Worldbuilding in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* Series

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tutkielmassani tarkastelen miten Terry Pratchettin satiirinen fantasiasarja *Discworld* (suom. *Kiekkomaailma*) rakentaa fiktiivisen maailmaansa kuvailun, kerronnan ja genren avulla, ja miten nämä eri ominaisuudet toimivat yhdessä. Käyn läpi maailman eri osia, esimerkiksi taian ja teknologian käyttö ja kehitys sekä hahmojen suhteet toisiinsa ja maailmaan. Lisäksi käsittelen fiktiivisen maailman politiikkaa ja historiaa sekä fantasian ja satiirin vaikutukset kerrontaan ja maailman ontologiseen perustaan.

Keskityn ensisijaisesti neljään romaaniin. Nämä ovat sarjan 13. romaani *Small Gods* (suom. *Pienet jumalat*), 23. romaani *Carpe Jugulum*, 25. romaani *The Truth* (suom. *Totuuden torvi*), sekä 34. romaani, *Thud!* (suom. *Muks!*). Käsittelen kuitenkin myös lyhyesti sitä, miten sarja toimii kokonaisuutena.

Terry Pratchett luo maailmanrakentamisen keinoin uskottavan tarinamaailman, joka perustuu lukijoille tuttuihin fantasian ja todellisen maailman ominaisuuksiin. Romaanit rakentavat maailmaa tarkastelemalla kerronnoissaan eri maita, kulttuureja ja maailmankuvia. Vaikka sarjan maailma on sinänsä absurdi, johdonmukaiset yksityiskohdat ja kertomukset tekevät siitä ymmärrettävän ja kiinnostavan. Lukijat pystyvät näin ollen päättelemään maailmasta enemmän kuin romaanit siitä kertovat, joka puolestaan saa tarinamaailman tuntumaan yhtenäiseltä ja itsenäiseltä kokonaisuudelta. Tutkielmassani osoitan, ettei kerronta välttämättä ole maailmanrakentamisesta irrallinen prosessi, toisin kuin jotkut maailmanrakentamisen teoreetikot ovat esittäneet. Kerronta, kuvaus ja lajityypin eri keinot vaikuttavat vahvasti toisiinsa ja muodostavat yhdessä maailmanrakentamisen prosessin.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords

Terry Pratchett, Kiekkomaailma, fantasia, maailmanrakentaminen

Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited

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1. Introduction

Storyworlds have long been a fixture of fiction, whether they are near identical recreations of the real world or entirely fantastical imaginings of what the world could be. Fantasy and science fiction, in particular, feature imaginary worlds which are designed to make readers learn their rules and become immersed in their stories. Well-realized storyworlds capture the imaginations of readers far beyond the narratives that take place in them. For instance, Tolkien's Middle Earth, Lewis' Narnia, and Carroll's Wonderland, among many others, have remained ever popular. Naturally, the interest in storyworlds has led to an interest in how they are built, and worldbuilding has recently become a focus of a fair amount of research.

Authors take many different approaches in building their storyworlds, ranging from using them as barely mentioned backdrops to extremely detailed descriptions combined with supplementary materials such as maps, glossaries, and mythologies, beyond the narratives set therein. Indeed, there are arguably as many approaches as there are creators. That said, they have many techniques in common. In this thesis, I explore such worldbuilding techniques, separating them into the levels of descriptions, narratives, and genres, as well as how each of these are used individually and how they work in tandem. For this study, I have chosen one of modern fantasy's most famous storyworlds – Discworld.

Sir Terry Pratchett (1948–2015) was a prolific British author, best-known for his fantasy series *Discworld*, featuring a storyworld of the same name. The first *Discworld* novel, *The Colour of Magic*, was published in 1983. In it, Pratchett introduced a flat world, carried on the backs of four elephants, which in turn stand on the back of a giant turtle called the Great A'Tuin, all gliding through space. Discworld (often shortened simply as the Disc) is inhabited by fantasy's most common creatures: regular humans share the planet with dwarfs, trolls, elves, fae, witches, and wizards, and the world only grew from there. After the first novel was published, Pratchett wrote on average one or two *Discworld* novels per year until his death in 2015. The final *Discworld* novel, *The Shepherd's Crown*, was published posthumously later that same year (Smythe). At a total of forty-one novels, the Disc has had a great deal of room to develop into a full-fledged fictional world, and as Pratchett's approach to the series encompasses all levels of worldbuilding, it is ideal for this analysis.

