts exist in the Discworld makes it obvious that these feelings have been filtered through the narrator's consciousness, while such cultural resonance also makes the images comically outlandish. Since these images bring catastrophic accidents before our eyes, they describe appropriately Mort's terrified feelings when he starts to realize the consequences of meddling with history. In both quotes, the expressed subjective feelings create a sense of verisimilitude, and they also invite the reader to identify with and feel sympathy for the characters.

In the third quote, Dios, who is the High Priest of Djelibeybi, the Discworld's equivalent of our Roundworld's ancient Egypt, is witnessing how the magic generated by a very large pyramid has awoken all the ancient gods of his land. Although it is possible that there are royalists with scrapbooks also in the Discworld,

this type of royalism can also be found in England, and it is therefore a familiar cultural cliché to Pratchett's British readers. Thus, the simile works in two directions simultaneously—it uses royalists to describe how Dios feels about his gods, while it also offers the reader a satirical viewpoint on the royalists of our Roundworld by comparing them to Dios, who is bemused when the gods he has worshipped all his life with reverent ceremonies suddenly incarnate and start behaving in an unruly manner.

In all three quotes, impressional similes function as a narrative and rhetorical device that invites us to peek directly into the characters' state of mind and to observe their emotional responses in a way that intensifies our sense of the characters' verisimilitude and guides us to identify with them. I have argued above that impressional similes—where such phrases as "suggested", "looked like", "felt like", etc. are used as the explicit indicators of analogical comparisons—are rhetorically interesting because they express subjective evaluations and emotional attitudes, which create a sense that characters are like real people. Thus, they invite the reader to identify with the characters in various situations and with their emotional responses to what happens in the story. I have also discussed above how some of these impressional similes involve synesthetic mixing of senses and that Pratchett tends to use this synesthetic trick to describe things that cannot be described.

I have discussed above Pratchett's comic imagery as a stylistic comic device, although I have also pointed out how the metaphor "throwing the book" serves a narrative function in *Guards! Guards!*. To conclude my discussion on Pratchett's comic metaphors and similes, I will next return to the same novel and demonstrate how a specific hyperbolic metaphor serves a thematic function by building thematic coherence into the story.

4.1.3.4 The city is a woman: a metaphorical and hyperbolical love story

Terry Pratchett hones his story-telling skills in the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters*, where he uses recurring thematic motifs as a foreshadowing technique. Kenneth Burke (1973, 20) has called this kind of device "associational clustering", where recurring thematic motifs build thematic coherence into the story. In the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), building such thematic coherence can already be found in full bloom. I have pointed out above that metaphor becomes a plot device in *Guards! Guards!* when Carrot throws the book at Patrician's secretary, and

the thematic coherence where Pratchett uses metaphor and hyperbole to build a romantic theme is another way of foregrounding metaphors in the same novel.

The theme-building begins on the very first page of the novel, when the point-of-view character Samuel Vimes, Captain of the Night Watch—which is the night-duty section of Ankh-Morpork's City Watch—lies in the gutter, and his drunkenly stumbling interior monologue is represented by the narrator. Using an extended metaphor, Sam Vimes personifies the city of Ankh-Morpork as a woman, while the same metaphor also expresses his emotional evaluation that although he loves this woman/city, it has not treated him kindly.

> The city wasa, wasa, wasa wossname. Thing. *Woman*. Thass what it was. Woman. Thass what it was. Woman. Roaring, ancient, centuries old. Strung you along, let you fall in thingy, love, with her, then kicked you inna, inna, thingy. Thingy, in your mouth. Tongue. Tonsils. *Teeth*. That's what it, she, did. She wasa … thing, you know, lady dog. Puppy. Hen. *Bitch*. (*Guards! Guards!*, 7–8)

The personified city seems to be the only thing even remotely resembling a woman in Vimes's life, which makes the relationship between Vimes and the city resemble a one-sided romance. A private detective protagonist who, after an unhappy love affair, has adopted the habit of drowning his sorrows in whisky is a commonplace motif in hardboiled detective fiction, and also the "city is woman" metaphor originates from detective fiction, as Edward James (2004, 196) points out in his essay on Ankh-Morpork's City Watch. However, Pratchett brings a new twist to this metaphor by turning it around at the end of the novel, and the thematic coherence that this hyperbolic metaphor builds makes this turning around possible.

The "city is woman" motif is elaborated also in a subsequent scene, when the guards are returning from a pub, and the alcohol-soaked Vimes confides his emotions to the fellow officers of the Night Watch.

> 'This city. This city. This city, Sar'nt. This city is a, is a, is a Woman, Sarn't. So t'is. A Woman, Sarn't. Ancient raddled old beauty, Sarn't. Butifyoufallinlove-withher, then, then, then shekicksyouinnateeth—'
>
> ' 's woman?' said Colon.
>
> He screwed up his sweating face with the effort of thought.
>
> ' 's eight miles wide, sir. 's gotta river in it. Lots of, of houses and stuff, sir,' he reasoned.
>
> 'Ah. Ah. Ah.' Vimes waggled an unsteady finger at him. 'Never, never, never said it wasa *small* woman, did I. Be fair.' (*Guards! Guards!*, 72)

Here the drunken Sergeant Colon, who is not very bright even when sober, understands Captain Vimes's metaphor literally, which creates a comical viewpoint on the metaphor. The elaboration of the metaphorical motif in Vimes's reply, where he also uses the rhetorical figure called *litotes*[72], expresses explicitly the comically unconventional reasoning that if the city is conceived as a metaphorical woman, then it must be an exceptionally big woman. The metaphorical image of the city as a giant woman is further emphasized by italicizing the word that qualifies size. This repeated motif paves way for further developments in the theme of Sam Vimes's love story, when he meets Lady Sybil Ramkin, whom the narrator describes using excessive hyperboles.

In *Guards! Guards!*, Vimes investigates the mysterious appearances and disappearances of a great dragon who terrorizes Ankh-Morpork, and this investigation leads him to meet Lady Ramkin. She breeds small swamp dragons, which are used in the Discworld as pets in a similar way as cats and dogs—although swamp dragons can breath fire and have a tendency to explode if they get overexcited. When Vimes and Lady Ramkin meet for the first time, the narrator uses several hyperboles and hypothetical analogies in describing her.

> Even shorn of her layers of protective clothing, Lady Sybil Ramkin was still toweringly big. Vimes knew that the barbarian hublander folk had legends about great chain-mailed, armour-bra'd, carthorse-riding maidens who swooped down on battlefields and carried off dead warriors on their cropper to a glorious roistering afterlife, while singing in a pleasing mezzo-soprano. Lady Ramkin could have been one of them. She could have led them. She could have carried off a battalion. When she spoke, every word was like a hearty slap on the back and clanged with the aristocratic self-assurance of the totally well-bred. The vowel sounds alone would have cut teak.
>
> Vimes's ragged forebears were used to voices like that, usually from heavily-armoured people on the back of a war charger telling them why it would be a jolly good idea, don'tcherknow, to charge the enemy and hit them for six. His legs wanted to stand to attention.
>
> Prehistoric men would have worshipped her, and in fact had amazingly managed to carve lifelike statues of her thousands of years ago. (*Guards! Guards!*, 94–95)

Vimes is the main point-of-view character in *Guards! Guards!*, and in this passage the clause "Vimes knew", which opens the second sentence, indicates to the reader that the narrator's vivid and stylistically vigorous descriptions convey Vimes's impressions. Although Lady Ramkin appears to be a very big woman, the hyperboles that the narrator uses in describing her can be interpreted to represent the emotional

[72] Litotes "consists in expressing a thought by denying its contradictory" (Joseph 2005, 323).

effects that her appearance and personality has on Vimes. At the same time, the imaginatively excessive hyperboles make these vivid descriptions comical.

In an interview for *The Internet Writing Journal* online magazine (White, 2000), Pratchett has explained his idea about how characters should be described in novels: "A great deal of character work lies not in describing the characters, but in describing the shape that they leave in the world." The passage quoted above can be viewed as a representative sample of this technique, and this approach to describing characters also explains why the narrator uses comically excessive analogies to describe Lady Ramkin. "Toweringly big" is a hyperbole which directly states that Lady Ramkin is tall and wide, while all the other hyperboles echo this initial statement in a more indirect way. The narrator's statements of the resemblance between Lady Ramkin and valkyries, on the one hand, and between her and the paleolithic Venus figurines, on the other hand, are too obviously analogical to be understood literally. Rather, they are hyperbolic similes that the narrator uses in order to show us through the comical magnifying glass what kind of shape Lady Ramkin leaves in the world, namely, what kind of impression she makes on Captain Vimes.

Since Vimes's conception that the city of Ankh-Morpork is a giant woman has been revealed to the reader already in the early pages of the novel, all hyperbolic descriptions of Lady Ramkin can be interpreted as foreshadowing, which implicitly assimilates Sybil Ramkin with the giant city/woman that Sam Vimes loves.

> She sat down, arranging a skirt that could have made sails for a small fleet. (*Guards! Guards!*, 95)
>
> Lady Sybil Ramkin sat off to one side, wearing a few acres of black velvet. (*Guards! Guards!*, 305)
>
> Besides, the guard captain wasn't sure he had enough men to drag Lady Ramkin anywhere. You'd need teams of thousands, with log rollers. (*Guards! Guards!*, 253)

The hyperboles in all these quotes are absurdly excessive, which makes it clear to the reader that they are not intended to be understood literally. Instead, they describe Lady Ramkin in an indirect and metonymic way. In the first two quotes, the hyperbolic size of her skirt and the excessive amount of black velvet that she wears have a metonymic relation to Lady Ramkin—the relation between clothes and the person who wears them can be conceived as the relation between the container and the content. In the third quote, the hyperbolic description also relies on a metonymic relation, but this time the relation is between the cause and the effect. In other words, the amount of manpower that the guard captain—who is the captain of the day-time

City Watch, while Vimes is the captain of the Night Watch—thinks is necessary to move Lady Ramkin implies his impression of her as a giant.

Simple hyperboles, such as telling that Lady Ramkin wears a few acres of velvet, lack the associative power of imagery, which descriptions gain when the narrator combines hyperbole with simile.

> Lady Ramkin's bosom rose and fell like an empire. (*Guards! Guards!*, 135)

> 'I always think we can all sleep safer in bed knowing that these brave men are watching over us,' said Lady Ramkin, walking sedately along the rank, like a treasure galleon running ahead of a mild breeze. (*Guards! Guards!*, 143)

> Lady Ramkin drawing herself up haughtily was not a sight to forget, although you could try. It was like watching continental drift in reverse as various subcontinents and islands pulled themselves together to form one massive, angry protowoman. (*Guards! Guards!*, 134)

Using the associative power of similes, these quotes place Lady Ramkin into a co-relation with very large entities: an empire, a treasure galleon, and a continent. The first hyperbolic simile seems outlandish, since the rise and fall of an empire typically refers to a long period in history, but by this analogy the narrator does not mean that Lady Ramkin breathes so slowly that one breath takes centuries. Rather, the purpose of the simile is to compare the rise and fall of her bosom to something grand and majestic. But since an empire can "rise" and "fall" only in a metaphorical sense, while a bosom rises and falls in the literal sense, this simile contains punning that contrasts metaphorical and literal meanings.

All these repetitions of the hyperbolic motif that Lady Ramkin is a giant woman build thematic coherence, which reaches its culminating point when Vimes and Lady Ramkin meet at a romantic dinner and Vimes comes to terms with his deep-buried emotions, which have before that surfaced only when he is drunken. In the build-up to that climactic dinner scene, the narrator deploys several hyperbolic descriptions. When Vimes arrives in the Ramkin mansion, he meets Lady Sybil's aristocratic friends, who wear clothes that are "so expensive and of such good quality that they never wore out and were handed down, like old china and silverware and gout" (310). Then Vimes goes into a room where he sees so many heads of dead animals on the walls that he thinks the Ramkin family "seemed to have endangered more species than an ice age" (312). Then he comes into the dining room where he finds "the kind of table where the people at the other end are in a different time zone" (312).

Unlike the two other hyperboles, the one that exaggerates the quality of the expensive clothes can be understood literally. The comic twist in this hyperbole is

not based on the absurdity of the exaggeration but, rather, it lies in the humorously unconventional perspective that expensive high-quality clothes last so long that they become a family heirloom. The final bathetic twist-in-the-tail in this hyperbole is the comically unconventional viewpoint that among the rich and aristocratic people gout, which is also known as the ”rich man's disease”, can be conceived as a family heirloom.

The narrator uses excessive hyperboles also when he describes the thematically climactic scene of Captain Vimes's and Lady Ramkin's romantic dinner.

> Lady Ramkin stood there, magnificently.
>
> Vimes was vaguely aware of a brilliant blue dress that sparkled in the candlelight, a mass of hair the colour of chestnuts, a slightly anxious face that suggested that a whole battalion of skilled painters and decorators had only just dismantled their scaffolding and gone home, and a faint creaking that said underneath it all mere corsetry was being subjected to the kind of tensions more usually found in the heart of large stars. (*Guards! Guards!*, 312)

The explicit statement that “Vimes was vaguely aware” of all the enumerated details of Lady Ramkins's magnificent appearance emphasizes Vimes's position as the point-of-view character, and that the narrator's description of Lady Ramkin conveys Vimes's impressions and emotional responses to what he sees. This explains the hyperbolic imagery of the impressional similes, when Lady Ramkin's face “suggested” expensive makeup and the faint creaking sound “said” that she wears tight corsetry. The hyperbolic imagery repeats the recurring thematic motif of many previous hyperboles that, in Vimes's eyes, Lady Ramkin is a magnificent giant. The word “magnificent” denotes grand and majestic in appearance, and thus both the word itself and its meaning resonate with magnifying.

The ultimate motivation for the hyperbolic descriptions of Lady Ramkin is finally revealed, when Vimes's emotional impression that the city he loves is a woman becomes reversed.

> She smiled at him.
>
> And then it arose and struck Vimes that, in her own special category, she was quite beautiful; this was the category of all the women, in his entire life, who had ever thought he was worth smiling at. She couldn't do worse, but then, he couldn't do better. So maybe it balanced out. She wasn't getting any younger but then, who was? And she had style and money and common-sense and self-assurance and all the things that he didn't, and she had opened her heart, and if you let her she could engulf you; the woman was a city.

> And eventually, under siege, you did what Ankh-Morpork had always done—unbar the gates, let the conquerors in, and make them your own.
>
> How did you start? She seemed to be expecting something.
>
> He shrugged, and picked up his wine glass and sought for a phrase. One crept into his wildly resonating mind. 'Here's looking at you, kid,' he said. (*Guards! Guards!*, 314)

Thematic coherence is a narrative device where several recurring thematic motifs are accumulated to support one major theme. During the dinner scene in the Ramkin mansion, of which the above quote is just a small part, Pratchett brings several recurrent motifs together and also adds a bit of intertextual resonance to the intratextual thematic resonance.

One thematic motif that recurs several times in *Guards! Guards!* is the million-to-one chance. In several *Discworld* novels, the narrator states that "million-to-one chances crop up nine times out of ten". In this phrase, Pratchett combines two clichéd phrases in a way that turns something very unlikely into something that is bound to happen. The humorously unconventional viewpoint here is that, in the Discworld, million-to-one chances always succeed. Immediately preceding the passage quoted above, Lady Ramkin tells Vimes that in Sergeant Colon's opinion the chances of Lady Ramkin and Vimes getting along is "million-to-one, but it might just work" (313–314).

Also in this same scene, just before the above-quoted passage, Lady Ramkin and Vimes discuss the unlikely romance between the small male swamp dragon named Errol[73] and the great noble female dragon, wondering how the dragons will manage their future life together. The romance of the dragons is a subplot that resonates with the main romance of the novel. In this subplot Errol, who has been raised by Lady Ramkin and adopted as a pet by Vimes, fights with the great dragon, who has been terrorizing Ankh-Morpork, and manages to subdue it. (When Errol challenges the great dragon, Vimes estimates that his chances of succeeding are million-to-one.) It is only after this confrontation is over that the reader and the human protagonists of the novel learn that the great dragon is actually a female and that this kind of fighting appears to be the normal courting procedure among dragons. In this draconic romance, Errol is the active party, while in the human romance Lady Ramkin seduces Vimes by gradually encircling him with her care and affection.

[73] Naming the swamp dragon Errol can be conceived as foreshadowing, since Errol Flynn was a famous romancer in Hollywood movies.

Vimes, on the other hand, resembles Humphrey Bogart's troubled and restrained film noir characters more than Errol Flynn's heroic charmers.[74]

Captain Vimes and Lady Ramkin share a possessive attitude toward the city of Ankh-Morpork. In Lady Ramkin's case this attitude is a factual and prosaic matter, since she is one of the richest persons in the city and owns a big part of it. In Vimes's case it is a sentimental attachment, since he has devoted most of his life to serving the city. In some sense, Vimes seems to think that he owns the city, which he expresses several times in the novel, such as when he sees the great dragon for the first time: "Of all the cities in all the world it could have flown into, he thought, it's flown into mine …" (103) This thought resonates intertextually with a similar line which Humphrey Bogart's character says in *Casablanca* (1942), a famous romantic Hollywood film. The dinner scene in Lady Ramkin's mansion concludes with another intertextual allusion to *Casablanca*, since the phrase that arises from Vimes's "wildly resonating" mind is another memorable line that Bogart's character says in the film.

Before I summarize my findings about Pratchett's comic metaphors and similes, it might be interesting to take a look at what linguistic humor studies have already revealed about humorous metaphors and similes. In his *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (2014a, 504–505), Salvatore Attardo writes that most accounts on humorous metaphors rely on variants of the distance theory, where semantic distance between the source and target domains in the metaphor becomes stretched, which is perceived as humorous. There is also another theory, which argues that "metaphors seek to find appropriateness in an incongruous connection between two frames", and when this appropriateness is genuine, the metaphor is perceived as poetic, but when it is spurious, the metaphor is perceived as humorous. Attardo has applied this latter theory in his own research, where he has found out that the term "humorous metaphor" is in fact an umbrella term covering a disparate set of phenomena: metaphors that describe inherently funny referents, un-metaphors (mapping one domain on itself), mixed metaphors (unrelated, sequentially added metaphors), and overdone metaphors (which violate primary metaphors). Attardo mentions also the literalization of metaphors as a well-known process whereby metaphors may become humorous, and he refers to a study on ironical similes. Attardo concludes that, overall, the analysis of humorous metaphors is still in its infancy. My study on Pratchett's comic imagery expands and elaborates on this research.

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[74] *Guards! Guards!* contains a number of allusions to hardboiled detective fiction and represents Sam Vimes as doing similar detective work, while Bogart has acted in the film roles of both Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe, the two most famous detectives in this genre.

I have discussed above some features of how Pratchett deploys hyperbole, metaphor, and simile in the narration of the *Discworld* novels in order to create comic imagery. I have pointed out that hyperboles can be made comical by increasing the degree of exaggeration to absurdity, because this magnifies the comic incongruity between truth and exaggeration. I have referred to Robert Hall's and Gideon Haberkorn's insights about Wodehouse's and Pratchett's comic imagery, which agree with the theories of humorous metaphors that Attardo reviews: metaphors and similes become comical when the resemblance between the analogy's image and the described thing is incongruous and far-fetched but nevertheless appropriate to the described thing. Such appropriate incongruity is perhaps the simplest way of making analogical images comical, but I have also discussed how Pratchett frequently either interprets metaphors literally (Attardo mentions this as "literalization of metaphors") or combines his imagery with hyperbole (Attardo calls these "overdone metaphors"), which are other common ways to make metaphors and similes comical. When metaphors are combined with other metaphors, the result is an extended (or sustained) metaphor, also known as conceit, which allows Pratchett to comically combine highly elaborate and poetic style with mundane imagery. As Attardo points out, unrelated and sequentially added metaphors are called mixed metaphors, but Pratchett usually constructs his comic conceits from semantically related (that is, not mixed) metaphors. Many of Pratchett's extended metaphors have a philosophical or aphoristic tincture, and their humor typically results from mixing elevated topics of description and elevated style with mundane images.

Occasionally Pratchett disappoints the reader's expectations anticlimactically by devising comically tautologic similes (Attardo calls these "un-metaphors"), which is one of the many possible ways to construct what I have here called "unexpected similes". The humor in Pratchett's unexpected similes is truly hyperdetermined, since they can combine several stylistic comic devices simultaneously—simile, verbal irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole—with such structural comic devices as bathos and paraprosdokian. (Attardo mentions "ironical similes", but not these other combinations between the simile and other comic devices.) The type of comic analogies that I have named Pratchett's "impressional similes" are rhetorically interesting because they express subjective evaluations and emotional attitudes, which create a sense of verisimilitude and invite the reader to identify with the characters and with their emotional responses. Pratchett has a notable fondness for describing things that cannot be described—such descriptions are inherently comical and he typically achieves this apparently impossible task by combining impressional similes and synesthetic images. I have also demonstrated how Pratchett uses

metaphor in one *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!*, both as a plot device and as a technique for creating thematic coherence.

Another type of analogical images, in addition to metaphor and simile, that Pratchett commonly deploys as a comic device in the *Discworld* novels is personification (which Attardo does not mention), and I will complete my study on Pratchett's comic imagery by discussing it next.

4.1.4 Personifications: projecting emotions and attitudes

While hyperbolic similes and extended metaphors are perhaps the most prominent devices in Terry Pratchett's comic imagery, also figurative personifications, which rhetoricians call *prosopopeia*[75], add striking and comically unconventional imagery to the narrator's descriptions in the *Discworld* novels. Prosopopeias in the *Discworld* novels concretize abstract phenomena by giving them human-like qualities, and they also foreground the characters' emotional responses by representing their body parts and mental faculties as autonomously acting individuals. In addition to such stylistic personifications, some of the characters in the *Discworld* novels are personifications. In a more general sense, the Discworld itself can be conceived as an exceptionally humanized fantasy world, ruled by the principle of personification.

According to M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham's glossary of literary terms, there are two different types of personifications, since personification can be conceived either as a rhetorical figure in a sentence or as a character in a narrative. In figurative personifications, prosopopeias, "either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings" (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 121), while in allegories "abstract entities such as virtues, vices, states of mind, modes of life, and types of character" are given names and represented as symbolic characters of the story (ibid., 7). Another term for character personifications is anthropomorphism (Edgecombe 1997, 1–2; Laakso 2014, 264–265).

Aristotle does not use the term prosopopeia, although he mentions giving metaphorical life to lifeless things as a specific variety of metaphor (Paxson 1994, 12). Accordingly, prosopopeia can be understood as a type of metaphor where the described thing is something that is not human, while the images of the analogy are

[75] Prosopopeia, or prosopopoeia, is derived from the Greek root words "prosopon" (face, mask, dramatic character) and "poiein" (to make), and thus prosopopeia can be translated as "character invention" (Paxson 1994, 13). Another name for figurative personifications, used by the Roman rhetoricians, is *personae fictio* (Fahnestock 2011, 170).

taken from the domain of human thinking and behavior. And while metaphors and similes become comical when the image of the analogy seems far-fetched and yet somehow appropriate to the described thing, a similar comic incongruity can occur in figurative personifications, when human-like imagery is attached to non-human things.

Christina Alm-Arvius (2003, 132–133) observes that there seem to be different degrees of personification, since animals that talk, act, and think like humans can be said to be humanized or anthropomorphized, while inanimate things that are made alive can be called animated. She points out also that personifications work by projecting our attitudes to things that surround us.

> The reason for this kind of metaphorical extension is of course that language users project their own subjective experiences and ways of thinking, reacting, and behaving on other things in the world. (ibid., 129)

The insight that personifications project the speaker's attitudes toward the personified things equips this figure with a rhetorical function. From the rhetorical point of view, personifications not only express the speaker's attitudes, but they can also function as a means to persuade the audience to agree with the projected attitudes. Hence, a rhetorical reading of personifications in literary fiction should consider what kinds of opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations prosopopeias persuade the reader to adopt toward different aspects of the communicative situation where they are used.

For instance, in the tenth *Discworld* novel *Moving Pictures* (1990), the narrator describes the Discworld's moon using a prosopopeia.

> A full moon glided above the smoke and fumes of Ankh-Morpork, thankful that several thousand miles of sky lay between it and them. (*Moving Pictures*, 21)

Beginning the narrative passage with a description of a celestial phenomenon, in order to let the reader learn the time of day when the events the narrator is about to discuss take place, is a literary convention. Here the narrator deploys this literary convention, and he makes it comical by attaching an unconventionally human-like emotional response and a subjectively evaluative attitude to the full moon. The apparent rhetorical function of this personified moon is to arouse readers' curiosity and to make us wonder what the personified moon has observed in Ankh-Morpork to make it want to keep distance between itself and the city.

4.1.4.1 Personification as a character

Although Pratchett's humorous figurative personifications are my main focus of interest in this dissertation, the animating and humanizing function of personifications in the *Discworld* novels is not restricted to style only. Jim Shanahan (2018, 36) has observed that there is "a tendency that runs through almost all of Pratchett's writing, an essentially animistic view suggesting that everything is alive in some way or other". I would go even further and say that the Discworld is not just an exceptionally animistic world but also an exceptionally humanized one, since it is based on human ideas and designs rather than on the laws of nature. The construction of the Discworld echoes some historical and mythological conceptions of our Roundworld: a flat world that makes it possible for people to fall off the edge, the four elephants that support the world in the Hindu mythology, and the world-turtle mytheme, which appears in several ancient mythologies. Hence, the Discworld's construction does not resemble the planets and asteroids of the real world—instead, it reflects our human conceptions about what a world should be like.

The Discworld is also a personified world in the sense that it is unusually animated, because it is carried by living animals. The elephants that carry the Discworld stand on the turtle and obviously cannot move around, but they are told to occasionally cock a leg to let the Discworld's tiny orbiting sun to go past (*Wyrd Sisters*, 5). Also the turtle is alive, and in the story arc that binds the first two *Discworld* novels together the great turtle's voyage to see its babies hatch plays an important role.

The ancient gods in Greek mythology famously resemble humans in their actions and motivations, as do gods in many other mythologies. Similarly, gods of the Discworld are to some degree humanized and anthropomorphized—for example, they pass time by playing games where they use humans as pawns (*The Colour of Magic*, 96). But these gods are also humanized in another sense: gods exist in the Discworld because strong beliefs can give shape to reality in the magical atmosphere of the Discworld, as the narrator explains in the eleventh *Discworld* novel, *Reaper Man* (1991):

> Belief is one of the most powerful organic forces in the multiverse. It may not be able to move mountains, exactly. But it can create someone who can.
>
> People get exactly the wrong idea about belief. They think it works back to front. They think the sequence is, first object, then belief. In fact, it works the other way.
>
> Belief sloshes around in the firmament like lumps of clay spiralling into a potter's wheel. That's how gods get created, for example. They clearly must be created by their

> own believers, because a brief resume of the lives of most gods suggests that their origins certainly couldn't be divine. They tend to do exactly the things people would do if only they could, especially when it comes to nymphs, golden showers, and the smiting of your enemies.
>
> Belief creates other things.
>
> It created Death. Not death, which is merely a technical term for a state caused by prolonged absence of life, but Death, the personality. He evolved, as it were, along with life. As soon as a living thing was even dimly aware of the concept of suddenly becoming a non-living thing, there was Death. He was Death long before humans ever considered him; they only added the shape and all the scythe and robe business to a personality that was already millions of years old. (*Reaper Man*, 103–104)

In addition to being a symbolic personification of a natural phenomenon, Discworld's Death possesses a distinct personality. In *Reaper Man*, Death appears as one of the protagonists, and the central conflict that motivates the story is introduced on the early pages of the novel, when three grey figures are described as floating and discussing in some unspecified place or dimension. The narrator introduces these figures as "auditors of reality" and explains that they "might be numbered among those who see to it that gravity operates and that time stays separate from space" (6). Thus, they appear to be some kind of supernatural beings rather than normal inhabitants of Discworld.

The dialogue between these auditors reveals that they are plotting against some specific force of nature that has developed a personality, and later in the novel it is revealed that this personified force is Death.

> One said, He has worked inefficiently?
>
> One said, No. We can't get him there.
>
> One said, That is the point. The word is *him*. Becoming a personality is inefficient. We don't want it to spread. Supposing gravity developed a personality? Supposing it decided to *like* people?
>
> One said, Got a crush on them, sort of thing?
>
> One said, in a voice that would have been even chillier if it was not already at absolute zero, No.
>
> One said, Sorry. Just my little joke. […]
>
> One, who seemed to have been thinking about something, said, Just one moment. Did you not just use the singular pronoun, 'my'? Not developing a personality, are you?
>
> One said, guiltily, Who? Us?

> One said, Where there is personality, there is discord.
>
> One said, Yes. Yes. Very true.
>
> One said, All right. But watch it in future. […]
>
> One said, Very well. Where is this place?
>
> One said, It is the Discworld. It rides through space on the back of a giant turtle.
>
> One said, Oh, one of *that* sort. I hate them.
>
> One said, You're doing it again. You said 'I'.
>
> One said, No! No! I didn't! I never said 'I'! … oh, bugger …
>
> It burst into flame and burned in the same way that a small cloud of vapour burns, quickly and with no residual mess. Almost immediately, another one appeared. It was identical in appearance to its vanished sibling. (*Reaper Man*, 6–7)

In this quote, Pratchett has chosen to represent the auditors as having individual voices, which allows them to discuss but also automatically personifies them to some degree, although the auditors are not personified by individual naming. Jeanne Fahnestock (2011, 170), in her discussion on personifications, calls voice "the most human of actions", and James Paxson (1994, 58) singles out the ability to speak as one of the most important indicators, along with naming, of personification characters. Personification also allows the auditors to possess human-like feelings, such as their dislike of personified forces of nature. The idea of character personifications who hate personification contains a built-in comic incongruity, which Pratchett exploits in their dialogue.

The *Discworld* novels introduce a number of non-human characters—dwarfs, trolls, elves, zombies, etc.—who nevertheless mostly act in a similar way as the human characters. This kind of personification in non-human characters has become a convention in fantasy and horror genres, and some of these character personifications also appear in fairy tales and folk tales. *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955) and *The Hobbit* (1937) by J. R. R. Tolkien established dwarves[76], trolls, elves, and many other fantasy species as stock characters in fantasy fiction. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) introduced a living dead character, and some of H. P. Lovecraft's short stories, such as "Herbert West—Reanimator" (1922), feature zombies. In various *Discworld* novels, Pratchett uses this convention of non-human fantasy and

[76] Tolkien spells the plural of "dwarf" as "dwarves", Pratchett as "dwarfs".

horror characters to tackle with the very human themes of racism and ethnic discrimination in the guise of disagreements between different species.

There are also characters who are animal-human hybrids, such as werevolves and vampires, which Pratchett occasionally renders comical by playing with the conventions that have been developed in the horror genre. For instance, *Reaper Man* features a werewolf woman who turns into a wolf during the full moon and a werewolf man who spends most of his time as a wolf but turns into a human during the full moon, and these two characters make together a comic romantic couple. The novels in the City Watch sequence include a female member of the Watch who is a werewolf and engages in a romance with her human colleague, which leads to a running joke where other characters repeatedly wonder if their offspring will turn out to be babies or puppies.

Reaper Man also introduces a married vampire couple who are made comical by revisioning the convention that vampires, like Count Dracula, tend to be aristocrats: the husband is a decidedly non-aristocratic vegetable salesman who has been turned into a vampire, and his wife is not really a vampire at all but nevertheless dresses and speaks like a stereotypical vampire because she feels that her position as a vampire's wife demands such behavior. Other comically personified non-human characters in the *Discworld* novels include Gaspode the Wonder Dog, who can speak and think like humans, and the witch character Nanny Ogg's hyperbolically macho tomcat Greebo, whose body the witches in several novels temporarily anthropomorphize by conjuring the cat into a human shape, while his thinking remains characteristically feline. Humanized and personified animals have traditionally been stock characters in fables and fairy tales.

Before I turn to study figurative personifications in the *Discworld* novels, I will discuss a character personification that appears in an embedded miniature story inside a *Discworld* novel.

4.1.4.2 The theatrical career of a personified storm

Forces of nature have been often anthropomorphized or otherwise personified as characters in some traditional genres of fictional stories, such as myths, fables, and fairy tales. Echoing and recycling this convention, the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), includes a comic narrative digression, which depicts a personified storm as a minor character that has an ambition to become a famous actor. This personified storm is introduced in the opening scene of the novel.

> The storm was really giving it everything it had. This was its big chance. It had spent years hanging around the provinces, putting in some useful work as a squall, building up experience, making contacts, occasionally leaping out on unsuspecting shepherds or blasting quite small oak trees. Now an opening in the weather had given it an opportunity to strut its hour, and it was building up its role in the hope of being spotted by one of the big climates.
>
> It was a *good* storm. There was quite effective projection and passion there, and critics agreed that if it would only learn to control its thunder it would be, in years to come, a storm to watch.
>
> The woods roared their applause and were full of mists and flying leaves. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 6)

Stormy weather becomes a thematic motif in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) because it is repeatedly associated with witches, and Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters* echoes this literary subtext by depicting its witch characters repeatedly holding their coven meetings outdoors on stormy nights. One of the central thematic motifs in *Wyrd Sisters* is theater, and describing the personified storm as an aspiring actor resonates with this motif, thus building the novel's thematic coherence. It is conventional to describe the fierce power of storms by using figurative personifications that project human emotions to them, like when we talk about "raging" storms. Pratchett gives the storm in *Wyrd Sisters* a role as an actual character via personification, albeit only a minor character whose main function is to introduce additional comedy into the novel. The storm is not personified to the extent that it would be named or given the ability to speak, so its communication with other characters remains limited.

In the above quote, the narrator tells about the human-like hopes and ambitions of the storm and constructs it as a character whose story the reader can sympathize with. In other words, Pratchett builds a position for readers that allows us to observe this character and to build expectations about the possible success or failure of its aspirations. The narrator mentions big climates who are apparently on the look out for rising talents and unspecified critics who assess the storm's performance, while the woods are personified as an audience that applauds to the performance. These additional personifications provide psychological plausibility for the analogy between the storm and performing human actors, while the difference between a storm and real actors creates comic incongruity.

Although this comic narrative digression does not appear to contribute much to the main narrative of *Wyrd Sisters*, the story of the personified storm does not end in this opening scene—it continues unexpectedly more than a hundred pages after its initial introduction.

> The storm was resting. It didn't want to be, but it was. It had spent a fortnight understudying a famous anticyclone over the Circle Sea, turning up every day, hanging around in the cold front, grateful for a chance to uproot the occasional tree or whirl a farmhouse to any available emerald city of its choice. But the big break in the weather had never come.
>
> It consoled itself with the thought that even the really great storms of the past—the Great Gale of 1789, for example, or Hurricane Zelda and Her Amazing Raining Frogs—had gone through this sort of thing at some stage in their career. It was just part of the great tradition of the weather.
>
> Besides, it had had a good stretch in the equivalent of pantomime down on the plains, bringing seasonal snow and terminal frostbite to millions. It just had to be philosophical about being back up here now with nothing much to do except wave the heather about. If weather was people, this storm would be filling in time wearing a cardboard hat in a hamburger hell.
>
> Currently it was observing three figures moving slowly over the moor, converging with some determination on a bare patch where the standing stone stood, or usually stood, though just at the moment it wasn't visible.
>
> It recognised them as old friends and connoisseurs, and conjured up a brief unseasonal roll of thunder as a form of greeting. This was totally ignored. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 134–135)

Even though the story of the personified storm is only an inconsequential narrative digression in the novel, the storm is the hero of this micronarrative. And, like all heroes, also the storm needs to face obstacles that construct dramatic peripeteias into the story. The above quote contains several analogies, which support the main analogy of representing the personified storm as an aspiring actor. The storm studies great storms of the past, just like a beginning actor would study famous actors. These famous storms are furthermore personified by naming them, which alludes to the cultural convention of giving names to major storms in our Roundworld—although "Hurricane Zelda and Her Amazing Raining Frogs" sounds like the name of a variety show and thus personifies also this famous storm as a performing artist. The quote includes an analogy about pantomime as a less esteemed form of acting and another analogy that explicitly humanizes the storm: working in a hamburger fast food restaurant, which stereotypically represents a temporary and poorly paid job which requires minimal training and no special skills.

The first paragraph of the quote alludes to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) by L. Frank Baum, a fantasy novel where a tornado lifts a farmhouse. Also the mentioned emerald city is an allusion to the same novel. The "big break in the weather" can be interpreted as a punning combination of the idiomatic expression

"break in the weather" and the "big break" to fame that aspiring actors are constantly waiting for. In a similar vein, "the great tradition of the weather" may be read as an allusion to the great tradition of theater. The last two paragraphs move this micronarrative again toward the initial intertextual connection between the storm and the three witch characters. After the excessive development of the narrative digression, which has invited the reader to appreciate the storm as a hero of this auxiliary storyline, the narrator's laconic comment that the witches totally ignore the storm's efforts comes as a comic anticlimax.

The final episode of the personified storm's micronarrative follows after another long gap, of nearly a hundred pages. This brief return of the personified storm's micronarrative is embedded into a scene where a theater play is being acted in the courtyard of the Lancre Castle, and the machine that produces the sound of thunder has broken. This sets up the stage for the personified storm to display its acting skills, and it finally gets a chance to perform in front of an appreciative theater audience.

> Hwel stood in the wings and gave the signal for the curtains. And for the thunder.
>
> It didn't come.
>
> 'Thunder!' he hissed, in a voice heard by half the audience. 'Get on with it!'
>
> A voice from behind the nearest pillar wailed, 'I went and bent the thunder, Hwel! It just goes clonk-clonk!'
>
> Hwel stood silent for a moment, counting. The company watched him, awestruck but not, unfortunately, thunderstruck.
>
> At last he raised his fists to the open sky and said, 'I wanted a storm! Just a storm. Not even a big storm. Any storm. Now I want to make myself absolutely CLEAR! I have had ENOUGH! I want thunder right NOW!'
>
> The stab of lightning that answered him turned the multi-hued shadows of the castle into blinding white and searing black. It was followed by a roll of thunder, on cue.
>
> It was the loudest noise Hwel had ever heard. It seemed to start inside his head and work its way outwards.
>
> It went on and on, shaking every stone in the castle. Dust rained down. A distant turret broke away with balletic slowness and, tumbling end over end, dropped gently into the hungry depths of the gorge.
>
> When it finished it left a silence that rang like a bell.
>
> Hwel looked up at the sky. Great black clouds were blowing across the castle, blotting out the stars.
>
> The storm was back.

> It had spent ages learning its craft. It had spent years lurking in distant valleys. It had practised for hours in front of a glacier. It had studied the great storms of the past. It had honed its art to perfection. And now, tonight, with what it could see was clearly an appreciative audience waiting for it, it was going to take them by, well … tempest. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 221)

In this scene, the narrative digression that has been developed in the course of the novel is finally set to serve a narrative function, albeit a minor one, in the main story: the personified storm becomes a successful special effect in a theater play. The play in which the personified storm performs retells the story of *Wyrd Sisters*, which retells the story of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The character named Hwel is the writer and the director of this play, and, via numerous allusions to Shakespeare's life and works, he is represented as the Discworld's equivalent of Shakespeare. Considering that the association between the three witches and the storm originated in *Macbeth*, this neatly woven intertextual design returns the personified storm to the context from which Pratchett borrowed it.

Although the miniature story of the personified storm draws its comic tone mainly from the analogy that represents the storm as an aspiring actor, there is also parody that arises from the allusions to Shakespeare and *Macbeth*. In this quote, the drama and intensity of the situation is enhanced with stylistic vigor and vivid imagery that involves several short paragraphs and short sentences, hyperbole (the sound of thunder seems to start inside Hwel's head), metaphor (the falling turret breaks away with balletic slowness), figurative personification (the gorge has hungry depths), and simile (silence rings like a bell). At the same time, the stylistic comedy of punning counterbalances this stylistic drama: the theater company wants to be "thunderstruck" because their machine that produces the sound of thunder has broken, and the personified storm plans to take its audience by "tempest"—which, in this specific context, can be interpreted as an allusion to the Shakespeare's play with the same name.

For the rest of this chapter, I will focus on analyzing personification as a stylistic comic device, although some of these figurative personifications are so vivid that they almost manage to turn the personified things into actual characters.

4.1.4.3 Animating the inanimate and humanizing the non-human

A common way of trying to understand other people in everyday life is to imagine how we would think and feel if we were in their place. Applying the same empathizing method of understanding to non-human entities creates

personifications that humanize the world around us. Another method of understanding the world around us is metaphorization, which pulls abstractions into the world of perceptions that we are used to deal with in our everyday life (Knowles & Moon 2006, 4–5). Because prosopopeia can be viewed as a specific type of metaphor, where the images come from the sphere of human behavior, personifications can combine these two methods of making sense of the world around us by both concretizing and humanizing abstract concepts.

The twelfth *Discworld* novel, *Witches Abroad* (1991), resonates intertextually with various fairy tales, and one of its main themes is that history is shaped by stories. In this novel, stories are personified to some degree—not humanized, but concretized and animated as a parasitic life-form.