Due to its length, it is impossible to study the series in its entirety here. Hence, I have chosen to analyze four works: *Small Gods*, *Carpe Jugulum*, *The Truth*, and *Thud!*. I selected

these specific novels in an attempt to provide as broad an overview of the series' various locations, characters, and events as possible within the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, they exemplify the internal structure of *Discworld*: *Small Gods* (henceforth abbreviated as *SG*) and *The Truth* (*TT*) are "one-offs" while *Carpe Jugulum* (*CJ*) and *Thud!* (*T*) belong to two different sub-series featuring recurring characters – the witches and the City Watch, respectively. Below, I introduce each of my chosen works.

1.1 *Small Gods*

Originally published in 1992, *Small Gods* is the thirteenth novel in the series. It follows the Great God Om, who finds himself stuck in the form of a tortoise and suddenly bereft of his godly powers, which forces him to wander until he meets Brutha, a deeply devout, if not terribly intelligent novice of the Church of Om. He is the only one who can hear Om's voice in this form. As the two set out to find out why Om is now almost entirely powerless and what can be done about it, they become caught up in a plot to overthrow Vorbis, head of the Quisition and the man who enforces the Church's bloody and totalitarian rule and who intends to wage war against the neighboring country of Ephebe. Later, Om realizes what it is that made him lose his powers: despite Omnianism being one of the Discworld's largest religions, its followers no longer believe in Om. Rather, they believe in the institution of the Church, as led and shaped by people like Vorbis, or only abide by its rules out of fear for their lives. Brutha is the only one left who truly believes in Om himself. During such realizations, as well as suffering from schemes, getting trapped in a desert, preventing a war, and nearly dying several times, Brutha begins to question the teachings he has always believed and sees the Church's cruelty for what it is. The temporarily small god Om, in turn, learns humility and compassion for the people he had never cared about before. By the end of the novel, Vorbis is overthrown and killed, Om regains his believers and thus his powers, and Brutha becomes the Eighth Prophet and head of the Church of Om, devoting the rest of his life to instituting wide-spread reforms within it.

In addition to featuring characters who never appear again beyond a few scant references, *Small Gods* takes place in locations which are not explored in most other *Discworld* novels: the countries of Omnia and Ephebe, and the desert between them. This allows Discworld to expand in new directions in terms of depicting new climates and cultures, thus creating a more complete storyworld.

1.2 *Carpe Jugulum*

Carpe Jugulum is the twenty-third novel in the series, and was first published in 1998. It features the witches Agnes Nitt (and her second personality Perdita), Nanny Ogg, and Granny Weatherwax, who are invited to the baptism of the King and Queen's daughter. Unfortunately, the King also invited a group of vampires – the Magpyrs – who use the opportunity to take over the castle and assume rule over the city-state of Lancre, with plans to expand to other cities in due time. Their goal is to use citizens as cattle for themselves, and they claim that in doing so, they are improving the lives of the common folk. The witches must confront the invaders, but the task is made more difficult by Granny Weatherwax, Lancre's most powerful and senior witch, who gives up and leaves without attempting to fight back, which is highly unusual for her. The remaining witches, with the help of Queen Magrat Garlick who used to be part of their coven, track down Granny, but are unable to convince her to help. It is only after they try and fail to overthrow the Magpyrs again that Granny joins the fight, only to be attacked and bitten. While this almost kills her, she is able to overcome the bite, and even uses her blood to poison the Magpyrs. The novel culminates in the Magpyrs being overthrown, and the Old Count being reinstated – the previous vampire to hold power in the Magpyrs' home country of Überwald.

This novel features a number of recurring characters – the witches – and is the sixth novel to do so, thus making it part of a sub-series. I chose it for this reason, as well as the fact that it takes place in both one of the series' more common locations as well as a less common one: the country of Lancre, and Überwald, respectively. The role of narrative in worldbuilding is prominent in this novel as well.

1.3 *The Truth*

The Truth is the twenty-fifth novel in the series, published in 2000. It follows William de Worde, the son of a noble who has turned his back on the aristocratic lifestyle, and who makes a living writing news bulletins which he sends to foreign influential figures. Accidentally, he becomes involved with the group of dwarfs, led by Gunilla Goodmountain, who brought a printing press to the city-state of Ankh-Morpork. Together, they make a printed version of William's newsletter, and once they realize its potential, establish the Disc's first newspaper: *The Ankh-Morpork Times*. Along the way, they hire Sacharissa Cripslock as a reporter and the vampire Otto Chriek as an iconographer. Meanwhile, the Patrician, Havelock Vetinari, is framed for embezzlement and attempted murder by two

criminals hired by a group of nobles and guild leaders, who plan to replace the head of state with someone more in line with their interests. William, along with the rest of *The Ankh-Morpork Times* staff, decides to investigate what is happening. Despite being targeted by the hired criminals who framed the Patrician, William is able to collect the evidence needed to prove the Patrician's innocence before a new one can be chosen.

I chose this novel for its one-time cast of characters, the location – Ankh-Morpork, the most common setting of *Discworld* novels – and the subject matter, as part of the Disc's industrial revolution. This novel also explores the introduction of a new technology, which contributes to the development of the storyworld.