> People think that stories are shaped by people. In fact, it's the other way around.
>
> Stories exist independently of their players. If you know that, the knowledge is power.
>
> Stories, great flapping ribbons of shaped space-time, have been blowing and uncoiling around the universe since the beginning of time. And they have evolved. The weakest have died and the strongest have survived and they have grown fat on the retelling … stories, twisting and blowing through the darkness.
>
> And their very existence overlays a faint but insistent pattern on the chaos that is history. Stories etch grooves deep enough for people to follow in the same way that water follows certain paths down a mountainside. And every time fresh actors tread the path of the story, the groove runs deeper.
>
> This is called the theory of narrative causality and it means that a story, once started, *takes a shape*. It picks up all the vibrations of all the other workings of that story that have ever been.
>
> This is why history keeps on repeating all the time. […]
>
> It takes a special kind of person to fight back, and become the bicarbonate of history. (*Witches Abroad*, 8–9)

In recent years, scholars in various sciences have noticed that stories have rhetorical power—we make sense of the world by arranging the events in our life into story patterns, and people try to guide our attitudes by telling us stories. Pratchett gives stories even more power to influence people by personifying them, in the Discworld, as a life-form that exists independently from the people—saying that they have been around "since the beginning of time" means that stories have existed long before people started to fabricate and tell stories.

If we consider the term "narrative causality", which the narrator mentions in this quote, we might think of how the events inside a story world need to follow a chain

of causes and consequences. By borrowing this logic of causality from the real world and applying it to stories, authors can give verisimilitude to their fictional worlds. However, Pratchett turns this idea upside-down and introduces a humorously unconventional viewpoint by replacing the real-world causality with narrative causality, and thus he makes narrative causality a law of nature in the Discworld.

Describing how stories become a force of nature is a difficult feat to accomplish, but one of Pratchett's special talents is his ability to describe and explain the seemingly indescribable and unexplainable phenomena. Story is an abstract and conceptual term, but the narrator transfers it into the empirical realm of space and time by describing stories as ribbons that move in an apparently uncontrolled way (flapping, blowing, uncoiling, twisting) in some indistinct location that is invisible to the human eye (darkness).

After establishing how stories exist in the empirical world, the narrator explains how stories affect people's behavior by etching grooves on history. The narrator persuades the reader to believe this implausible explanation by using the concretizing analogy of water running down a mountainside along grooves in the ground, and he also animates stories by not only claiming that they exist and form patterns independently of people, but that they also evolve like other life-forms, and that the successful stories grow fat on the retelling. Although stories are clearly a very different kind of life-form than humans, this personification of stories nevertheless serves as an explanation for the "narrative causality"—which is a central thematic motif in *Witches Abroad*—and for the narrator's claim that "history keeps on repeating all the time".

By stating that the knowledge of how stories work is power, the narrator foreshadows the plot of *Witches Abroad*, where an evil witch uses the narrative causality of fairy tales to control other characters' behavior, while the protagonist witches also need to figure out how stories work in order to fight back and to become the metaphorical "bicarbonate of history". Despite the fact that narrative causality does not work in our Roundworld in quite the same way as it does in the Discworld, it is necessary also for us in the real world to understand how stories work, if we want to resist the rhetorical power of stories. In this sense, the personified stories in *Witches Abroad* can be interpreted to resonate culturally with the rhetorical power of stories in our own world. Representing human-made designs, stories, as a force of nature is only one of the numerous features that make the Discworld an extraordinarily personified and humanized fantasy world.

Although many figurative personifications in the *Discworld* novels animate or humanize abstract concepts—such as death, history, and stories—also more

concrete things are occasionally animated or humanized via prosopopeia, so that they appear to act, feel, and think like independent individuals. In the early pages of the first *Discworld* novel, *The Colour of Magic* (1983), the narrator's description of a tourist who has just arrived in Ankh-Morpork involves a personification of a small lifeless physical object, which nevertheless appears to be able to speak telepathically to a local beggar.

> The stranger smiled widely [and] fumbled yet again in the pouch. This time his hand came out holding a large gold coin. It was in fact slightly larger than an 8,000-dollar Ankhian crown and the design on it was unfamiliar, but it spoke inside Hugh's mind in a language he understood perfectly. My current owner, it said, is in need of succour and assistance; why not give it to him, so you and me can go off somewhere and enjoy ourselves? (*The Colour of Magic*, 26)

What is described here is the beggar's strong emotional response to the sight of a large gold coin, although this emotion of greed is represented with the image of a personified coin. It is the beggar Hugh, not the coin, who wants to change the coin's ownership, and thus this figurative personification projects Hugh's desire to a lifeless object. The image of a coin as a living thing that can speak telepathically is comical because it deviates from our everyday experiences and conventional expectations. The personification is also comical because it represents a familiar phenomenon, the greed for money, from a comically euphemistic viewpoint, where a large gold coin seduces the poor and greedy beggar. This description of the beggar's emotional response to the sight of a gold coin adds psychological plausibility to the situation by explaining the motivation behind Hugh's actions, when he offers to help the tourist.

Pratchett's comic use of prosopopeia in the *Discworld* novels tends to coincide with hyperbole; the narrator's personifications are frequently hyperbolic personifications. Hyperbole can be used for expressing intense emotions, for calling the reader's attention to something important, and also for creating comic incongruities. In the *Discworld* novels, hyperbolic personifications are often deployed to perform all these functions simultaneously.

In the following quotes from the first, third, fifth, and tenth *Discworld* novels—*The Colour of Magic* (1983), *Equal Rites* (1987), *Sourcery* (1988), and *Moving Pictures* (1990)—the narrator deploys prosopopeia to equip various more or less abstract entities (a whimper, reality, silence, a month, and language) with human-like qualities.

> A whimper escaped from his lips, glad to be free. (*The Colour of Magic*, 75)

> Reality returned, and tried to pretend that it had never left. (*Equal Rites*, 212–213)

> Silence poured from the heavy woodwork. But, unlike the silence that had the rest of the city under its thrall, this was a watchful, alert silence; it was the silence of a sleeping cat that had just opened one eye. (*Sourcery*, 102)
>
> A month went by quickly. It didn't want to hang around. (*Moving Pictures*, 29)
>
> It is at this point that normal language gives up, and goes and has a drink. (*The Colour of Magic*, 208)

In the first quote, the narrator initially uses the idiomatic personification that an involuntary sound, such as a terrified whimper, can "escape" from someone's lips, but then the narrator adds a modifying phrase that intensifies the prosopopeia and gives the clichéd idiom a fresh comic twist by revealing the whimper's human-like emotion. The whimpering character is in a life-threatening situation and wants to escape, so the personification projects the character's emotional response to the personified sound.

In the second and third quote, the narrator uses prosopopeia to describe the specific atmosphere of the moment. The quote from *Equal Rites* takes place just after something unusual has happened, and the normal state of affairs starts to prevail again. The expression "reality returned" contains an idiomatic figurative personification, which Pratchett renders playfully humorous by elaborating and exaggerating it. In the *Sourcery* quote, the figuratively personified silence receives the ability to observe its surroundings from the analogy that represents the abstract thing as a living animal. The rhetorical purpose of this prosopopeia is to evoke a similar expectant attitude in the reader, suggesting that something unusual is about to happen.

The personification in the fourth quote is amusing because the prosopopeia is combined with a paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail, which forces the reader to re-evaluate what the narrator has just said. This quote resembles the first two quotes, where the initial mild prosopopeia is elaborated with a more extreme personification. Readers are likely to pass by the first personifications in these quotes without noticing them, because we do not normally pay attention to figurativeness in idiomatic expressions, but the additional personifications draw our attention to the on-going play with personifications. The personification of a month may also draw our attention to the literary convention which requires authors to figure out some way to tell readers that some time has passed between two subsequent episodes in the story. Hence, this combination of prosopopeia and paraprosdokian can be interpreted as parody of a literary convention: the narrative ellipsis.

In the fifth quote, the narrator confesses his own difficulty to explain a strange phenomenon, which he has just described, by personifying language.[77] The prosopopeia appears to seize the agency away from the narrator and associates it with language, which is reluctant to cooperate. The personified language behaves in a way that is both seemingly independent from the narrator and comically human-like, although in fact this prosopopeia is just an excuse for the narrator's comically absurd and quasi-scientific explanation that follows the quoted sentence.

In the ninth *Discworld* novel, *Eric* (1990), the narrator explains in a footnote how universes typically begin. Here is a part of that footnote:

> It is also apparent that creators sometimes favour the Big Bang method of universe construction, and at other times use the more gentle methods of Continual Creation. This follows studies by cosmotherapists which have revealed that the violence of the Big Bang can give a universe serious psychological problems when it gets older. (*Eric*, 107–108)

This quote contains cultural resonance between the Discworld and our Roundworld, since the narrator combines our world's cosmological theories about the beginning of the universe with child psychiatry, which is similarly a feature of our own culture. This cultural resonance creates a humorously unconventional viewpoint, where a universe that has just become into existence is personified as a newborn baby, whose possible psychological problems subsequently become a concern for "cosmotherapists".

The quote also mentions "creators", and thus combines a religious explanation of how the universe came into existence with the aforementioned sciences of cosmology and psychiatry. Consequently, there are a number of features in this quote that personify universes: As it appears, universes are made by human-like creators, and thus they are constructed according to designs that are fundamentally human; universes are also represented to possess human-like qualities, since they can suffer from psychological problems if their birth process is excessively violent; furthermore, there are cosmotherapists who observe and treat the mental disorders of universes. Since even the universe where the Discworld exists is humanized, it is no wonder that many things in the Discworld are similarly personified.

To wrap up my review of Pratchett's comic personifications, I will next discuss the two perhaps most frequently occurring types of prosopopeia in the *Discworld* novels: the independently acting body parts and mental faculties of characters.

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[77] The strange phenomenon in question is one where the protagonists, Rincewind and Twoflower, are riding a dragon in the Discworld, when they suddenly find themselves as aircraft passengers in our Roundworld.

4.1.4.4 Independent body parts and autonomous feelings

Prosopopeia can be used to make psychological and physiological parts of humans to act and think independently from the person to whom they belong (Alm-Arvius 2003, 133; Nash 1989, 126). The *Discworld* novels include frequently these kinds of personifications, which the narrator typically uses for representing the characters' intense emotional responses to story events. Consequently, this kind of personifications create psychological plausibility into the story and invite the reader to identify with the characters.

Rincewind, the inept wizard, acts as the antiheroic protagonist in some of the early *Discworld* novels, where Pratchett pastiches and parodies conventions of the fantasy genre. The following quotes from the first, second, and ninth *Discworld* novels—*The Colour of Magic* (1983), *The Light Fantastic* (1986), and *Eric* (1990)—introduce prosopopeias where the narrator represents Rincewind's body parts as if they were autonomously acting and thinking individuals.

> Rincewind choked on his wine. His ears tried to crawl into his head in terror of the syllables they had just heard. (*The Colour of Magic*, 113)

> Rincewind groaned. His bones were very angry at the treatment they had recently received and were queuing up to complain. (*The Light Fantastic*, 70)

> His ears picked up the crackle of a fire and a bubbling noise, source unknown. His nose, feeling that it was being left out of things, hastened to report a whiff of brimstone. (*Eric*, 18)

The personification in the first of these quotes projects the character's terrified attitude as a property of his ears and thus calls the reader's attention to Rincewind's emotional response. Instead of describing Rincewind's emotions directly, the narrator has chosen to describe them indirectly, by personifying Rincewind's ears as individuals who can feel emotions and react independently from Rincewind. The image of ears that try to crawl into the head is clearly a comic hyperbole, an excessive exaggeration.

The image in the second quote is not original, since people sometimes tell about their bodily aches by saying that their bones are complaining. However, the narrator elaborates and amplifies this commonplace personification by stating that Rincewind's bones have an emotional attitude and that they queue up to complain, which is something that mistreated people, but not bones, might do in everyday life.

These prosopopeias create psychological plausibility, because characters who react emotionally to the story events, for instance by being terrified or by feeling

aches in their limbs, resemble real people. Thus, prosopopeias can invite the reader to identify with and feel empathy for the characters, while hyperbolic prosopopeias can at the same time make the character's emotional responses comical.

While the first two of the above three quotes include prosopopeias where the personified parts of the body appear to be out of the character's control, the prosopopeia in the third quote introduces body parts that are keen to serve their owner. The narrator's report that Rincewind's ears pick up noises is a conventional prosopopeia, an idiom that is common in everyday language use—and as such, it is not comical. However, the description of the personified nose's human-like feelings, which appear to be independent from the character's feelings, is non-idiomatic and comically unconventional. Here the non-idiomatic prosopopeia acts as a playful continuation and further elaboration of the idiomatic prosopopeia, drawing our attention to the figurativeness of the idiomatic personification, which we otherwise might have ignored.

In the eighth *Discworld* novel, *Guards! Guards!* (1989), Captain Samuel Vimes experiences an unexpected internal conflict, which the narrator foregrounds comically by deploying prosopopeia.

> He became terribly aware that Lady Ramkin had moved, and saw to his horror that she was striding toward the dragon, chin stuck out like an anvil. […]
>
> To his shame, Vimes realized that his legs were going to have nothing to do with any mad dash to drag her back. His pride didn't like that, but his body pointed out that it wasn't his pride that stood a very reasonable chance of being thinly laminated to the nearest building. (*Guards! Guards!*, 173)

This quote represents, in a humorously circumlocutional way, Vimes's cowardliness in a situation where he would prefer to see himself acting heroically. The idea that in dangerous situations people's legs may freeze with fear and refuse to obey is a conventional one, but Pratchett elaborates this idea comically by devising a brief dialogue between Vimes's body and his pride. Vimes's conscious mind, represented by his pride, appears as a valiant hero who wants to rescue the damsel in distress, while Vimes's instinctive and emotional need for self-preservation is projected as a property of his independently acting and reasoning legs.

I have picked up the following quotes from the sixth, eighth, and second *Discworld* novels—*Wyrd Sisters* (1988), *Guards! Guards!* (1989), and *The Light Fantastic* (1986)—and in all these quotes prosopopeias are used for the double purpose of adding both psychological plausibility and comedy to the narrator's descriptions.

> For the first time a flicker of doubt invaded Granny Weatherwax's mind, puzzled to find itself in such unfamiliar surroundings. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 154)
>
> The pain sensations, which had taken advantage of Vimes's unconscious state to bunk off for a metaphorical quick cigarette, rushed back. (*Guards! Guards!*, 125)
>
> In the debating chamber of his mind a dozen emotions got to their feet and started shouting. Relief was in full spate when Shock cut in on a point of order and then Bewilderment, Terror and Loss started a fight which was ended only when Shame slunk in from next door to see what all the row was about. (*The Light Fantastic*, 105)

In the first quote, the expression that a flicker of doubt "invades" the witch character's mind can be understood as an idiomatic one; the narrator's elaborated personification of the doubt draws the reader's attention to the non-comical personification and makes it humorous. Thus, the comedy in the prosopopeia results from the narrator's humorously unconventional elaboration on the conventional personification of the idiom. This prosopopeia is humorous, but it also functions as device of characterization, communicating to us in a circumlocutional way that even a momentary fragment of doubt is unusual for Granny Weatherwax's self-confident and domineering ethos.

In the second quote, Captain Vimes has been knocked unconscious by a fire-breathing dragon's attack, and the narrator uses prosopopeia to describe Vimes's experiences when he starts to regain his senses. Simply stating that Vimes's pain sensations "rushed back" would be a conventional and non-comical idiomatic prosopopeia. However, suggesting that they rushed back from a quick cigarette break combines the prosopopeia with an unconventional perspective and thus makes the figurative personification comical, and even though the narrator explicitly points out that the cigarette break is only metaphorical, the comic image nevertheless lingers. This description of Vimes's emotional response invites us to empathize with his sorry state, but at the same time the comic personification suggests that Vimes has not suffered any permanent damages.

In the third quote, the narrator deploys a personifying technique which is frequently found in allegories: the emotions are named by using initial capital letters. The narrator also humanizes the emotions by stating that they have feet, that they live in the metaphorical "debating chamber" of the character's mind—or somewhere "next door", where Shame appears to reside—and that they can shout and fight. The emotions can also be curious, like Shame whose attention is attracted by the noise that the other emotions make. This description represents the character's mixed emotions to the reader in an efficiently condensed manner, and the autonomous agency of the emotions also makes it quite clear that they are not under the

character's control. Despite the character's apparent distress, Pratchett persuades the reader to view the character's situation from an emotionally disengaged, humorous perspective, which he constructs by representing the emotions as exaggeratedly personified.

In the next quote, from the second *Discworld* novel *The Light Fantastic* (1986), the narrator combines prosopopeia with other rhetorical figures.

> Homesickness, the little elastic band in the subconscious that can wind up a salmon and propel it three thousand miles through strange seas, or send a million lemmings running joyfully back to an ancestral homeland which, owing to a slight kink in the continental drift, isn't there any more—homesickness rose up inside Rincewind like a late-night prawn biriani, flowed along the tenuous thread linking his tortured soul to his body, dug its heels in and tugged … (*The Light Fantastic*, 138)

Although comparing homesickness to an elastic band does not sound like an elevating metaphor, the narrator adds pathos to the image by suggesting that homesickness motivates impressive mass migrations among animals—even though the explanation why lemmings migrate is here comically unusual. The image of the simile that follows this comical explanation, an exotic late-night dish rising up in the stomach, functions as a bathetic anticlimax after the apparent attempt at stylistic elevation. These comic bits remind the reader that Rincewind is prevalently a comic character, even though we are sometimes guided to feel a momentary pang of empathy for him.

This description is skillfully constructed—it consists of a periodic sentence[78], which is a frequently deployed stylistic device in P. G. Wodehouse's novels but rare in Pratchett's. The climactic construction of the sentence suggests that, despite the comic disruptions, the narrator nevertheless aims to appeal to the reader's emotions with his description of Rincewind's awakening homesickness. Mentioning the metaphorical thread that links Rincewind's soul to his body brings again some stylistic elevation to the sentence, and describing his soul as tortured invites the reader to feel empathy. At the very end of this lengthy sentence, the narrator personifies the homesickness as it prepares to act autonomously in Rincewind's subconsciousness and pull him toward his hometown Ankh-Morpork with the same irresistible power that forces animals to migrate.

As in several other cases that I have discussed in this chapter, also here the narrator uses prosopopeia to describe mental processes that are out of the character's control. Personifying the character's body parts or feelings figuratively as

[78] Periodic sentence is a long and syntactically complex sentence, where the meaning is suspended throughout the sentence, not to be completed until the end (Lanham 2009, 49).

independently and autonomously acting beings is a way to describe the character's subconscious thought processes. This technique can be also conceived as a circumlocution, and in fact all the prosopopeias that I have discussed above are indirect ways of telling something that could have been said more directly. The narrator could have communicated Rincewind's homesickness to the reader without resorting to metaphorical elastic bands, salmons, lemmings, or late night prawn birianis, but then the description would have been less eloquent and less funny.

To summarize my discussion on personifications in the *Discworld* novels, at first I suggested that the Discworld can be conceived as an unusually humanized fantasy world because it is governed by human-made patterns and designs rather than the laws of nature, and then I have demonstrated how various kinds of personifications animate and humanize the Discworld. I have pointed out that some characters in the *Discworld* novels are personified entities, such as Discworld's gods, Death, and auditors of reality, as well as various non-human characters and animals that talk and act like humans. Furthermore, I have discussed a narrative digression in *Wyrd Sisters*, which represents a personified storm as the protagonist of a micro narrative, and I have pointed out how this character personification functions as a thematic motif that adds thematic coherence to the novel's main themes, Shakespeare and theater.

In addition, I have analyzed how Pratchett uses figurative personifications to animate inanimate things and to humanize non-human things, such as stories, a gold coin, a whimper, reality, silence, a month, language, and a universe. Furthermore, I have observed that Pratchett's figurative personifications are often hyperbolic, since they exaggerate the described things, and while hyperbole is typically used for expressing intense emotions, Pratchett frequently deploys figurative personifications to represent the characters' intense emotional responses to story events and their subconscious processes by making the characters' body parts (such as ears, nose, bones, and legs) and feelings (such as pride, doubt, pain sensations, relief, shock, bewilderment, terror, loss, shame, and homesickness) to act independently of their owner. From the rhetorical viewpoint, characters' emotional responses make the characters psychologically plausible and invite the reader to identify with them.

I have also pointed out that the personification can be easily turned into a comic device, since making inanimate or otherwise non-human things to act and speak as humans creates a comically unusual viewpoint on these non-human things. Pratchett's figurative personifications often coexist with idiomatic expressions and other conventions of language use and draw the reader's attention to them, while, at the same time, Pratchett makes these conventions comical by inviting us to view them from fresh and comically unusual viewpoints.

Next, I will study how Pratchett constructs comic ambiguity into the narrator's discourse and the characters' dialogues by colliding the sound and sense of words.

4.2 Puns: happy collisions of sound and sense

The standard dictionary definition of the pun is "play on words", which in its vagueness does not really tell us much. More accurately put, the pun signifies humorous playing with ambiguities that are created by similar sounds and double meanings in language, although also this definition covers a vast array of linguistic phenomena. Speaking of puns, Salvatore Attardo (1994, 112–113) points out that ambiguity of meaning can appear in any linguistic element that is out of context and that, consequently, "no taxonomy can classify all the possible factors of ambiguity in language, so no taxonomy of puns can be exhaustive". Attardo concludes that ambiguity alone should not be conceived as a sufficient condition for puns, but rather as an enabling feature.

Even though taxonomies of puns cannot be exhaustive, they can nevertheless give us a general idea about what kinds of humorous wordplay scholars tend to include under the category of puns, even if the taxonomies themselves differ from each other. Literary scholar Jonathan Culler (1988, 5–6), for example, associates puns mainly with paronomasia and antanaclasis, but also with syllepsis, anagrams, and portmanteau words. Linguist Walter Nash (1985, 137–147) discusses various types of puns: homophones, paronyms, homonyms, contacts and blends, pseudomorphs, portmanteaux, etymological puns, bilingual puns, and pun-metaphors. Humor theorist John Morreall (1983, 71–72) lists a number of comic devices that can be conceived as puns: double-entendres, mispronunciations, spoonerisms, verbal slips, Freudian slips, and typographical errors. In this section, I will discuss several types of puns that are prominent in Terry Pratchett's witcraft: antanaclasis, paronomasia, colliding metaphorical and literal senses, portmanteau puns, and bilingual puns. In addition, I will review some examples of less usual wordplay that do not seem to fit into these categories.

Puns are sometimes disparaged as the lowest form of wit, but the pun has also won over some eloquent defenders, who argue for the underrated merits of this humble and common type of wordplay. Arthur Koestler (1964, 64–65) mentions pun as an example of "bisociation", which he deems to be the source of all creative thinking, and describes the pun as "the bisociation of a single phonetic form with two meanings—two strings of thought tied together by an acoustic knot". James

Geary (2019, 6) argues that puns are among the highest displays of wit and writes that they "straddle that happy fault where sound and sense collide, where surface similarities of spelling or pronunciation meet above conflicting seams of meaning". In addition to this definition, Geary offers his own explanation about how puns work:

> Punning folds a double knowledge into words. To make and understand a pun, you must grasp two things at once: the primary, apparently intended import of a word or phrase, and the secondary, usually subversive one. (ibid., 7)

Linguists have prepared complicated and fine-grained models for analyzing the different elements of puns,[79] but to me Geary's simple exposition of the pun's two colliding senses—one primary and non-comical, the other secondary and comically subversive—feels like an opportune point of departure for analyzing what makes Pratchett's puns funny.

Geary also suggests that puns create sudden alternative points of view by reordering our ordinary associations.

> Through deft juxtapositions […], puns reveal previously unseen relations among things. This reordering of ordinary associations, this upsetting of the applecart of expectations, affords the mind sudden alternative points of view on subjects and situations it thought it knew. (Geary 2019, 12)

As Geary here explains, in many puns the comical sense provides an alternative and unusual perspective on the conventional way of viewing things, which is expressed by the pun's non-comical sense, and thus comically unusual viewpoints on familiar things might be conceived as an inherent ingredient of punning. Furthermore, Geary's conception of how puns work make me think that the associative mechanisms of puns and metaphors bear some resemblance with each other. In both cases, we must grasp two things at once—although with puns we associate the colliding senses by the similarity of sounds, while with metaphors the contrasting images are associated by their analogous meanings.

Although we tend to view the pun as a comic device, it can in fact be applied without apparent humorous intention. M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham (2009, 295) point out some examples of how puns have been used to express serious intentions: Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew 16:18,[80] the dying Mercutio in

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[79] See Attardo 1994, 108–142.

[80] "Thou art Peter [Petros] and upon this rock [petra] I will build my church."

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597),[81] in John Donne's "Hymn to God the Father", and in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667). Abrams and Harpham state that from the 18th century onwards the literary use of the pun has been almost exclusively comic. He singles out James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939) as a major exception to this modern trend, since Joyce's extensive punning plays simultaneously with multiple levels of meaning, both comic and serious. My own addition to these examples would be a memorable passage from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955), where a pun is used without humor. In that novel, Frodo says that it is pity that Bilbo did not stab Gollum when he had the chance, but Gandalf replies that it was precisely because Bilbo felt pity that he chose not to kill Gollum.

Comic wordplay is one of the staples of Terry Pratchett's witcraft, and I will discuss below what kinds of wordplay I have detected in the *Discworld* novels.

4.2.1 Paronomasia and antanaclasis

Paronomasia and antanaclasis are types of wordplay that are commonly conceived as typical puns, while some other types of puns can be understood as variations of these two main types. Paronomasia means punning on a pair of similar-sounding words, while antanaclasis signifies punning on two different senses of a single word (Howard 2010, 33, 153–154; Lanham 1991, 12, 110). Both paronomasia and antanaclasis are traditional rhetorical figures, but since the academic study of puns has mostly been done by linguists, paronomasia and antanaclasis are often discussed in linguistic terms by resorting to three categories: paronomy, homonymy, and homophony (Chiaro 1992, 37–40; Redfern 1984, 17–18). Salvatore Attardo explains how these different types of puns differ from each other:

> Two words are paronyms when their phonemic representations are similar but not identical. Two words are homonyms when their phonemic or graphemic representation is identical […]. Two words are homophones when their phonemic representation is identical (i.e., they are pronounced the same). (Attardo 1994, 110–111)

Thus, using linguistic terminology, paronomasia can be defined as either a paronymic or homophonic pun and antanaclasis as a homonymic pun.[82]

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[81] "Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man."

[82] When the focus of humor research is on written texts only, linguists describe antanaclasis as a homographic pun, since words that are written identically are called homographs. Homographs are a subclass of homonyms (Hempelmann 2014, 614).

4.2.1.1 Titular puns: *Equal Rites*, *Sourcery*, *Witches Abroad*, and *Mort*

Before discussing specific types of puns in more detail, I want to point out that punning in the *Discworld* novels is not restricted to the narrator's discourse and the characters' dialogues. Some *Discworld* novels include puns in their titles, as is the case in the third *Discworld* novel, *Equal Rites* (1987), where the title is pronounced identically with "equal rights", even though "rites" and "rights" are different words and their spelling is different. This makes it a paronomastic pun. The interpretation of the title as a pun receives thematic support from the story of the novel, because *Equal Rites* tells about two gendered "rites" of magic, female witches and male wizards, and also about a girl's striving to become a student in the Discworld's premiere college of magic, Unseen University, which has traditionally accepted only boys as students. This thematic motif resonates culturally with our Roundworld, since women's equal right for higher education was on the agenda of early feminism. The primary meaning in this punning title is that witches and wizards are equal "rites" of magic in the Discworld, while the subversive secondary sense deploys cultural resonance as a narrative foreshadowing device, which informs the reader that there is a feminist theme in the novel.

The title of the fifth *Discworld* novel, *Sourcery* (1988), is a portmanteau pun that merges "source" and "sorcery". As the title plays with the similar sounds of the two words it merges, it can also be conceived as a paronomasia. Number eight has in the Discworld a similar numerological importance as number seven in our Roundworld, and every eighth son of the eighth son is destined to become a wizard. This idea recycles and revises the concept, familiar from folklore and popular culture in our Roundworld, that every seventh son of the seventh son possesses special powers. In *Equal Rites*, the eighth son of the eighth son turns out to be a daughter, while *Sourcery* introduces the eighth son of the eighth son of the eighth son, who is a wizard so potent with magical powers that he becomes a sourcerer, the source of sorcery.

The title of the twelfth *Discworld* novel, *Witches Abroad* (1991), includes a pun because being "abroad" can be understood in the idiomatic and metaphorical sense of being "out of doors" or "away from one's home", while the story of the novel tells about witches who literally travel to another country. The same pun also appears in the narrator's discourse in the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), where the wordplay has been made more obvious:

> On nights such as this, witches are abroad. Well, not actually *abroad*. They don't like the food and you can't trust the water and the shamans always hog the deckchairs. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 7)

In both cases, the idiomatic phrase seems to be the more obvious primary meaning, while the literal interpretation of this phrase provides a comically subversive secondary sense. Puns that collide the metaphorical and literal senses of words can be conceived as a special type of antanaclasis.

The title of the fourth *Discworld* novel, *Mort* (1987), is simultaneously the name of the young protagonist (Mort is short for Mortimer), who becomes Death's apprentice, and the French word for death. The boy's name is here the more obvious primary meaning, while the French meaning of his name becomes the subtler and subversive secondary sense. Thus, both *Mort* and *Witches Abroad* invite the reader to interpret the titles as antanaclastic puns, and the title *Mort* can also be viewed as an example of bilingual puns. Although these titular puns are not particularly funny, they are nevertheless clever and playful. Since novel titles are paratexts, whose main function is to inform the reader about the contents of the novel (Genette 1997), these titular puns prepare the reader to expect similar punning wit and playful humor also elsewhere in the novels.

As I have pointed out above, paronomasia and antanaclasis are the two specific kinds of wordplay that are most commonly associated with the word "pun", and they are also the types of puns that Pratchett deploys most frequently in the *Discworld* novels. Therefore, I will discuss them first, before proceeding to the other types of puns in Terry Pratchett's witcraft, and I will start with paronomasia.

4.2.1.2 Paronomasia: everything he touched turned to Glod

The following two quotes—from the first and seventh *Discworld* novels, *The Colour of Magic* (1983) and *Pyramids* (1989)—include puns that exemplify the Discworld's wizards' and assassins' sense of humor.

> Eight was also the Number of Bel-Shamharoth, which was why a sensible wizard would never mention the number if he could avoid it. Or you'll be eight alive, apprentices were jocularly warned. (*The Colour of Magic*, 118)

> He had slip-on priests in his pouch. They were devilish things to prowl around a room in, but he shuffled into them anyway. (Priests were metal-reinforced overshoes. They saved your soles. This is an Assassin joke.) (*Pyramids*, 47)

The pun in the first quote relies on the homophony between "eight" and "ate", where "eight" is the funny secondary sense and "ate" is the primary meaning. In fact, saying that "you'll be eight alive" is a strained pun, because the phrase does not make any sense, except that it repeats the number that happens to be the topic of

discussion. In order to ensure that the reader notices this bad pun, Pratchett substitutes the secondary meaning for the primary meaning in the pun's written representation, and the narrator also explicitly points out that the warning is jocular. However, there is another punning double meaning in being "ate alive" that collides metaphorical and literal meanings, since this phrase is an idiomatic and metaphorical expression for being thoroughly defeated. In this semantic layer of the pun, the idiomatic meaning is the non-comical primary sense, while the literal meaning is the comically subversive secondary sense, which also provides a humorously unusual viewpoint: although people are rarely eaten alive in the literal sense, Bel-Shamharoth the Soul-Eater is a giant octopus-like monster, not dissimilar to H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu, and thus the literal meaning actually makes better sense in this context than the idiomatic meaning.

It seems somewhat implausible that the wizards, who want to avoid saying aloud number eight, would pun on a word that is pronounced identically with the forbidden number, but in the early novels of the *Discworld* series comedy and parody, instead of narrative plausibility, are the driving forces behind the stories.

The second quote contains a similar paronomastic pun, where the homophony between "soles" and "souls" forges comically unexpected associative links between priests, assassins, and protective footwear. The profession of priests involves the noble task of saving human souls from damnation, while the assassins' "priests" serve the more mundane purpose of fortifying shoe soles and saving feet from injuries when one steps on sharp objects. This juxtaposition of the pun's primary spiritual sense and the secondary, comically mundane meaning creates an unusual viewpoint by bathetically undermining the elevated mission of priests and by associating their occupation with the mundane purpose of protective overshoes.

In both quotes, the narrator attributes characters as makers of the puns. Wizards are here pointed out as being responsible for the strained "eight alive" pun, while assassins' pun makes sense in both meanings of the punned phrase. However, although the wizards' pun is strained, it is also more complex than the assassins' pun because it actually consists of two puns that are superimposed.

In the following quote, from the twelfth *Discworld* novel *Witches Abroad* (1991), the narrator recounts two anecdotes, one in the main text and another in a footnote, where comical consequences ensue from misspellings.

> Local people called it the Bear Mountain. This was because it was a *bare* mountain, not because it had a lot of bears on it. This caused a certain amount of profitable confusion, though; people often strode into the nearest village with heavy duty crossbows, traps and nets and called haughtily for native guides to lead them to the bears. Since everyone locally was making quite a good living out of this, what with

> the sale of guide books, maps of bear caves, ornamental cuckoo-clocks with bears on them, bear walking-sticks and cakes baked in the shape of a bear, somehow no-one had time to go and correct the spelling.*
>
> * Bad spelling can be lethal. For example, the greedy Seriph of Al-Ybi was once cursed by a badly-educated deity and for some days everything he touched turned to Glod, which happened to be the name of a small dwarf from a mountain community hundreds of miles away who found himself magically dragged to the kingdom and relentlessly duplicated. Some two thousand Glods later the spell wore off. These days, the people of Al-Ybi are renowned for being unusually short and bad-tempered. (*Witches Abroad*, 11)

Here a mistake in spelling renders "bare" into "bear", which are pronounced identically although their spelling is different. In the footnote, which provides a parodic and comically unusual viewpoint on the Greek myth of King Midas, the misspelling takes place when two letters in a word are accidentally transposed, and the resulting wordplay gold/Glod is paronymic rather than homophonic. Due to the mistakes in spelling, in both puns the subversive and funny secondary sense of the punned word appears as the written version, which foregrounds the punning. The footnote also includes a third pun, which the reader can easily pass by without noticing it, because it is not foregrounded like the two other puns: since a curse can be considered as a kind of spell, a misspelled curse is "bad spelling" in more than one sense. Unlike the puns on Bear and Glod, which are paronomastic puns, the wordplay on "bad spelling" is an antanaclastic pun.

None of the misspellings here are inherently comical, but Pratchett uses the puns as kernels of anecdotes, which he makes comical by deploying dramatic irony—and in the duplicated dwarf's case, also absurd logic. The narrator invites us to observe the bear hunters and duplicated dwarfs of these anecdotes from an epistemically superior position. The characters' emotional responses and attitudes add both psychological plausibility and comedy to this dramatic irony, when the cunning people of the Bear Mountain take advantage of the haughty bear hunters, while the short people of Al-Ybi are understandably bad-tempered. It would have been possible to tell both anecdotes without these emotional responses, but then they would have been less funny, because they would have lacked the view to human motivations which such responses provide.

In the fourth *Discworld* novel, *Mort* (1987), Death's servant, an old man named Albert, casts a nostalgic glance at Ankh-Morpork's noble historic monarchs.

> 'And they was kings in those days, real kings, not like the sort you get now. They was *monarchs*,' continued Albert, carefully pouring some tea into his saucer and fanning it primly with the end of his muffler. 'I mean, they was wise and fair, well, fairly wise.

> And they wouldn't think twice about cutting your head off soon as look at you,' he added approvingly. 'And all the queens were tall and pale and wore them balaclava helmet things—'
>
> 'Wimples?' said Mort.
>
> 'Yeah, them, and the princesses were beautiful as the day is long and so noble they, they could pee through a dozen mattresses—'
>
> 'What?'
>
> Albert hesitated. 'Something like that, anyway,' he conceded. (*Mort*, 99)

The unintended pun in Albert's description of the princesses is based on the fact that "pea" and "pee" are pronounced identically, and thus the pun is a paronomasia. This description is clearly a parodic allusion to Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea", where a princess proves her noble heritage when a pea underneath a dozen mattresses makes her bed feel so uncomfortable that she is unable to sleep. Just like in the above-discussed puns that result from misspellings, also here the misremembered version of the "princess and pee/pea" anecdote (and its comically subversive sense of the punned word) is represented first. Mort's incredulous emotional response alerts the reader that there is something amiss in Albert's anecdote, and our task is to associate it with the original fairy tale (and its non-funny primary sense of the pun) in order to actualize the comic incongruity that Albert's misunderstood version introduces. The humor in this paronomastic pun is hyperdetermined, since the pun creates bathos by providing an unusual viewpoint on the nobility of princesses and by comically undermining Albert's attempt to associate royalty with elevating imagery.

Similar undermining can also be seen in the bathetic transformation of the initially "wise and fair" monarchs into a much less complimentary statement that they were "fairly wise". Albert's admiration for kings who can cut their subjects' head off on a whim creates a comically unusual and satirical viewpoint on both royalty and ardent royalists. Similarly, balaclava helmets, also known as ski masks, are unlikely to evoke connotations of nobility. Thus, Pratchett sets up Albert's rhetorical praise of monarchs in a way that comically undermines his persuasive efforts, and the homophonic mistake with pee/pea also makes Albert the ignorant butt of comic dramatic irony.

While all intended puns, including bad puns, display the speaker's playfulness and wit, unintended puns tend to demonstrate the speaker's lack of wit. Consequently, unintended puns appear in the narrator's discourse only when he attributes the unintended puns to someone else, as in the case when the narrator uses characters'

bad spelling as a starting point for his own humorous anecdote. In the *Discworld* novels, unintended puns typically appear in the characters' dialogues, where lexical ambiguities can trigger comic misunderstandings, bathos, and dramatic irony.

4.2.1.3 Antanaclasis: the mummy's curse

Puns are perhaps most commonly associated with paronomasia (where the punned words are slightly different in sound and/or spelling) but antanaclasis (where the punned words are identical in both sound and spelling) is another common type of puns. *Wyrd Sisters* includes a passage where Hwel the playwright, who is the Discworld's equivalent of Shakespeare, dreams of theatrical stage spectacles and cinematic special effects, which are unavailable to him when he is awake. The narrator ends the passage with an aphorism, which Pratchett makes comical by ambiguating one of its words.

> Hwel snored.
>
> In his dreams gods rose and fell, ships moved with cunning and art across canvas oceans, pictures jumped and ran together and became flickering images; men flew on wires, flew without wires, great ships of illusion fought against one another in imaginary skies, seas opened, ladies were sawn in half, a thousand special effects men giggled and gibbered. Through it all he ran with his arms open in desperation, knowing that none of this really existed or ever would exist and all he *really* had was a few square yards of planking, some canvas and some paint on which to trap the beckoning images that invaded his head.
>
> Only in our dreams are we free. The rest of the time we need wages. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 185)

The non-comical primary meaning of the first sentence in the aphorism, in the last paragraph, recycles the clichéd idea that while we sleep and dream, our imagination can roam free from the shackles of reality. However, the second sentence of the aphorism introduces a paraprosdokian twist-in-the-tail, which forces the reader to reconsider what the word "free" means in this case—because it also has the comically subversive secondary sense of lacking monetary price or charge. Since this wordplay is based on the two comically incongruous meanings of a single word, it is an antanaclastic pun.

The word "we" in both sentences of the aphorism can refer to people in general, but the pronoun is open to more than one interpretation, in the manner that Graeme Ritchie (2004, 165) calls semantic-referential ambiguity. It can be interpreted also as

a reference to the characteristic that playwrights Hwel and Shakespeare share with Pratchett: all of them are authors. In this latter interpretation, the author's voice becomes audible in the narrator's voice, and the aphorism now expresses Pratchett's comically unusual viewpoint on his own profession: only in dreams do authors work without payment. Thus, the aphorism deploys also, in addition to the antanaclasis and paraprosdokian, a bathetic shift of tone: from the elevated philosophizing of freedom in the first sentence to the authors' mundane and pragmatic monetary concerns in the second sentence.

Granny Weatherwax is typically represented as a character who, despite being intelligent, is so stern and serious-minded that she seems to lack any sense of humor. However, in the third *Discworld* novel, *Equal Rites* (1987), when she talks with Mrs. Whitlow, the head of Unseen University's housekeeping, asking her to employ Granny's young ward, Granny's laconic observation composes an antanaclastic pun.

> 'There are plenty of opportunities here for a young woman willing to work hard,' said Mrs Whitlow. 'Aye myself started as a maid, you know.'
>
> 'We all do,' said Granny vaguely. (*Equal Rites*, 191)

Mrs. Whitlow uses "maid" clearly in the sense "servant girl", but Granny Weatherwax's repartee intentionally ambiguates the word "maid" and turns it into a homonymic pun. There is similar deictic ambiguity in the word "we" as in the above-discussed *Wyrd Sisters* quote, but it does not make sense in the given context for Granny Weatherwax to state that "we all" start as servant girls. "Maid" can be disambiguated by assuming that, in the context of the dialogue, "we all" refers to women. Then it is easy to infer how Granny's statement that "we all start as maids" makes perfect sense if we give "maid" the comically subversive secondary sense "virgin". This, in turn, renders Mrs. Whitlow's statement that she started her career as a virgin a comically unusual declaration.

As Granny Weatherwax's intention does not appear to be to amuse Mrs. Whitlow with the pun, it can be conceived as wry sarcasm. Mrs. Whitlow is a comic character, whose inflated self-importance and lack of education prevents her from detecting the implied sarcasm, but for readers Granny's pun is amusing because it invites us to reinterpret Mrs. Whitlow's words in a comically unexpected way. Thus, Granny's witticism combines the antanaclastic pun with paraprosdokian, sarcasm, and dramatic irony.

In the following quote, from the seventh *Discworld* novel *Pyramids* (1989), the narrator conveys what the pharaoh of Djelibeybi thinks about pyramids. The

description includes two puns and emphasizes with comical hyperbole how impoverished his once prosperous country has nowadays become.