1.4 *Thud!*

Thud! is the thirty-fourth novel of the series, and was published in 2005. It follows Commander Sam Vimes and the City Watch of Ankh-Morpork as they investigate the murder of a dwarf fundamentalist (known as a Deep-Downer or grag) in a new mine the dwarfs have built under the city. They must do so amid rising tensions between the dwarf and troll populations of the city, as the anniversary of a historical battle between the two, the Battle of Koom Valley, approaches. Relations are further inflamed as the dwarfs accuse the trolls of having committed the murder. During the investigation, Vimes becomes unknowingly possessed by an entity known as the Summoning Dark, an ancient being called up by another murdered dwarf who slowly drives its victims mad. The investigation eventually proves that the dwarf was murdered by his compatriots rather than a troll, but also that the Deep-Downers are after some secret of Koom Valley. Once they realize they have been caught, that is where the Deep-Downers flee. Vimes follows them through the caves beneath the Valley, nearly dying and being overcome by the Summoning Dark. Vimes is able to withstand the attack, if only barely, but scares the Deep-Downers into surrender before that. The secret of Koom Valley is revealed to have been that the two opposing sides had been there to negotiate peace, but heavy fog and confusion among ranks led both sides to believe they were being ambushed, and the meeting turned into a deadly battle instead. The Deep-Downers wished to destroy the evidence of this attempted peace, as it contradicts what they believed was true, but are stopped before they can do so.

I chose this novel mostly for its political narrative, but also because it features recurring characters as its main cast, as well as both familiar and unfamiliar locations of Ankh-Morpork and Koom Valley, respectively. Despite sharing a setting with *The Truth*, it

provides a different perspective on Ankh-Morpork as it focuses on a different set of characters and their experiences, and thus broadens the storyworld.

2. Descriptions

In this chapter, I examine the use of descriptions as worldbuilding. In doing so, I analyze both the subjects of these descriptions and how they are presented in order to explore how they contribute to readers' understanding of the various aspects of the storyworld. I divide this discussion into sections focusing on environment and culture, as well as magic and technology, as these are central to *Discworld*'s unique identity as both series and storyworld. Furthermore, I analyze the effects of focalization and dialogue in terms of how they impact what is described and how, as well as the implications of the use of multiple characters in doing so.

2.1 Theoretical Background

Descriptions are a prevalent feature of fiction of all genres, and as such, they are a basic component of worldbuilding. Even in realist fiction, where the storyworld is intended to mimic the actual world as closely as it can, extensive descriptions are used to achieve a sense of verisimilitude (Brooke-Rose 89–90). Fantasy novels, too, often include lengthy exposition of their respective created storyworld in order to make it more immersive. In a storyworld which differs significantly from the actual world – as most fantasy worlds do – descriptions play a vital role in informing readers about the differences between the two and help ground the narrative in the storyworld's rules.

As this chapter focuses on descriptions, it is necessary to establish a definition for them, and understand how descriptions work in general. Roland Barthes defines description as being "purely summatory" and lacking in predictive aspect, as opposed to narrative, which is "schematizing to the extreme" and is characterized by causality (142–143). In this view, the details given in descriptions are "useless" or "insignificant," as they do not directly contribute to the progression of the plot. Descriptions are often an interruption of the narrative. Despite the insignificance of the details of a novel (or perhaps because of it), their inclusion serves a function of its own: it creates what Barthes calls the *reality effect* (148). Simply put, this effect establishes a text as realist. Elaine Auyoung develops the concept further, suggesting that it is a cognitive phenomenon rather than a purely rhetorical one. For her, it arises at least in part from the way we process our perceptions of our environments: both descriptions and perceptions are inherently fragmented (582–583). In our day-to-day lives, we combine immediately available information (*bottom-up processing*) and our prior knowledge and

experiences of the world (*top-down processing*) to make inferences, as we often do not have access to every detail. In Auyoung's view, this is highly similar to what happens when we read fiction: in fact, it seems that readers cannot avoid imagining what is described to at least some degree, and in doing so use the available cues in the same way they would in life (581–584). The reality effect is thus more than just a marker of genre.

Both Barthes and Auyoung only analyze the reality effect and descriptions in terms of realist literature. There is, however, nothing to prevent readers of other genres from being affected as well. No descriptions – in any genre of fiction – can possibly be truly exhaustive no matter how extensive they are, and as such, readers will always have to infer more than any given fictional text strictly provides. Furthermore, genres as well-established as fantasy tend to develop conventions and clichés of their own over time (M. Wolf 37), which can aid in this process. I discuss the use of genre in depth in chapter 4, and thus do not go into it here. For now, it is enough to understand that readers can draw on more than just real-life experience for top-down processing.