> Oh, Djelibeybi* had been great once, when upstarts like Tsort and Ephebe were just a bunch of nomads with their towels on their heads. All that remained of those great days was the ruinously-expensive palace, a few dusty ruins in the desert and—the pharaoh sighed—the pyramids. Always the pyramids.
>
> His ancestors had been keen on pyramids. The pharaoh wasn't. Pyramids had bankrupted the country, drained it drier than ever the river did. The only curse they could afford to put on a tomb these days was 'Bugger Off'.
>
> * Lit. 'Child of the Djel'. (*Pyramids*, 20)

The first pun in this quote is the name of the country, Djelibeybi, and the pun is foregrounded by explaining it's funny secondary sense in the footnote. Djelibeybi is the Discworld's equivalent of the ancient Egypt in our Roundworld, with its pharaohs and pyramids. The river Djel is similarly the Discworld's counterpart of the Nile, while Tsort and Ephebe are the Discworld's counterparts to the ancient city-states of Troy and Athens. The "beybi" part in the primary meaning of Djelibeybi, as the name of a country, is most likely designed to evoke connotations of Arabic words, although, as the footnote implies, it can also be conceived as a pun on the word "baby". Hence, the pun associates the name Djelibeybi with the meaning "Djel's baby", or "Child of the Djel" as it is translated in the footnote. This is a paronomastic pun that comically collides semantic associations through homophonic similarities between the punned words. The name Djelibeybi also includes an additional, more cryptic, paronomastic pun, which the narrator does not reveal to the reader. In the United Kingdom, there is a popular brand of sweets called Jelly Babies, which may have inspired Pratchett for naming the country Djelibeybi.[83]

Most of Pratchett's readers are likely to be familiar with the cultural cliché—recycled in horror films and adventure stories which deal with Egyptian mummies—that pyramids, as the tombs of ancient pharaohs, are typically protected by a terrible curse that falls upon tomb raiders. When the narrator plays with the homonymic ambiguity of the word "curse", the effect is not simply comical—it also parodically undermines the serious and frightening attitudes that the "mummy's curse" motif is typically associated with. As this antanaclastic pun compels us to reconsider what "curse" means in this sentence, the pun is also a paraprosdokian punch line for the joke which the narrator sets up in the preceding contemplation on how pyramids

[83] See the annotation page for *Pyramids* on Terry Pratchett and Discworld fan website, *The L-Space Web* <https://www.lspace.org/books/apf/pyramids.html> [accessed 15 January 2023].

have ruined Djelibeybi's wealth. *Pyramids* includes also the rather obvious antanaclastic pun on mummies, although in a different occasion from this curse pun. When the protagonist Teppic arrives at Ankh-Morpork to study in the Assassins' Guild, one of the new students is escorted there by his mother, and when another new student comments that he will not last long because he is still hanging on to his mummy, Teppic replies (p. 34): "We do, too, and we've lasted for thousands of years".

The interworldly cultural resonance between Djelibeybi and the ancient Egypt makes the Discworld country immediately familiar to the reader, while it also allows Pratchett to introduce comically unusual viewpoints on various familiar cultural phenomena, such as the mummy's curse. The pun in the description of a dreaming playwright, "Only in our dreams are we free", presents a comically unusual viewpoint on authors' work, while another antanaclasis, in "Aye myself started as a maid", offers the reader a comically unexpected perspective on Mrs. Whitlow's private life. All these unusual viewpoints, including the punning parody of mummy's curse, can be interpreted to contain rhetorical, critically evaluative, elements. The pun about authors can also be read as an example of Pratchett's self-depreciating humor, since it foregrounds authors' mundane motivations for creating great works of art.

As I have observed above in my analyses of Pratchett's antanaclastic puns, the humor in the passages where punning occurs in the *Discworld* novels tends to be hyperdetermined, as Pratchett combines several other comic devices with his punning. I have pointed out that Pratchett has combined paronomasia and antanaclasis with misspellings, misunderstandings, absurd logic, self-depreciating humor, paraprosdokian, bathos, parody, satire, sarcasm, comic dramatic irony, and hyperbole.

I have now reviewed the two most common types of puns, antanaclasis and paronomasia, but there are also other types of punning wordplay in the *Discworld* novels, such as juxtaposing the metaphorical and literal senses of words, which I will discuss below.

4.2.2 Colliding metaphorical and literal senses: he hated their guts

Metaphors, especially in idiomatic expressions, are used in everyday language so frequently that we are constantly speaking in metaphors without being aware of it. Juxtaposing metaphorical meanings with literal ones can be used for exposing such hidden or "dead" metaphors, while it also foregrounds the fact that metaphorical

expressions are not meant to be understood literally. Since literal interpretations of metaphors tend to create comic incongruities, puns that contrast the metaphorical and literal meanings of a specific word or phrase can produce a similar comic effect. This kind of puns are typically antanaclastic, and often polysemic rather than homonymic.[84]

The following antanaclastic pun appears in the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), and the punned word is used here in two different senses. Although these meanings are related, the contrast between the different senses is strong enough to create comic incongruity, and this humor is amplified by the fact that one of the contrasted senses is metaphorical while the other is literal.

> He sat up, and was surprised to find that while someone he was certainly inclined to think of as himself was sitting up, something very much like his body remained lying on the floor.
>
> He had always been quite attached to it although, he had to admit, this did not now seem to be the case. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 9)

It is a recurring narrative motif in the *Discworld* novels that when a character dies, the narrator describes how the ghost of this character slowly adjusts to the new situation of being dead. This typically involves a detachment of the spirit from the body, with the anthropomorphic Death's assistance. In this scene, King Verence I of Lancre has just been murdered, and the narrator puns on the two different but related senses of the idiom "being attached to something": first, in the non-comical primary sense that the king had been fond of his body and, second, in the comically subversive sense that the king's ghost is no longer spatially joined to his body. The first, explicit, occurrence of the word "attached" involves the metaphorical idea of emotional connectedness, while in the second, implied, occurrence the attachment is understood literally and spatially. Thus, although these two meanings are related, they are also distinctly different, which creates comic incongruity between the different senses.

Even though the observation that the king is no longer attached to his body is here attributed to King Verence, he is not in the novel represented as a particularly clever character, and thus this pun is more likely to demonstrate the narrator's than the character's wit. The idea that humans have an immortal soul that survives the death of one's body is not original, but it is somewhat unusual to describe the first minutes after death from the dead character's perspective. Such descriptions are a

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[84] In polysemes, the different senses of a word are related, while in homonyms they are unrelated (Zimmermann & Sternefeld 2013, 15–18).

recurring narrative motif in the *Discworld* novels, and it is because of these descriptions that the character Death appears in practically all the *Discworld* novels. The *Discworld* novels promote emphatically the idea that death, nor Death, is not something to be scared of—in the Discworld, death is only a brief transitional phase, after which the characters move on to find out what happens next. Fantasy allows Pratchett to portray this humorously unusual viewpoint on life after death without attaching it to any particular religion. What happens to the spirit afterwards depends on what the character has believed in while still being alive, but the fact that there is life after death does not depend on the character's beliefs.

In the third *Discworld* novel, *Equal Rites* (1987), a caravan of merchants has been attacked during the night by a party of gnolls, a variety of stone goblins, but mysterious and powerful magic protects the caravan. In the morning Gander, the trail boss of the caravan, finds the remains of the magically slayed gnolls. The narrator's description of this scene ends with a summary of Gander's attitude toward gnolls, which includes an antanaclastic pun that is based on an idiomatic phrase.

> Bits of gnolls hung from the nearby rocks, giving them a sort of jolly, festive air. Gander wasn't particularly sorry about that—gnolls liked to capture travellers and practise hospitality of the red-hot-knife-and-bludgeon kind—but he was nervous of being in the same area as Something that went through a dozen wiry and wickedly armed gnolls like a spoon through a lightly-boiled egg but left no tracks. […]
>
> Still, it was a relief to get away from that macabre sight. Gander considered that gnolls didn't look any better inside than out. He hated their guts. (*Equal Rites*, 144–145)

To "hate someone's guts" is a metaphorical idiom for expressing intense hatred. However, the immediate story context ambiguates the idiom's meaning by allowing also a comically literal interpretation. Thus, the non-comical primary meaning of the idiom expresses Gander's emotional and evaluative attitude, while the comical secondary sense transforms this expression into a pun. Gander is clearly not in a playful mood, so the punning can be more easily attributed to the humorous narrator.

The humor in this passage is hyperdetermined, since the narrator deploys several devices of vivid imagery and stylistic vigor, which on the one hand dramatize and intensify the description but on the other hand add humor to it. The narrator's suggestion that bits of gnolls hanging from rocks create "jolly, festive air" is clearly ironic. Also the formulation "hospitality of the red-hot-knife-and-bludgeon kind" is an ironic euphemism, which justifies Gander's strong emotional response, while it also rhetorically guides the reader's attitude toward the gnolls. Then there is the simile about a spoon going through a lightly-boiled egg, which adds tangibility to the

description. The antanaclastic pun about hating the gnolls' guts takes place in a short sentence that follows a couple of longer sentences; this kind of stylistic arrangement typically creates dramatic intensity by concentrating additional emphasis into the topic of the short sentence, but it can also be used for creating effective comic punch lines. In this particular case, it serves both of these purposes.

The backdrop for the following quote, from the fourteenth *Discworld* novel *Lords and Ladies* (1992), is that the members of Lancre Morris Men have spent an evening practicing a comic play near an old stone circle, and afterwards they stay there drinking homemade apple liquor until they pass out. In the next morning, when the men wake up hung-over, Jason Ogg recalls that his mother, a witch, has warned him that creatures from other worlds can use stone circles to reach out to the Discworld.

> 'We've slept out here all night,' said Jason uncertainly 'That's dangerous, that is.'
>
> 'You're right there, Mr Ogg,' said Carter, 'I think something went to the toilet in my ear.'
>
> 'I mean strange things can enter your head.'
>
> 'That's what I mean, too.' (*Lords and Ladies*, 204)

The phrase "enter your head" is in this dialogue given two distinctly different, although related, senses. In Jason Ogg's speech, entering someone's head is metaphorical and means mental influence and control, supernatural possession, while for Carter it literally means that something physically enters the ear canal. They also refer to very different kinds of dangers and "strange things", which weaves a series of comic misunderstandings into the dialogue. Thus, there is antanaclastic punning on the phrase "enter your head", and also semantic-referential ambiguity in the phrases "that's dangerous" and "strange things". The resulting juxtaposition of the two different scenarios where strange and dangerous things enter your head is comically incongruous. Representing the embarrassing but essentially harmless danger after the non-comical primary meaning of supernatural danger makes Carter's literal secondary meanings comical by creating bathetic anticlimaxes.

These examples demonstrate that even when the punned senses are closely related, they can create comic incongruities when one of the punned meanings is metaphorical and the other literal. This type of wordplay combines punning with the comic strategy of interpreting metaphors literally. In some examples that I have discussed above, the metaphorical meaning of the pun is introduced first and the literal sense later. However, in the "he hated their guts" pun the literal sense is introduced before the metaphorical, and it does not make the pun less amusing. This

suggests that metaphorical readings of statements that are intended to be understood literally can sometimes be just as funny as literal readings of metaphors.

I have pointed out above that the humor in the "he hated their guts" pun is hyperdetermined, since it succinctly concludes the sentiment toward gnolls that has been set up in the preceding passage by deploying verbal irony and a comic euphemism, and that punning on the phrase "strange things can enter your head" similarly includes hyperdetermined humor, because it adds bathos to the comic ambiguities. Both of these punning phrases also express the character's emotional response and rhetorical evaluation, which guides the reader to adopt a similar critical attitude toward gnolls and the strange things that can enter your head. The "he had always been quite attached to his body" pun epitomizes Pratchett's humorously unusual perspective on life after death, where the first moments after the character's death are represented from the dead character's point of view.

4.2.3 Portmanteau puns: sexual morrisment

When two words are fused into one, so that they form a single word that is new and unique, this resulting word is called a portmanteau word (Baldick 2001, 200). In Lewis Carroll's novel *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871),[85] Humpty Dumpty uses the term when he disambiguates for Alice an obscure word from the poem "Jabberwocky":

> "Well, '*slithy*' means 'lithe and slimy'. 'Lithe' is the same as 'active'. You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word." (Chapter 6)

Humor theorists typically conceive portmanteau words as a type of pun. Derek Attridge (1988, 144) categorizes portmanteaux into the vacant slot between puns and verbal echoes of various kinds, such as rhyme, alliteration, and assonance. He points out that while the dual meaning of puns normally depends on a particular kind of context, a "carefully constructed linguistic envelope", to be activated, the portmanteau word signals its operation independently of context, and "in a completely inescapable way" which does not allow readers to ignore it. This seems to be a unique feature that separates portmanteau puns from other modes of punning.

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[85] Carroll deploys various kinds of puns abundantly in both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass*.

James Geary comments on Heinrich Heine's portmanteau pun, which appears in "The Baths of Lucca" (1929):

> In condensing "famillionaire" from "familiar" and "millionaire", Heine fused two definitions into a new double meaning, a meaning all the more striking for having been distilled from such disparate sources. The combination makes two things seen together seem quite strange that are, when regarded apart, seen as quite commonplace. (Geary 2019, 12)

Similar defamiliarization and revealing previously unseen associations via punning juxtapositions act as the source of humor also in Pratchett's portmanteau puns.

In the fourteenth *Discworld* novel, *Lords and Ladies* (1992), the dwarf Casanunda, who boasts to be the second greatest lover in the world, shares a flight on a broomstick with one of the witch protagonists, Nanny Ogg. In a footnote, the narrator offers a punning comment on what Nanny Ogg says about broomsticks.

> '[…] Anyway,' she nudged Casanunda, 'you should be right at home on one of these. Magrat says a broomstick is one of them sexual metaphor things.'*
>
> * Although this is a phallusy. (*Lords and Ladies*, 299)

Casanunda's name can be conceived both as a paronomasia and a portmanteau pun, since while it clearly alludes to Casanova, it merges the sound of the word "under" with this famous name as a subtle jest about the dwarf's size. The word "phallusy" in the footnote is another paranomastic pun, since the similarity of sounds guides us to associate "phallusy" with both "phallus" and "fallacy". In the "phallusy" pun, Pratchett takes two words and merges them into a new coinage, a nonce word that refers to an obsession with spotting phallic symbolism everywhere. Thus, this merging of two similar-sounding words into a new word creates a portmanteau pun, which expresses a comically unusual viewpoint on sexual symbolism.

Despite the narrator's statement in the above quote, folkloristic practices in the Discworld do seem to frequently involve both sexual symbolism and Morris dancing. In the following dialogue, also from *Lords and Ladies*, the motif of sexual symbolism is elaborated with a pun that occurs in a character's speech.

> 'What was that dance your Jason and his men did when they'd got drunk?' said Granny.
>
> 'It's the Lancre Stick and Bucket Dance, Esme.'
>
> 'It's legal, is it?'

> 'Technically they shouldn't do it when there's women present,' said Nanny. 'Otherwise it's sexual morrisment.' (*Lords and Ladies*, 370)

The sexual symbolism of stick and bucket should be obvious to those readers who are familiar with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical method of interpreting dreams, although the symbolism itself of course precedes Freud and can be observed in pagan fertility rituals. For readers who are not familiar with fertility rites or Freud's theories, the symbolism of the Lancre Stick and Bucket Dance may pass unnoticed, and then also the full meaning of Nanny Ogg's pun may remain obscure.

Nanny Ogg's pun may at first glance appear to be similar to simple and strained "bad puns", where a grammatically incorrect word is added to a sentence for the sole reason that it refers to the topic of discussion (Morreall 1983, 70). However, the phrase "sexual harassment" is common in the English language, and readers can easily detect the echo of this phrase behind the less familiar phrase "sexual morrisment". Thus, the word "morrisment" can be disambiguated as a fusion of "Morris", or "Morris Men", and "harassment". Nanny Ogg's pun differs from bad puns because, while strained puns play with words rather than with ideas, this portmanteau pun expresses the comically unusual perspective that it is possible to view Morris dancing as sexual harassment—or, at least, this appears to be the case with the Lancre Stick and Bucket Dance.

Since Morris dancing is a familiar folkloristic practice in England, the Lancre Stick and Bucket Dance adds interworldly cultural resonance to *Lords and Ladies*, and thus allows Pratchett to represent a familiar cultural phenomenon from a humorously unusual viewpoint, while it also makes the fantasy world feel more familiar to those readers who have seen people dance Morris. Nevertheless, I would suspect that the apparent sexual symbolism of the Lancre Stick and Bucket Dance is a comical and unique feature of the Discworld, and that it is not commonly associated with Morris dancing in England. Later in the novel, Morris dancing is associated with another unique feature when the dancers apply the Stick and Bucket Dance as a method of fighting against the elves. Together, these Discworld-specific features represent Morris dancing rhetorically and evaluatively, in a positive light, by making it a more comical, and perhaps also more interesting, version of the Morris dancing of our Roundworld.

Another portmanteau word, used and disambiguated by characters in their dialogue, appears in the fifth *Discworld* novel, *Sourcery* (1988). The title *Sourcery* is also a portmanteau pun, since an exceptionally powerful wizard in the Discworld can become a sourcerer, the source of sorcery.

> 'What exactly is the Apocralypse?'
>
> Rincewind hesitated. 'Well', he said, 'it's the end of the world. Sort of.'
>
> 'Sort of? *Sort of* the end of the world? You mean we won't be certain? We'll look around and say "Pardon me, did you hear something?"?'
>
> 'It's just that no two seers have ever agreed about it. There have been all kinds of vague predictions. Quite mad, some of them. So it was called the Apocralypse.' He looked embarrassed.
>
> 'It's a sort of apocryphal Apocalypse. A kind of pun, you see.'
>
> 'Not very good.'
>
> 'No. I suppose not.'*
>
> * Wizards' taste in the matters of puns are about the same as their taste in glittery objects. (*Sourcery*, 80)

As Rincewind has already disambiguated the pun, and the other interlocutor in the dialogue—Conina the Hairdresser, artist of theft and daughter of Cohen the Barbarian—has evaluated it, there is not much left for me to add. The narrator joins the discussion in the footnote and seems to agree with Conina's judgement about the quality of the pun. Hence, Pratchett cleverly dodges the responsibility for the "not very good" pun by making the narrator to blame wizards for its poor quality, although the pun has, of course, in fact been devised by Pratchett. However, this pun plays with ideas as well as on words, and thus I think that it is actually a pretty clever pun, which introduces a satirical and comically unusual viewpoint on both the concept of apocalypse and the religious revelations about it.

As I have pointed out above, puns are not always intended to be comical. The portmanteau words in "Jabberwocky" are not particularly amusing, and neither is the portmanteau pun in the title *Sourcery*. Humor in puns is typically based on comic incongruity of the colliding senses which the similarity of sounds ties together. The "Apocralypse" pun is funny because the idea of apocryphalness destabilizes the unconditional nature of Apocalypse, making it a "sort of" end of the world, as Rincewind explains. In a similar manner, the "phallusy" and "sexual morrisment" portmanteaux merge senses that are comically incongruous, while they also introduce fresh and unusual perspectives on sexual symbolism and Morris dancing.

Detecting portmanteaux is not difficult, although their disambiguation can sometimes be. The portmanteau pun in "Jabberwocky" is cryptic, and both Alice and the reader need Humpty Dumpty's disambiguation to realize the pun's cleverness. Also "Apocralypse" is an obscure word before Rincewind decodes and

disambiguates it. The novel title *Sourcery* is initially obscure, but as the events in the novel unravel, the meaning of this pun becomes obvious. Some portmanteaux are considerably easier to disambiguate, such as "phallusy", and "sexual morrisment".

I have discussed above several kinds of puns that can be found in the *Discworld* novels: paronomasia, antanaclasis, playing with the metaphorical and literal meanings of words, and portmanteau puns. Another type of wordplay is the bilingual pun, which I will discuss next.

4.2.4 Bilingual puns: FABRICATI DIEM, PVNC

There are numerous ways in which one can combine two or more languages in punning, and thus it is not easy to pin down this type of punning with a pithy definition. Defying this difficulty, linguist Graeme Ritchie (2004, 140) attempts to formulate a general definition of bilingual puns: "while made partly or wholly in one language, [the bilingual pun] depends on phonetic similarity to a phrase in another language". Another linguist, Walter Nash (1985, 137), is more detailed in his definition: "The essence of the bilingual joke is that a foreign word is made to bear the sense of an English word, whether by homophonic accident, by homonymic/semantic contrivance […], or by literal translation." Reviewing Pratchett's bilingual puns in the light of these definitions, I find that they often tend to be mistranslations, and some, although not all, of them are based on homophonic or paronymic resemblances between two languages.

In the eleventh *Discworld* novel, *Reaper Man* (1991), the "wild idea" of a shopping mall has landed on the Discworld, represented as an alien and predatory life form. When the wizards of Unseen University prepare to battle against the shopping mall's trolleys, the Dean recalls the warrior ethos of Counter-weight Continent—which is the Discworld's equivalent of our Roundworld's ancient China and Japan—and a comic misunderstanding of foreign words in the wizards' dialogue gives rise to a bilingual pun.

> He removed his hat, something a wizard doesn't ordinarily do unless he's about to pull something out of it, and handed it to the Bursar. Then he tore a thin strip off the bottom of his robe, held it dramatically in both hands, and tied it around his forehead.
>
> 'It's part of the ethos,' he said, in answer to their penetratingly unspoken question. 'That's what the warriors on the Counter-weight Continent do before they go into battle. And you have to shout —' He tried to remember some far-off reading. '— er, bonsai. Yes. Bonsai!'

> '*I* thought that meant chopping bits off trees to make them small,' said the Senior Wrangler.
>
> The Dean hesitated. He wasn't too sure himself, if it came to it. But a good wizard never let uncertainty stand in his way.
>
> 'No, it's definitely got to be bonsai,' he said. He considered it some more and then brightened up. 'On account of it all being part of bushido. Like … small trees. Bush-i-do. Yeah. Makes sense, when you think about it.' (*Reaper Man*, 246)

Using "bonsai" as a battle cry is a funny mistake, since the actual Japanese battle cry is "banzai"[86], while the Japanese word "bonsai" refers to the peaceful cultural practice of growing miniature trees. As "bonsai" and "banzai" resemble each other in sound, the Dean's mistaken word choice produces an unintended paronomastic pun, where the sense of the pun's substituted word is comically incongruous with the context where it is used.

After this paronomastic punning in a foreign language, a bilingual pun is constructed when the Dean tries to argue for his initial word choice, using the Japanese word "bushido"[87] in a dissected form, "bush-i-do", which mistranslates "bushido" as "I make bushes". This wordplay is not an actual translation—instead, the mistranslation results from the fact that the sound of the Japanese word resembles the sounds of some English words.[88] Consequently, this paronomastic punning dissects the Japanese word into three English words, which provide a comical secondary meaning that collides with the non-comical primary sense of the Japanese word. When the Dean argues how bonsai can be associated with bushido, absurd logic is added to the humor of this extended punning. This hyperdetermined humor is furthermore enhanced by comic dramatic irony, where Pratchett invites the reader to observe the Dean's ignorance. Similar comic dramatic irony can typically be found in all bilingual puns that are based on a character's unintended mistranslation.

In the following quote, from the fourteenth *Discworld* novel *Lords and Ladies* (1992), Casanunda, the world's second greatest lover, hones his skills in the art of seduction by arranging a romantic dinner at a small restaurant for himself and one of the witch protagonists, Nanny Ogg, which in turn gives the witch a chance to demonstrate her skills in foreign lingo.

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[86] In our Roundworld, "banzai" is the Japanese word for "ten thousand years", and when it is used as a battle cry, it means something akin to "Long live the Emperor".

[87] In our Roundworld, bushido is the warrior ethos of the Japanese samurai, "the way of the warrior".

[88] Or, rather, they resemble sounds of some Morporkian words, since Morporkian, which is the language of Ankh-Morpork, uncannily resembles English.

> 'This is damn good wine,' she said, picking up another bottle. 'What did you say it's called?' She peered at the label. 'Chateau Maison? Chat-eau … that's foreign for cat's water, you know, but that's only their way, I know it ain't real cat's water. Real cat's water is sharper.' (*Lords and Ladies*, 243)

Although the "chat-eau" pun bears some similarity with the "bush-i-do" pun, because in both cases a single foreign word is transformed into other words by using dissection, it is somewhat different since while the comic sense of "bush-i-do" does not come from actual Japanese-English translation, in this quote the comical secondary sense results from the correct French-English translations of "chat" and "eau". However, "cat's water" is obviously a comic mistranslation of "chateau".[89] As is the case with "bush-i-do", also here the punning is unintended inside the story world, but it becomes an intended paronomastic pun when we join the authorial audience. In fact, Nanny Ogg's mistranslation creates a multi-layered wordplay, since she clearly uses "cat's water" as a euphemism for cat's urine—if she meant cat's drinking water, she probably would not have mentioned its sharp taste. Of course, inferring how Nanny Ogg can know what real cat's urine tastes like brings additional humor to the wordplay.

The following quote—from the eighth *Discworld* novel *Guards! Guards!* (1989)—describes the facade of the City Watch's Watch House in Ankh-Morpork and combines bilingual punning and parody with mistranslation.

> He reached the Watch House. It was an ancient and surprisingly large building, wedged between a tannery and a tailor who made suspicious leather goods. It must have been quite imposing once, but quite a lot of it was now uninhabitable and patrolled only by owls and rats. Over the door a motto in the ancient tongue of the city was now almost eroded by time and grime and lichen, but could just be made out:
>
> FABRICATI DIEM, PVNC
>
> It translated—according to Sergeant Colon, who had served in foreign parts and considered himself an expert on languages—as 'To Protect and to Serve'. (*Guards! Guards!*, 51)

The motto over the Watch House front door is told to be in the ancient tongue of Ankh-Morpork. This ancient language is elsewhere in the *Discworld* novels called Latatian, which clearly resembles our Roundworld's Latin. As is the case with Latin, it appears that also Latatian is often used by people who have only learned fragments

[89] "Chateau", "chat", and "eau" are French words, but inside the story world they are Quimian words. Quirm is the Discworld's equivalent of France, and consequently the Quirmian language appears to be indistinguishable from French.

of it. The resulting poor imitations of Latin are called "dog Latin", and thus the corresponding imitations of Latatian could perhaps be called "dog Latatian"—although this term is not used in the *Discworld* novels. When it is used intentionally, both dog Latin and its Discworld equivalent can be conceived as an erudite type of bilingual punning, which can be fully appreciated only by people who can recognize the difference between Latin and dog Latin.

Aside from the facetious mention of "suspicious leather goods", the description that precedes the motto is serious in tone; this seriousness functions as a setup that makes the motto's comic effect unexpected, and thus more striking. The humor in the motto is hyperdetermined, and one of its comic ingredients is that the language used in the motto appears to be dog Latatian, which makes it bilingual punning. Quotes in Latin typically contain dignified adages, but in this case there is nothing dignified in the dog Latatian phrase, because it appears to be a literal translation of the memorable phrase "Make my day, punk" from the Dirty Harry films, starred by Clint Eastwood. Using this phrase as the motto of the City Watch can be conceived as an appreciative parody since, as Margaret Rose (1995, 51–52) points out, parodies do not necessarily have to be critical toward their targets. Although FABRICATI DIEM, PVNC imitates Latin, or Latatian, on the level of superficial appearance, the phrase itself is clearly dog Latatian, because it does not make any grammatical sense unless one knows the subtext. "Diem" is a word that is familiar for many people from the Latin adage "carpe diem", "seize the day". "Fabricate" is an English word that is etymologically derived from Latin, and thus it sounds more Latatian than "make", and in this motto also its conjugation imitates the Latin languages. "Pvnc" imitates Latin by substituting "v" for "u", and the motto is written in capitals, which was the way the ancient Romans wrote Latin.

Sergeant Colon's translation adds comedy to this combination of an intertextual allusion and bilingual dog Latin punning, since it is an obvious mistranslation that adds a comical secondary sense to the motto. This mistranslation brings forth another intertextual allusion—it echoes the motto of Los Angeles Police Department, which has been made familiar to many viewers by various American television series. Even though Colon's translation is clearly a mistranslation, it is in a sense apt in this context because the City Watch is the police force of Ankh-Morpork. Also Dirty Harry is a police officer, although his threatening phrase projects a considerably tougher attitude toward criminals than the lofty LAPD motto. Juxtaposing the mottoes of these two police forces makes the City Watch motto funny, while it can also be interpreted as a parody of the LAPD motto. Humor tends to be funnier when we are invited to participate in its construction, and here

Pratchett leaves it for the reader to disambiguate the bilingual punning and to thus actualize its hidden comical meanings.

In addition to bilingual punning, all the examples that I have analyzed above include comic dramatic irony that results from mistranslations, and they also include interworldly cultural resonance that allows Pratchett to display familiar cultural phenomena from a humorously unusual perspective. The bonsai/banzai and bushido/bush-i-do puns introduce an unusual viewpoint on Japanese bushido, while the chateau/chat-eau pun does the same for romantic dinners and fine wines, and the FABRICATI DIEM, PVNC pun for the lofty mottoes of police departments.

There are also kinds of wordplay in the *Discworld* novels that do not fit easily into the above-discussed categories of punning, and next I will survey briefly some of these less usual witticisms: polyptoton, a punctuation jest, a typographic jest, and a cinematic crosscut jest.

4.2.5 Less usual wordplay: inserting the significant comma

A piece of dialogue in the seventh *Discworld* novel, *Pyramids* (1989), includes wordplay that is sustained and extended through several replies. The event that precedes this dialogue and directly provokes it is that Teppic, the new king of Djelibeybi, has insisted on shaking hands with a stonemason without knowing that it is a sacrilege for the common people to touch the pharaoh, a living god. Consequently, the high priest Dios has ordered that the stonemason's hand must be cut off.

> 'It will not be done,' Teppic said. 'I am the king. I forbid it to be done, do you understand?'
>
> Dios bowed. […]
>
> 'Your wish will certainly be done, O fountain of all wisdom. Although, of course, the man himself may take matters into, if you will excuse me, his own hands.'
>
> 'What do you mean?' snapped Teppic.
>
> 'Sire, if his colleagues had not stopped him he would have done it himself. With a chisel, I understand.'
>
> Teppic stared at him and thought, I am a stranger in a familiar land.
>
> 'I see,' he said eventually.
>
> He thought a little further.

> 'Then the—operation is to be done with all care, and the man is to be given a pension afterwards, d'you see?'
>
> 'As you wish, sire.'
>
> 'A proper one, too.'
>
> 'Indeed, sire. A golden handshake, sire,' said Dios impassively.
>
> 'And perhaps we can find him some light job around the palace?'
>
> 'As a one-handed stonemason, sire?' Dios's left eyebrow arched a fraction.
>
> 'As whatever, Dios.'
>
> 'Certainly, sire. As you wish. I will undertake to see if we are currently short-handed in any department.' (*Pyramids*, 135–136)

The comic dialogue foregrounds a subtle tension between the traditionalist high priest and the liberal-minded new pharaoh. Although Dios consents to the pharaoh's direct order, his continuous wordplay reveals his mocking attitude. Dios reiterates the word "hand" in various forms: "take matters into his own hands", "golden handshake", and "short-handed". This persistent reiteration of the word in different forms and functions constructs the rhetorical figure called *polyptoton*. Brian Vickers (2002, 417) defines polyptoton as "repeating a word in a different form" and Arthur Quinn (1993, 103) as "repetition of the same word or root in different grammatical functions or forms". The variation of forms in polyptoton is typically achieved via inflection, but here the word "hand" is varied by using it in different idiomatic phrases.

The absurdity of this incident, where a pious character wants to maim himself as a self-inflicted penalty for sacrilege, is foregrounded by Teppic's incredulous emotional response when he suddenly finds himself as a "stranger in a familiar land". This phrase is a playful allusion to the title of Robert A. Heinlein's science fiction novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961).[90] The absurd incident can be here interpreted as satire of religious zealotry, while it also creates a comically unusual viewpoint on religious fanaticism.

The same novel includes also a rather cryptic and unusual type of wordplay, which can perhaps be described as a punctuation jest. In the following quote, the narrator describes a situation where Teppic and two of his classmates have been out on the town, celebrating their graduation from the Assassins' Guild. As the night begins to

[90] This title, in turn, is a quote from the Book of Exodus in the King James Bible.

turn into morning and the drunken assassins cross the Shades, the disreputable old town of Ankh-Morpork, sinister men start following them with murderous intent.

> Broadly, therefore, the three even now lurching across the deserted planks of the Brass Bridge were dead drunk assassins and the men behind them were bent on inserting the significant comma. (*Pyramids*, 65)

The modifier "significant" suggests that the comma, when inserted, changes the meaning of a sentence. To disambiguate this punctuation jest, we first need to figure out that the narrator's statement refers to his own discourse—in other words, the lurking robbers are planning to do something that, figuratively, inserts a significant comma into the narrator's sentence. Inserting a comma after the word "dead" changes the meaning of the idiomatic phrase "dead drunk" into "dead and drunk".[91] Hence, the phrase "inserting the significant comma" gets a comically subversive secondary sense when it turns out to be a punning euphemism for murder. The crypticness of this punctuation jest invites the reader to participate in the construction of its comic meaning.

Mort, the eponymous protagonist of the fourth *Discworld* novel *Mort* (1987), manages to escape robbers in the following quote, because his job as Death's apprentice has given him the ability to step through walls. The subsequent exclamations by the surprised robbers include an unusual typographic jest.

> 'I don't think I'm due to die,' said Mort, backing away. 'I'm sure I would have been told.'
>
> 'Yeah,' said the thief, who was getting fed up with this. 'Yeah, well, you have been, haven't you? Great steaming elephant turds!'
>
> Mort had just stepped backwards again. Through a wall.
>
> The leading thief glared at the solid stone that had swallowed Mort, and then threw down his knife.
>
> 'Well, - - - - me,' he said. 'A - - - - ing wizard. I hate - - - - ing wizards!'
>
> 'You shouldn't - - - - them, then,' muttered one of his henchmen, effortlessly pronouncing a row of dashes. (*Mort*, 63)

There are several comic elements in this quote, which make its humor hyperdetermined. The first comic element is the thief's comically hyperbolic

[91] Another punctuation jest can be found in the title of Lynne Truss's punctuation guide, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* (2003), where a dry factual statement about the panda's eating habits has been transformed into a dramatic and action-packed micro-narrative simply by adding a significant comma.

expletive, when he sees Mort stepping through the wall. Then there is the henchman's witty repartee, when he introduces a comically unexpected perspective by interpreting the chief thief's metaphorical curse word literally, in the sense that the chief thief hates having sexual intercourse with wizards. And, finally, the narrator introduces another humorously unexpected viewpoint by suggesting that the rows of dashes in the thieves' speeches are, in this particular case, not a typographic convention that is used for censoring curse words. Both of these wordplays, the henchman's punning repartee and the narrator's typographic jest, are funny because they play with the reader's expectations, which depend on the conventions of language use—namely that, as curse words, "fuck" and "fucking" should not be understood literally and that these words are often censored by representing them euphemistically with a row of dashes or asterisks. The comedy works here in a similar manner as in the literal readings of metaphors and metaphorical idioms, where we initially understand something in the metaphorical sense but subsequently realize that it is possible to understand the same expression also in a literal sense, and this collision of senses creates comic incongruity.

In the *Discworld* novels, which lack traditional chapters, only an empty line typically separates the ending of one scene from the beginning of the next one. The following quote, also from *Mort*, demonstrates an unusual type of wordplay which this technique of switching between the scenes enables. The quote begins with a scene where Mort has disrupted history and divided reality by saving Princess Keli, who was destined to become assassinated. Consequently, her subjects live in a reality where the princess has died and tend to ignore all the evidence that she still exists. In an effort to solve this problem, Keli commands a wizard to help her.

> 'You've just been appointed Royal Recogniser.'
>
> 'Oh. What does that entail, exactly?'
>
> 'You're going to remind everyone I'm alive. It's very simple. There's three square meals a day and your laundry done. Step lively, man.'
>
> 'Royal?'
>
> 'You're a wizard. I think there's something you ought to know,' said the princess.
>
> THERE IS? said Death.
>
> (That was a cinematic trick adapted for print. Death wasn't talking to the princess. He was actually in his study, talking to Mort. But it was quite effective, wasn't it? It's

> probably called a fast dissolve, or a crosscut/zoom. Or something. An industry where a senior technician is called a Best Boy might call it anything.) (*Mort*, 116)

As the narrator explains, Pratchett's cinematic trick makes it appear to the reader as if Death were responding to Princess Keli's comment that ends the previous scene, although this is not actually the case. Here the narrator's informal aside to the reader is placed inside parenthesis in the main text, although usually this kind of comic asides are presented in footnotes. Similar crosscuts—alternating between scenes that happen simultaneously but in different locations—appear frequently in cinema and television programs, although they are not usually deployed for confusing the audience for comic purposes, as Pratchett does above. Reproducing cinematic tricks and special effects in written text is one of Pratchett's penchants, and this cinematic crosscut jest is one of the numerous unusual wordplays in the *Discworld* novels that demonstrate the versatility and imaginativeness of Terry Pratchett's witcraft.

I have suggested above that there are two basic types of puns, paronomasia and antanaclasis, and that most other types of puns can be conceived as their variations. In addition to analyzing some paronomastic and antanaclastic puns from the *Discworld* novels, I have also discussed other types of wordplay: colliding metaphorical and literal senses, portmanteau puns, bilingual puns, and some unusual types of wordplay. Also the titles of the *Discworld* novels can occasionally include puns, such as *Equal Rites* (antanaclasis), *Sourcery* (portmanteau pun), *Witches Abroad* (colliding metaphorical and literal senses), and *Mort* (bilingual pun).

In addition, I have pointed out that while intended puns demonstrate the speaker's cleverness and playfulness, unintended puns demonstrate lack of wit. Unintended puns are often introduced by characters' misspellings, misunderstandings, or mistranslations, which tend to create comic dramatic irony.

For the purpose of analyzing puns, it is helpful to distinguish the pun's non-comical primary sense from the comical secondary sense, and I have argued above that the pun's comically subversive secondary sense often introduces a comically unusual viewpoint on the more conventional perspective, which is expressed by the non-comical primary meaning. The switch from the conventional viewpoint to a comically unusual one is revealed to the reader when we disambiguate puns. In many of the puns that I have studied above this switch of viewpoint involves bathos. I have also pointed out above that puns tend to be funnier when their disambiguation requires some inference from the audience, because this invites the audience to participate in the construction of the pun's comic meaning.

Also comic euphemisms can be conceived as a type of wordplay, although they function in a different way and for different purpose than puns. Next, I will discuss

the special way that comic euphemisms conceal things which are disagreeable, offensive, or embarrassing.

4.3 Euphemisms: hiding unseemly things behind a thin veil

Euphemism, one of the better-known rhetorical figures, is a specific mode of circumlocution, and definitions of euphemism can be found in most dictionaries. In their glossary of literary terms, M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham not only offer the standard definition of euphemism, but they also list some topics that are typically discussed using euphemistic expressions:

> An inoffensive expression used in place of a blunt one that is felt to be disagreeable or embarrassing. Euphemisms occur frequently with reference to such subjects as religion ("Gosh darn!" for "God damn!"), death ("pass away" instead of "die"), bodily functions ("comfort station" instead of "toilet"), and sex ("to sleep with" instead of "to have sexual intercourse with"). (Abrams & Harpham 2009, 104–105)

R. W. Holder's extensive dictionary of euphemisms in the English language, *How Not To Say What You Mean* (2002), includes a thematic index, which lists no less than seventy topics—including abortion, age, bankruptcy, bribery, charity, cheating, cosmetics, cowardice, drunkenness, gambling, mental illness, obesity, police, pregnancy, prison, race, stealing, vulgarisms, and warfare. About one third of Holder's topics can be placed under the four categories that Abrams and Harpham mention, and although Holder's long list is schematic and hardly exhaustive, the unifying theme seems to be that we use tactful euphemisms for discussing matters that people may find disagreeable and emotionally disturbing: embarrassing, frightening, or offending.

Armin Burkhardt observes that although all euphemisms share the same purpose of hiding something disagreeable, this hiding can serve two rhetorically different purposes:

> Euphemisms are expressions that are used to hide unwelcome associations. A "veiling" and a "concealing" subfunction must be distinguished. While the former are used in the realm of taboo and may have a moral foundation, the latter must be taken as ways of deliberate deception in public discourse. (Burkhardt 2010b, 369)

Thus, while the more evident euphemisms only aim to hide unwelcome associations behind a transparent veil of tactfulness, subtler euphemisms are designed to deliberately deceive the audience by concealing the unpleasant associations

altogether. Burkhardt points out that there are various kinds of deceptive euphemisms that are commonly used for rhetorical purposes, in order to make disagreeable things seem agreeable:

> Euphemisms, which are not untypical for political language in particular, can be synecdochical, metonymical or metaphorical. They are synecdochical when speakers avoid the appropriate word by using abstract generic terms which have less semantic features, such as *device* or *system* for 'weapon', *flying aircraft* for 'missile', or *price adjustment* for 'price increase'. Euphemisms are metonymical when they excessively focus on secondary aspects within the relevant frames, such as calling the dismissal of workers as *setting* them *free* or the draining of poisonous chemicals into the high sea as *dumping*. And finally, euphemisms are metaphorical when they play down a danger by giving a harmless analogy, e.g. by speaking of an *atomic volcano* or of an *industrial* or *wastedisposal park*. (Burkhardt 2010a, 256)

This tripartite taxonomy—synecdochical, metonymical, and metaphorical euphemisms—can be found not only in the subtle euphemisms of political language, but also in the less subtle euphemisms which are designed to veil rather than conceal the unpleasant associations. Euphemisms can also be based on other rhetorical figures than these three tropes which Burkhardt points out, as I will demonstrate below in my analyses of Pratchett's comic euphemisms.

Neither Abrams and Harpham nor Burkhardt mention that the euphemism can be deployed as a comic device. Also, rather curiously, Salvatore Attardo's extensive *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (2014a) lacks an article dedicated to comic euphemisms, although many of its articles point out that scatology and sex are frequent topics in humor. This perhaps suggests that euphemistic humor has been studied more often by psychologists than by linguists. Since comic euphemisms are typically deployed to palliate taboo topics, the Freudian explanation of what makes jokes funny seems to be especially well suited for analyzing comic euphemisms. According to Freud's (1960) theory, jokes and comic wit act as a psychological pressure valve that allows us to release and experience socially unacceptable emotions which we would normally repress. Although Freud's analysis of verbal wit is focused on sexual pleasure and aggression, discussing such embarrassing bodily functions as feces and flatulence indirectly, via comic euphemisms, can also be considered to give us pleasure that results from releasing repressed emotions.

I will spend most of this chapter analyzing Pratchett's comic euphemisms for excrement and sex, although at the end of the chapter I will also briefly discuss a dialogue where Pratchett satirizes the deceptive use of euphemisms in political rhetoric.

4.3.1 Excrement: a short sharp shower of—

In the fourteenth *Discworld* novel, *Lords and Ladies* (1992), an embassy of the wizards from Unseen University of Ankh-Morpork travel to the small kingdom of Lancre in order to attend its royal wedding. When the coach wagon arrives at its destination, a young and nerdy wizard named Ponder Stibbons reacts to his rural surroundings with notably different attitude than Archchancellor Ridcully, who advocates hunting, fishing, and healthy outdoor life.

> Ridcully leapt out of the coach and took a deep, theatrical breath.
>
> 'Can't you smell that?' he said. 'That's real fresh mountain air, that is.' He thumped his chest.
>
> 'I've just trodden in something rural,' said Ponder. (*Lords and Ladies*, 197)

The euphemism "something rural" in Ponder's speech is not aimed at concealing the fact that he has stepped into something unpleasant. Rather, Ponder uses the euphemism to tactfully veil the exact nature of this unpleasant thing, although common cultural knowledge allows the reader to infer that it is most likely animal dung. Synecdoche is the rhetorical figure of substituting one word with another, based on the relationship between a part and the whole (Lanham 1991, 148), and since dung is a natural part of rural landscape, Ponder's circumlocutious expression can be described as a synecdochical euphemism.

The comedy of this euphemism arises from the situation and the order of presentation rather than from witty wordplay. The quoted passage builds antithetical contrast between Ridcully's and Ponder's attitudes. Ridcully's words manifest his appreciation of the rural atmosphere, while Ponder disapproves it. The reader may also suspect that the smell which Ridcully enthusiastically interprets as "real fresh mountain air" might in fact originate from the unpleasant rural thing that Ponder treads in. Ridcully's attitude represents the conventional idea of a pastoral idyll, against which Ponder's naturalistic observation constructs a comically unusual viewpoint. The order of presentation is also significant for the humor of the dialogue—this authorial design plays with the reader's expectations by building a bathetic anticlimax when Ridcully's elevating comment is immediately followed by Ponder's degrading comment. As we need to figure out what treading in something rural actually means in this particular case, the euphemism invites the reader to participate in the construction of the comic bathos.

In discussing the history of satire, Conal Condren (2014, 663) has observed that "[s]catological humor, quite conventional between the 16th and 18th centuries as a

medium for satiric wit and denigration, fell from favor and went into relative disuse during the 19th century". This may well be true as far as satiric wit is concerned, but I suspect that scatological humor can never really go out of fashion as long as we find defecation embarrassing. From a Freudian perspective, humor is a mechanism that allows people to release feelings that are not socially acceptable, such as sexuality and aggression (Hess Zimmermann 2014, 125). Consequently, we can release repressed emotions, and experience the pleasure that results from this releasing, by discussing taboo topics indirectly, via comic euphemisms. A Freudian interpretation of the above quote would point out that the comic pleasure of Ponder's embarrassing mishap results partly from the fact that it allows us to release our repressed aggression, and that we get similar aggressive pleasure when Ridcully's idealistic praise of rural life is immediately degraded by Ponder's naturalistic observation.

In the twelfth *Discworld* novel, *Witches Abroad* (1991), the three witch protagonists travel abroad, from the small rural kingdom of Lancre to the faraway city of Genua, where they are impressed by the shining cleanness of the city.

> It was certainly the cleanest place they'd ever seen. Even the cobblestones had a polished look.
>
> 'You could eat your tea off the street,' said Nanny, as they strolled along.
>
> 'Yes, but you'd eat your tea off the street anyway,' said Granny.
>
> 'I wouldn't eat all of it. Even the gutters are scrubbed. Not a Ronald* in sight, look.'
>
> 'Gytha!'
>
> * Ronald the Third of Lancre, believed to be an extremely unpleasant monarch, was remembered by posterity only in this obscure bit of rhyming slang. (*Witches Abroad*, 153)

The euphemistic meaning of the name Ronald is obscure in the dialogue, and the narrator's explanation in the footnote only implies what it means. Granny Weatherwax's emotional response suggests that Gytha "Nanny" Ogg has said something that should not be said aloud in public. As there is nothing explicitly unseemly in the name Ronald, the reader is guided to assume that it is a euphemism for something disagreeable. It is also unusual to use an indefinite article in front of a person's name, which also suggests that the name stands for something else. The footnote offers further clues for decoding this cryptic euphemism, and from these cues we can infer that, while it is difficult to find a rhyme for Ronald, this is much easier for "the Third". Hence, Ronald the Third can be libellously rhymed with

Ronald the Turd, so that Ronald in Nanny's speech becomes a euphemistic circumlocution for turd.

The construction of this euphemism involves both a homophonic pun (rhyming "third" with "turd") and an ellipsis (omitting both of the punned words). The rhetorically antithetical contrast between the highly esteemed position of a king and the low esteem of a turd makes the pun comically incongruous. From a Freudian perspective, associating a king with turd is a comic mechanism that allows us to pleasurably release our repressed aggression. As both punning and ellipsis are involved in this circumlocutious wordplay, it can be described either as a punning euphemism or an elliptical euphemism. The crypticness of the explanation in the footnote invites us to participate in the construction of humor by disambiguating the pun's comic meaning.

The following dialogue, which includes a euphemism at the end, takes place, in the eighth *Discworld* novel *Guards! Guards!* (1989), between the Night Watch officers Captain Sam Vimes and Corporal Nobby Nobbs, after they have escaped an attacking dragon's fiery breath by jumping from the roof of the Watch House.

> On the other hand, he was here and alive. His left side felt as though it had been hit with an iron bar, but he was quite definitely alive.
>
> 'What happened?' he said.
>
> 'It was young Carrot,' said Nobby. 'He grabbed you and the sergeant and jumped off the roof just before it got us.'
>
> 'My side hurts. It must have got me,' said Vimes.
>
> 'No, I reckon that was where you hit the privy roof,' said Nobby. 'And then you rolled off and hit the water butt.'
>
> 'What about Colon? Is he hurt?'
>
> 'Not hurt. Not exactly hurt. He landed more sort of softly. Him being so heavy, he went through the roof. Talk about a short sharp shower of—' (*Guards! Guards!*, 127)

Although the euphemism "short sharp shower of—" tactfully omits the vulgar word for human feces, the construction of the phrase is designed to help us in figuring out the missing word. Hence, the purpose of omitting the offending word is to veil rather than to conceal the unpleasant thing that the omission palliates. This euphemism involves the rhetorical figure *aposiopesis*, which can be conceived as a specific type of

ellipsis.[92] Omission of the vulgar word makes this an elliptical euphemism, but it can also be called an alliterative euphemism because the alliteration in the phrase "short sharp shower" guides the reader to fill the vacant slot at the end of Nobby's sentence with a short word that begins with letters "s" and "h".

This combination of alliteration and ellipsis exemplifies a stylistic and rhetorical feature which Kenneth Burke (1969, 58) has discussed as the "formal appeal" in literary fiction: "many purely formal patterns can readily awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us. […] Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation regardless of the subject matter". In this case, the combined formal appeal of alliteration and ellipsis invites the reader to participate by completing Nobby's aposiopetic euphemism. From the Freudian perspective, this witty euphemism distracts a social norm that we have internalized—that it is not acceptable to laugh at other peoples' misfortunes—and thus it allows us to experience aggressive pleasure at Colon's expense.

The following quote, from *Witches Abroad*, contains a rhetorically evaluative description of the swamp where a terrible voodoo witch lives.

> Trees grew out of the swamp. They had a jagged, foreign look and seemed to be rotting as they grew. Where the water was visible, it was black like ink. Occasionally a few bubbles would eructate to the surface like the ghosts of beans on bath night. (*Witches Abroad*, 149)

In the last sentence of this quote, the narrator combines simile and metaphor with euphemism. Although the phrase "ghosts of beans on a bath night" is presented here as a part of the simile that describes how bubbles eructate from the swamp's black water, the relationship between this phrase and its euphemistic meaning is metaphorical. In other words, "ghosts of beans on a bath night" is a metaphorical euphemism for flatulence, because eating beans is known to cause indigestive gas that can become visible as bubbles in bath. "Ghosts of beans" is a poetical metaphor for the mundane bodily function, and conceiving flatulence as ghosts of beans is a humorously unusual viewpoint on this familiar phenomenon. The antithetical incongruity between the poetical expression and its unpoetical meaning constructs a comic euphemism that expresses this humorous viewpoint wittily.

This description of swamp contains several evaluative rhetorical elements, which persuade the reader to adopt the attitude that the swamp is not a pleasant place. One of the negative evaluative elements in the description is the comic euphemism, which

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[92] Richard Lanham (1991, 20) defines aposiopesis like this: "Stopping suddenly in midcourse, leaving a statement unfinished; sometimes from genuine passion, sometimes for effect."

implies that the described swamp does not smell pleasant. By describing the swamp as a repulsive and scary territory, the narrator creates a specific kind of atmosphere and thus prepares the reader to adopt the attitude that voodoo magic, which has its roots in this landscape, is dark and dangerous, and also that the voodoo witch who lives there might not be a nice person.

In the examples I have discussed above, euphemisms palliate things that can be conceived as disagreeable and embarrassing: excrement and flatulence. But the comic euphemisms in the *Discworld* novels are clearly not used for concealing these potentially offensive topics—on the contrary, they draw the reader's attention to the undignified meanings by hiding the inappropriate things behind transparent veils of pretended tactfulness. Of Pratchett's comic euphemisms that I have discussed above, one is clearly metaphorical, while others are based on principles that Burkhardt (2010a, 256) does not mention in his taxonomy of euphemisms: punning, ellipsis, and alliteration.

Next, I will continue my study of Pratchett's comic euphemisms by discussing euphemisms that hide the taboo topic of sex behind a thin veil of decency.

4.3.2 Sex: A Slow Comfortable Double-Entendre with lemonade

Such bodily functions as excrement and flatulence can cause embarrassment and are thus frequently used topics for comic euphemisms. In our culture, there is similar coyness about discussing sexual intercourse, which allows humorists to design insinuating euphemisms and double-entendres. I have pointed out above, in the chapter on dramatic irony and sexual innuendo, that the narrator occasionally refers to "ladies of negotiable affection", which is a comically circumlocutious euphemism for prostitutes, but there are also other euphemisms about sex in the *Discworld* novels, both in the narrator's discourse and in the characters' dialogues.

The following dialogue between the human protagonist Victor and a troll named Rock, from the tenth *Discworld* novel *Moving Pictures* (1990), takes place in a troll bar, where a female troll singer is performing a flirtatious show.[93] In this dialogue, Pratchett recycles a famous sexually insinuating witticism from the early days of Hollywood movies and modifies it by adding features that are specific to the Discworld.

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[93] I have discussed above, in the chapter on comic footnotes, how the words of her song are represented in the troll language in the main text and translated to English in footnotes.

> 'What did she just say to that troll?' he said, as a deep wave of laughter rolled across the room.
>
> Rock scratched his nose. 'Is play on words,' he said. 'Very hard to translate. But basically, she say "Is that the legendary Sceptre of Magma who was King of the Mountain, Smiter of Thousands, Yea, Even Tens of Thousands, Ruler of the Golden River, Master of the Bridges, Delver in Dark Places, Crusher of Many Enemies",' he took a deep breath, ' "in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?" '
>
> Victor's forehead creased.
>
> 'I don't get it,' he said.
>
> 'Perhaps I not translate properly,' said Rock. (*Moving Pictures*, 105)

The famous sexually insinuating witticism "Is that a gun in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?" is commonly attributed to the Broadway and Hollywood actress Mae West, who was a sex symbol in the early decades of the 20th century. One of the main thematic motifs in *Moving Pictures* is the cultural resonance between Hollywood movies and the Discworld's budding film industry. This adaptation of Mae West's quip, on the one hand, makes trolls (who, as a silicon-based life form, are basically moving rocks) seem as less alien to the reader and, on the other hand, it characterizes the female troll as the Discworld's version of Mae West. The verbose translation of this quip from the troll language adds extra comedy to the original witticism by extending the setup that precedes the punch line.

A comically incongruous double meaning is created when a bulge in the male's pocket is associated either with a hidden weapon or with sexual arousal, while this arousal is referred to with the metonymical euphemism that he appears to be "glad to see" her. From a Freudian perspective, it is the possibility of an innocent explanation for the bulge and the indirectness of the allusion to sexual arousal that allow us to bypass the barriers of our internalized social norms and to enjoy the sexual insinuation. In Rock's translation, the basic idea of Mae West's quip remains unchanged, but the hidden weapon is expressed with hyperbolic images, which comically also magnify the bulge in the male's pocket.

Another comic element in this quote is the ignorant person, Victor, who creates comic dramatic irony when he fails to understand the euphemistic sexual insinuation. A Freudian interpretation would point out that laughing at the expense of the ignorant character allows us to release repressed emotions of aggression. The comedy of dramatic irony can also be explained via the superiority theory of humor, which states that we tend to find it amusing when someone turns out to be in some way inferior to us, because that boosts our self-esteem and gives us the pleasure of

feeling superior to others (Critchley 2006, 2–3; Morreall 2009, 6–8). As John Morreall (ibid.) notes, the three types of humor theories do not contradict, but rather supplement each other—many comic phenomena can be explained satisfactorily from the respective perspectives of the superiority theory, the relief theory, and the incongruity theory of humor.

The following dialogue is from the eleventh *Discworld* novel, *Reaper Man* (1991), where the recently deceased wizard Windle Poons becomes a zombie because Death is not doing his normal duties. To find out why his mind stays trapped inside his dead body, Windle visits a spiritualist medium, who puts him in contact with a spirit named One-Man-Bucket.

> 'Why are you called One—'
>
> *is that all? I thought you could work that one out, a clever man like you. in my tribe we're traditionally named after the First thing the mother sees when she looks out of the teepee after the birth. it's short for One-Man-Pouring-a-Bucket-of-Water-over-Two-Dogs.*
>
> 'That's pretty unfortunate,' said Windle.
>
> *it's not too bad*, said One-Man-Bucket. *it was my twin brother you had to feel sorry for. she looked out ten seconds before me to give him his name.*
>
> Windle Poons thought about it.
>
> 'Don't tell me, let me guess,' he said. 'Two-Dogs-Fighting?'
>
> *Two-Dogs-Fighting? Two-Dogs* Fighting*?* said One-Man-Bucket. *wow, he'd have given his right arm to be called Two-Dogs*-Fighting. (*Reaper Man*, 259–260)

The repetitions and the typographical switch of one word, from italic to regular typeface, at the end of the quote hint that there is hidden wordplay in the last word of the assumed name Two-Dogs-Fighting. Another hint is One-Man-Bucket's strong emotional response, which, along with the mention that his twin brother would give his right arm to change it, rhetorically persuades us to assume that the actual name is something much more disagreeable than Two-Dogs-Fighting. Together, all these hints invite us to substitute the word "fighting" with another word. It is not difficult to infer that if the bucket of water was not poured on the two dogs because they were fighting, then it was most likely because they were copulating. There is a vulgar word for sexual intercourse that has a somewhat similar shape as the word "fighting", so this similarity acts as another clue for decoding the comic euphemism.

The humor of this euphemistic circumlocution results from the clever way in which it manages to avoid explicitly mentioning the vulgar word, while it

nevertheless offers us enough cues to deduce the word that we need to substitute for "fighting". Thus, the euphemism invites the reader to participate in creating the comic wordplay which exploits several euphemistic mechanisms: omission, punning, and deduction based on the cause-and-effect relations of the events in One-Man-Bucket's account. Since the principle of cause and effect guides how the "fighting" part of the name is meant to be replaced, this wordplay could perhaps be described as a metonymical euphemism, although it can also be called an elliptical or punning euphemism.

In the fifteenth *Discworld* novel, *Men at Arms* (1993), the City Watch officers of Ankh-Morpork go to a tavern to have drinks. Constable Detritus, who is a troll (a silicon-based life form), drinks molten sulfur. Corporal Carrot drinks milk, while the other officers drink beer—except Corporal Nobby Nobbs, who chooses a cocktail that has a humorous name.

> Carrot counted out his change on the counter.
>
> 'That's three beers, one milk, one molten sulphur on coke with phosphoric acid—'
>
> 'With umbrella in it,' said Detritus.
>
> '—and A Slow Comfortable Double-Entendre with lemonade.' (*Men at Arms*, 94)

The name "Slow Comfortable Double-Entendre" echoes a cocktail that exists in our Roundworld—Slow Comfortable Screw, which is a name that involves intense punning. The "slow" part in the original drink's name comes from one of its ingredients, Sloe Gin. In a similar manner, the "comfortable" part comes from the liqueur Southern Comfort, and the "screw" part comes from orange juice, which is said to give the cocktail its twist. The combination of these puns forms a phrase that acts as a double-entendre, because the word "screw" is also a slang word for sexual intercourse. Since understanding this euphemism requires that the reader knows the original name of the cocktail and is also aware of its punning nature, the euphemism becomes an instance of cultural resonance that creates a comically unusual viewpoint on a familiar cultural phenomenon in our Roundworld.

The name of Nobby's cocktail adds another comic twist to the original wordplay by substituting the name of a category of puns for the specific pun that makes the drink's original name a double-entendre, and thus the word "double-entendre" in the drink's name in this quote becomes a synecdochical euphemism for the word "screw". At the same time, it retains the humorously playful sexual connotations of the cocktail's original name. This play on words can be conceived as a self-reflexive (or metatextual) pun, while at the same time it is also a euphemism, so it can be called

either a synecdochical euphemism, a punning euphemism, or a self-reflexive/metatextual euphemism.

I have discussed above some comic euphemisms that hide taboo topics, excrement and sex, behind a thin veil of decency, and next I will analyze a dialogue where Pratchett draws his reader's attention to the concealing and deceptive euphemisms of political rhetoric.

4.3.3 Political rhetoric: hygienic urban clearance

Most of the above-discussed euphemisms are designed to veil rather than to conceal taboo topics, offensive words, and disagreeable associations. However, in the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), there is a passage where Duke Felmet plans to cut down all the forests, burn some houses, and raise taxes in the small kingdom of Lancre. To legitimate this unpopular plan, the Fool advises the duke and the duchess how they can deploy concealing euphemisms for deliberate deception. Because the concealing and deceiving functions of euphemisms are made evident in this passage, it can be read as a satire of political language, which deploys similar euphemisms.

> 'Lady, the duke wishes to chop down the forests, is this not so?'
>
> 'The trees talk about me,' whispered Lord Felmet. 'I hear them whisper when I go riding. They tell lies about me!'
>
> The duchess and the Fool exchanged glances.
>
> 'But,' the Fool continued, 'this policy has met with fanatical opposition.'
>
> 'What?'
>
> 'People don't like it.'
>
> The duchess exploded. 'What does that matter?' she roared. 'We rule! They will do what we say or they will be pitilessly executed!'
>
> The Fool bobbed and capered and waved his hands in a conciliatory fashion.
>
> 'But, my love, we will run out of people,' murmured the duke.
>
> 'No need, no need!' said the Fool desperately. 'You don't have to do that at all! What you do is, you—' he paused for a moment, his lips moving quickly—'you embark upon a far-reaching and ambitious plan to expand the agricultural industry, provide long-term employment in the sawmills, open new land for development, and reduce the scope for banditry.'
>
> This time the duke looked baffled. 'How will I do that?' he said.

'Chop down the forests.' (*Wyrd Sisters*, 131–132)

The characters' emotional responses give this conversation psychological verisimilitude and make the story more interesting to the reader. Emotional responses are often connected to evaluative attitudes toward things that cause these responses, and thus they persuade the reader both by representing something as either positive or negative and by inviting the reader to identify with the characters. When the Fool and the duchess exchange glances, this confirms to us that they both silently consider the duke to be mentally unstable. The duchess' anger and threats explain why the Fool is motivated to help them by devising a non-violent alternative to executing people who oppose the duke's plan. From the Fool's emotional responses, we understand that his motivation for teaching the duke and the duchess to use deceptive political rhetoric is to protect the people of Lancre. Thus, unlike the mad duke and the ruthless duchess, who are the villains of the story, this scene persuades the reader to view the Fool as a sympathetic character and his deceptive rhetoric as a means to avoid unnecessary violence.

As George Lakoff (2004, 3–4) has pointed out, strategic key words are carefully chosen in political language in order to represent the topics under discussion rhetorically—either as positive or negative, agreeable or disagreeable. Lakoff names this rhetorical practice "framing". Calling the duke's paranoid obsession "policy" frames his plan as authoritative, official, and impersonal, while describing the opposing views as "fanatical" frames them as irrational and emotionally unbalanced.

However, the main feat of political rhetoric in this quote is the phrase "far-reaching and ambitious plan to expand the agricultural industry, provide long-term employment in the sawmills, open new land for development, and reduce the scope for banditry", which is a euphemism for Duke Felmet's plan to chop down the forests. This euphemistic phrase conceals the actual purpose of the plan and its disagreeable consequences by focusing the audience's attention on the agreeable consequences. Thus, the phrase consists of several metonymical euphemisms.

The dialogue continues as follows:

> 'Exactly how,' she said, eventually, 'does one go about knocking over the houses of people one does not like?'
>
> 'Urban clearance,' said the Fool.
>
> 'I was thinking of burning them down.'
>
> '*Hygienic* urban clearance,' the Fool added promptly.
>
> 'And sowing the ground with salt.'

> 'Marry, I suspect that is hygienic urban clearance and a programme of environmental improvements. It might be a good idea to plant a few trees as well.'
>
> 'No more trees!' shouted Felmet.
>
> 'Oh, it's all right. They won't survive. The important thing is to have planted them.'
>
> 'But I also want us to raise taxes,' said the duchess. […]
>
> 'Why … prithee … you need to finance your ambitious programme for the country.'
>
> 'Sorry?' said the duke, who was getting lost again.
>
> 'He means that chopping down trees costs money,' said the duchess. She smiled at the Fool. It was the first time he had ever seen her look at him as if he was other than a disgusting little cockroach. There was still a large element of cockroach in her glance, but it said: good little cockroach, you have learned a trick. (*Wyrd Sisters*, 132–133)

No decoding of euphemisms is necessary for the reader in this passage, as the dialogue makes it clear that the "hygienic urban clearance and a programme of environmental improvements" is a synecdochical euphemism for knocking down houses, burning them, and sowing the ground with salt, since this euphemism conceals the unwelcome concrete outcomes by hiding them under a more general and abstract term that evokes positive connotations. Similarly, "financing ambitious programme for the country" is a synecdochical euphemism for raising taxes. We encounter similar concealing euphemisms frequently in the political language of our Roundworld, although these euphemisms are often subtle and it takes some effort to detect and decode them. Thus, making the purpose and meaning of the Fool's deceptive euphemisms evident in this dialogue, Pratchett can be interpreted to satirize similar deceptive euphemisms in our Roundworld's political rhetoric.

I have analyzed above Pratchett's comic euphemisms for excrement, flatulence, and sex and noticed that they tend to veil rather than to conceal these taboo topics. In fact, the veil of decency behind which the comic euphemisms hide unseemly things is typically so thin that the reader can be easily see through it. I have also discussed how Pratchett satirizes the subtle euphemisms of political rhetoric by foregrounding their concealing and deceptive functions. In addition to the three principles of constructing euphemisms that Burkhardt (2010a, 256) mentions—synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor—my analyses have revealed that Pratchett's comic euphemisms are sometimes also based on other principles, such as punning, ellipsis, alliteration, and self-reflection/metatextuality. Another noteworthy feature of Pratchett's comic euphemisms is that the reader often needs to decode the veiled

meanings. This invites us to participate in constructing the humor, which makes the euphemisms funnier.

I have also pointed out that the Freudian "relief theory" of comic wit is especially well-suited for analyzing comic euphemisms. Although the Freudian explanation of comic wit is typically associated with sexual aspects, it can also reveal hidden aggressive elements in humor, and it can be applied to other taboo topics, such as embarrassing bodily functions, where the humorous treatment of these topics can be conceived to release repressed feelings.

Throughout the current dissertation I have argued that viewing familiar things from comically unusual perspectives is typical for Pratchett's humor, and that his comedy is funny because he uses hyperdetermined wit to represent his humorous viewpoints. In the euphemisms that I have discussed above, the sexually insinuating Mae West quip and the humorous name of Nobby's cocktail are instances of cultural resonance which depend on the reader's cultural knowledge to be understood, while Ponder Stibbons's naturalistic observation creates a comically unconventional viewpoint on rural idylls. Representing flatulence poetically as ghosts of beans is another humorously unusual viewpoint, and juxtaposing the duke's and the duchess' plans with the Fool's cleverly deceptive euphemisms opens a comically candid perspective on how political rhetoric works. Several of Pratchett's comic euphemisms are based on punning, and I have also found other instances of hyperdetermined humor in Pratchett's euphemisms: euphemism is combined with bathos both in the "Ronald the Turd" pun and when Ponder Stibbons treads in something rural. Euphemism is combined with comic dramatic irony when Victor fails to understand the euphemism, and with hyperbole when the Mae West's quip is translated from Trollish.

This discussion on Pratchett's comic euphemisms ends the text analysis part of my dissertation. In the following conclusion chapter, I will summarize my main conclusions about what makes Terry Pratchett's witcraft funny and which elements in this witcraft can be considered rhetorical.

5 CONCLUSIONS

One only needs to pick up any one of the *Discworld* novels and start reading it to become convinced that these novels are rich with humor. Perhaps the most striking and persistent comic elements in the *Discworld* novels are the narrator's humorous discourse and the Discworld's cultural resonance with our Roundworld, although there are also plenty of comic situations and amusing dialogues. Despite the fact that Terry Pratchett is best known as a fantasy writer, I would not hesitate to place him among the great humorists in English literature, along with such names as Henry Fielding, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, P. G. Wodehouse, and Douglas Adams. It is therefore surprising that academic studies on Pratchett's humor are scarce and difficult to find. This observation has prompted me to compose, in this dissertation, a poetics of Terry Pratchett's humor by studying what kinds of comic devices Pratchett deploys in his *Discworld* novels.

Consequently, my main research question in this study has been: What makes Terry Pratchett's witcraft funny? My answer to this question consists of several elements. In addition to the frequent occurrences of humor, another ingredient that makes the *Discworld* novels funny is that Pratchett, when compared to most other humorists, deploys an exceptionally large number of comic devices. I do not claim that I have reviewed in this dissertation all the comic devices that can be found in the *Discworld* novels—in fact, I think that making such an exhaustive list would be an impossible task. Nevertheless, I have studied the comic devices that I find most characteristic for Terry Pratchett's witcraft, and I believe that a vast majority of instances in the *Discworld* novels that make the reader laugh or smile can be explained by referring to one or more of the comic devices that I have discussed in this dissertation. I consider mapping out the comic devices that are characteristic for Pratchett's humor to be one of the major contributions of this dissertation to the academic study of humor in literature.

Some of the comic devices that I have studied in this dissertation (irony, parody, satire, jokes, and puns) have been extensively studied by other humor researchers, but I have also discussed some comic devices that have previously received less attention in humor research: absurd logic, bathos, figgins (or running gags), comic footnotes, comic imagery (comic metaphors, similes, and personifications), and

comic euphemisms. Previous studies have also typically been monographs of a single comic device—for instance, there are many studies that focus on either irony, parody, satire, puns, or jokes, but studies that focus on more than one comic device are rare, and there have been no previous studies that focus on hyperdetermined humor, i.e., how humorists combine comic devices.

The abundant use of comic devices makes Pratchett's humor hyperdetermined, which means that he typically combines various comic devices in the narrator's humorous descriptions, the characters' dialogues, and in constructing comic situations. Thus, my study on the poetics of Terry Pratchett's witcraft is at the same time a study on how Pratchett constructs hyperdetermined humor. In order to explain how hyperdetermined humor is constructed in the *Discworld* novels, I have expanded the traditional twofold taxonomy of comic devices—humor from action and humor from speech—into a new four-part taxonomy: situational, contextual, structural, and stylistic humor. This taxonomy, a conceptual tool for analyzing hyperdetermined humor, is one of the contributions of this dissertation to the academic study of humor in literature—it allows me to argue that literary humor can be considered truly semantically rich and hyperdetermined only when it combines comic devices from more than one of these four categories.

I have conceived comic dramatic irony and absurd humor as situational comic devices, since they are commonly used for creating comic situations. In theoretical discussions on irony, dramatic irony is typically associated with theater and tragedy, but it can also function as a comic device that is not uncommon in humorous novels. In this dissertation, I have pointed out that dramatic irony involves situational irony, and I have observed that, unlike tragic dramatic irony, comic dramatic irony is typically incidental. I have also pointed out that comic dramatic irony epitomizes the superiority theory of humor, and that it often involves either misunderstandings or deception. In my analyses of absurd humor in the *Discworld* novels, I have focused on paradoxical logic, but I have also pointed out that excessive exaggeration is another common way to create absurd humor.

I have called parody and satire contextual comic devices because the humor of these devices arises from comic cultural resonance, which often involves rhetorical evaluation and creates humorously unusual viewpoints on familiar cultural clichés. Although I have explained how parody and satire can be distinguished from each other, I have also noticed that in practice this distinction is not always easy, and that contextual humor can simultaneously contain both parodic and satiric elements. Previous research on parody has concluded that, as comic intertextual imitation, parody has a unique "double-coded" nature, because it can use parts of its target

texts as a constituent part of its own structure in order to comically refunction them. However, I have demonstrated that Pratchett's satire can in a similar manner incorporate its targets, cultural clichés, as a constituent part of the *Discworld* novels and refunction them comically, which suggests that also satire can function as a double-coded comic device.

Joke must be the most acknowledged structural comic device, but even though especially linguistic and psychological humor researchers have studied jokes extensively, since jokes are typically short and semantically self-contained, I think that I have found a less-explored perspective on the joke structure by studying Pratchett's paraprosdokian twists-in-the-tail (or unexpected twists of the viewpoint), which can either force us to reconstruct the meaning of a single sentence or serve as punch lines for lengthy anecdotes.

The other structural comic devices that I discuss in this dissertation have received less attention from humor researchers. While analyzing bathos (or failed elevation) in Pratchett's humor, I have observed two strategies for creating comic anticlimaxes: stylistic shifting from elevated to mundane tones and descending the dignity or importance of the discussed topic. Figgin (or running gag) is another structural comic device that has been mostly ignored in humor research. It is a comic device that has been more commonly recognized as a convention of stand-up comedy, while it is also a notable component of Pratchett's witcraft, since Pratchett's fandom uses the term "figgin" to refer to his running gags. Also comic footnotes are a notable feature of Pratchett's witcraft, and while the comic use of footnotes has not been studied before, in this dissertation I have analyzed the various techniques that Pratchett deploys to make his footnotes funny.

I began my discussion on Pratchett's comic imagery by observing that his comic descriptions are often vivid because they pile up images and the narrator represents them with stylistic vigor. I have also pointed out that while hyperbole in typical language use tends to express intense emotions, Pratchett frequently makes his imagery comical by combining it with excessive hyperbole.

Verbal analogies, metaphors and similes, have not been studied much as comic devices in humor research, since their primary function in language is not comical (similar reasoning applies also to why footnotes have not been studied as a comic device), but I think that they are nevertheless well worth studying, since many humorists devise comic metaphors and similes either by making the image of the analogy far-fetched or by combining their imagery with excessive hyperbole. I have pointed out that Pratchett often designs comic extended metaphors (or conceits) where he deploys mundane imagery to describe elevated topics, while the humor in

his unexpected (or paraprosdokian) similes can become truly hyperdetermined when Pratchett combines several stylistic comic devices (simile, verbal irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole) with such structural comic devices as bathetic anticlimax and paraprosdokian. I have also discussed how Pratchett deploys synesthetic mixing of senses in his impressional similes to design comical descriptions of things that cannot be described.

In analyzing Pratchett's comic imagery, I have also discussed both Pratchett's personified non-human characters and his stylistic personifications (or prosopopeia). Stylistic personifications can be considered a subclass of metaphors, and since the comic use of metaphors has not been studied much in humor research, also comic stylistic personifications have, before the current dissertation, remained an unresearched comic device. In this study, I have pointed out that Pratchett's comic stylistic personifications concretize abstract phenomena by giving them human-like qualities, and they can also foreground the characters' emotional responses by representing their body parts and mental faculties as autonomously acting individuals. Since we typically use personifications to project human emotions and attitudes to non-human things, which humanizes the world around us, I have argued that Pratchett's frequent use of comic prosopopeia makes the Discworld an extraordinarily humanized fantasy world.

Linguists have studied puns extensively, but in this dissertation I have simplified the linguistic taxonomy and terminology by deploying two classical rhetorical figures that capture the most essential qualities of punning: paronomasia and antanaclasis. In addition, I have discussed puns in the titles of the *Discworld* novels, colliding metaphorical and literal senses, portmanteau puns, bilingual puns, and some unusual types of wordplay that I have detected in the *Discworld* novels. I have also analyzed unintended puns in the characters' speech: misspellings, misunderstandings, and mistranslations. For analytical purposes, I have distinguished the pun's non-comical primary sense from the comical secondary sense, and I have argued that the pun's comically subversive secondary sense often introduces a comically unusual viewpoint on the more conventional perspective, which is expressed by the non-comical primary meaning. Furthermore, I have pointed out that puns tend to be funnier when their disambiguation requires some inference from the audience, because this invites the audience to participate in the construction of the pun's comic meaning.

I have also dedicated a chapter for another type of wordplay, comic euphemisms, which have received less attention in humor research than puns. I have analyzed Pratchett's comic euphemisms for excrement, flatulence, and sex and noticed that they tend to veil rather than to conceal these taboo topics. I have also discussed how

Pratchett satirizes the subtle euphemisms of political rhetoric by foregrounding their concealing and deceptive functions. Previous research on non-comic euphemisms has suggested that euphemisms can be constructed on the principles of synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor, but my analyses have revealed that Pratchett's comic euphemisms are sometimes also based on other principles, such as punning, ellipsis, alliteration, and self-reflection/metatextuality. Another noteworthy feature of Pratchett's comic euphemisms is that the reader often needs to decode the veiled meanings. This invites the reader to participate in constructing the humor, which makes the euphemisms funnier. I have also pointed out that, just like comic dramatic irony epitomizes the superiority theory of humor, the Freudian "relief theory" of comic wit is especially well-suited for analyzing comic euphemisms.

In my analyses throughout this dissertation, I have demonstrated that Pratchett's humor is typically hyperdetermined, since he deploys numerous comic devices and tends to combine them with each other. At the end of each text analysis chapter, I have provided summaries of hyperdetermined humor (as well as summaries of comically unusual viewpoints and rhetorically evaluative attitudes) that I have found in the analyzed quotes. These analyses and their summaries demonstrate that in most of the analyzed quotes, Pratchett combines more than one comic devices and that at least two of my four categories (situational, contextual, structural, and stylistic) of comic devices are typically represented in these combinations. Thus, my taxonomy helps to explain why the humor in some quotes is more hyperdetermined than in others, while it also provides evidence-based and quantifiable criteria to support my personal and subjective assertion that Pratchett's witcraft is exceptionally funny.

In several analyses of Terry Pratchett's witcraft, I have applied Peter Rabinowitz's conceptions of the narrative and authorial audiences to distinguish the narrator's humor from the author's humor, and in these analyses I have demonstrated, on the one hand, how we can enjoy the narrator's humor when we attend the narrative audience and, on the other hand, how new levels of humorous meanings become available to us as soon as we join the authorial audience. Consequently, demonstrating how the narrator's humor can be distinguished from the author's humor is also one of the contributions of my dissertation to the academic study of humorous novels.

In addition to hyperdetermined humor, another characteristic feature in the *Discworld* novels that makes Terry Pratchett's witcraft abundantly funny is that he often represents various cultural clichés (familiar cultural phenomena, conventions of representation, and conventional ways of thinking) from a humorously unusual viewpoint. In this dissertation, I have argued that Pratchett constructs parody and

satire of cultural clichés that are familiar to the reader by viewing them from comically unusual perspectives. I have also argued that such humorously unusual viewpoints function as one of the main strategies of constructing humor in the *Discworld* novels, and that these humorous viewpoints add an extra comic layer to Pratchett's hyperdetermined witcraft: on the one hand, the humorous viewpoints highlight cultural clichés and thus point the reader's attention to their clichéd nature, while on the other hand they also revise and refresh the worn-out clichés. Thus, foregrounding comically unusual viewpoints on familiar things as a basic strategy of generating humor is yet another contribution that this dissertation makes to the study of humorous literature. Furthermore, I have argued that Pratchett's comically unusual viewpoints function as a bridge that connects his witcraft with narrative rhetoric.

Accordingly, my second research question in this dissertation has been: What kinds of elements in Terry Pratchett's witcraft can be interpreted as rhetorical? In order to answer this question, I have defined narrative rhetoric, in accordance with the classical definitions of rhetoric, as the representation of evaluative attitudes, either positive or negative, which can be interpreted as the author's attempt to persuade the reader to adopt the expressed attitudes. Combining this neoclassical definition of narrative rhetoric with my study on Pratchett's witcraft, I have found out that the narrator's humorous viewpoints in the *Discworld* novels frequently express evaluative attitudes toward various cultural clichés of our Roundworld. Since there has not yet been any commonly accepted definition about what rhetoric means when it is applied to the study of literary fiction, or to narratives in general, and because I think that such definition would be useful, I offer my own definition of narrative rhetoric as a starting point for anyone who wants to study the rhetorical aspects of literary fiction in a way that agrees with the classical understanding of rhetoric.

Another aspect of narrative rhetoric in the *Discworld* novels, in addition to the cultural resonance between the Discworld and our Roundworld, arises from the characters' emotional responses, which typically express evaluative attitudes toward things that exist inside the story world. As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, in the case of the humorous narrator's evaluative attitudes, readers are persuaded to adopt these attitudes because it rewards us with the pleasurable feelings of humorous amusement, while in the case of the characters' evaluative attitudes the persuasion works by guiding us to identify with and feel empathy for the character. Also in this latter case, humor plays a role in Pratchett's narrative rhetoric, since he often represents the characters' emotional responses with comic imagery. In the classical

tradition of rhetoric, the rhetorical figures that use verbal images to bring the described things before our eyes (such as hyperbole, metaphor, simile, and personification) have been typically associated with the function of arousing pathos in the audience, but in the current dissertation I have pointed out that these rhetorical figures can also function as stylistic comic devices.

Many of the comic devices that I have discussed in this dissertation can be found also in other humorists' texts, and thus my taxonomy of comic devices can be used for analyzing hyperdetermined humor in other humorists' works as well. Therefore, I hope that this dissertation can serve as a starting point for future comparative studies of literary humorists. It would be interesting to expand the current dissertation by comparing Terry Pratchett's use of comic devices especially with P. G. Wodehouse's and Douglas Adams's—two authors whose humor I find in some respects similar to Pratchett's.

Another possible avenue for expanding this dissertation is opened by my observations of the role that the characters' emotional responses play in Terry Pratchett's narrative rhetoric. While in this study I have focused on how Pratchett deploys the characters' emotional responses to make his readers laugh, it has also become apparent that such emotional responses frequently express evaluative attitudes, appeal to our emotions, and persuade us via identification. The characters' emotional responses can be found in all kinds of stories, and it would be intriguing to study and compare how different authors deploy such emotional responses as a part of their narrative rhetoric. Also the relationship between humor and the expression of emotions in literary fiction is a topic that I think requires further research.

In the course of this dissertation, I have repeatedly pointed out that the Discworld, as a secondary world of fantasy fiction, provides Terry Pratchett with a place where he can import cultural phenomena from our Roundworld and examine these phenomena parodically and satirically, outside of their ordinary context. Furthermore, the fantasy world allows Pratchett to comically exaggerate, twist, and add new imaginative features to these phenomena in ways that would be highly implausible in their normal context. But while it is true that the fantasy context allows Pratchett to make his comedy more imaginative, I think it is also true that comedy—humorously unusual viewpoints, absurd logic, comic exaggerations, etc.—has made the Discworld a more imaginative setting than most other fantasy worlds. Thus, I would conclude that the imaginative magic of the *Discworld* novels that arises from Terry Pratchett's witcraft of seeing things differently is just as powerful, if not more so, as the more conventional fantasy magic of dragons, sorcery, and witchcraft.

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