In *Descriptions in Literature and Other Media*, Werner Wolf notes that descriptions are often defined in opposition to narrative (as in Barthes) and that it is generally practical to do so. However, he acknowledges that there are cases where overlap between the two occurs. As such, the best approach to definition is one of "prototypical conceptualization," which allows for such cases (9). Werner Wolf does so by suggesting that both the narrative and the descriptive should be considered frames, which are realized in narration and description. They each have various prototypical features which help trigger the frame in the minds of readers. Wolf claims that these features are mainly derived from their functions (1–10). Primarily, these functions are the referential (identification through attribution of traits, both mimetic and non-mimetic), the representational and experiential (vivid representation, implying experientiality of the object being described), and the pseudo-objectivizing functions (providing a sense of objective information, although there is always some degree of interpretation). The latter, Wolf notes, is what triggers the reality effect, due to its enforcement of the referential illusion of fiction (16–17). In practice, descriptions are generally used as a "substitute for sensory experience," and are primarily concerned with what Wolf calls the *whatness* of their objects (14), in other words, the sense of experiencing the object.

Beyond their functional aspects, Werner Wolf also points out that descriptions are often characterized by their content and presentation. In terms of content, descriptions tend to favor concrete objects over abstractions, objects over actions, and external phenomena over

internal ones. However, as I discuss in 2.4, internal phenomena are significant, too. Visual objects and aspects are more common than other senses, but all forms of sensory data are frequent to the point of being the most recognizable presentational feature of descriptions (32). In literature especially, descriptions are often even organized to mimic the "process of perception," such as the way a person's gaze would track over an object (53). As a prototypical model, none of the above tendencies exclude their alternatives from description, such as mental objects (32). Like Auyoung, Wolf also acknowledges that no description can be truly exhaustive. Descriptions will inherently include what he calls *areas of indeterminacy*, which readers may fill in with their own understanding of the world, particularly through cultural context (36).

Discworld does not employ descriptions to the same extent as archetypal fantasy often does, as in the works of Tolkien, or more modern fantasy as in those of George R. R. Martin. These authors (and many others) favor heavily detailed descriptions to convey what their worlds and events are like as vividly and extensively as possible. Their lengthy and frequent descriptions could be considered examples of what Mark Wolf calls the *encyclopedic impulse*, where the narrative is stopped entirely for the sake of describing the storyworld and its inhabitants (30). *Discworld*, in comparison, generally uses short descriptions which are embedded within the narrative. While it is typical for passages of description to be broken up and interwoven into the plot of any given work where descriptions are used, they also tend to be longer. In *Discworld*, this leads to many cases where the separation between description and plot becomes ambiguous, in much the same way as I discuss in chapter 3 on narrative, where worldbuilding and narrative are at times difficult or even pointless to separate. As Barthes does not go into detail about the difference, it is difficult to say where the line between "insignificant" and "significant" details ought to be. Furthermore, Werner Wolf states that there are cases where narration and description coincide (24). According to Wolf, it is possible to analyze passages where the boundaries between the two are vague. For the sake of clarity, however, I endeavor to choose the most unambiguous examples of plot non-essential descriptions according to Barthes' definition, but there will inevitably be cases where their insignificance is debatable.

Relevant to any analysis of descriptions are the ways in which they can be used. Mark Wolf's three main principles in worldbuilding are useful in this context: invention, completeness, and consistency. The first – *invention* – is the degree to which the storyworld differs from the actual world (34). Descriptions are naturally useful for establishing what these differences are, but they can also either directly or indirectly demonstrate the ways a

storyworld mirrors the actual world. Of relevance is Marie-Laure Ryan's *principle of minimal departure*, which argues that readers assume a storyworld is as similar to the actual world as possible until the text suggests otherwise, at which point readers only change what is necessary about their assumptions (Ryan). Invention, then, results in the alteration of readers' assumptions of a storyworld. This is also of relevance to my discussion on genre in chapter 4, since genre conventions[1] result in their own assumptions, and as fantasy-satire, *Discworld* uses these expectations for humor, subversion, and worldbuilding.

Completeness, in turn, refers to a work's ability to present enough details to suggest a complete world, broader than the text actually covers, with sufficient explanations for all that resides and happens within it (M. Wolf 38–39). Not all explanations need to be overt, as it can be enough for readers to make inferences based on various cues within the text, as would be expected from the reality effect. It should be remembered that no storyworld can be complete in the same sense that the actual world is. At best, there is only an illusion of completeness. However, as mentioned above, we do not have access to every detail in real life either, and no one person will ever experience (or document) everything in the actual world. Our understandably incomplete perceptions of the actual world could arguably be what makes the illusion of completeness effective.

Finally, *consistency* refers to the "degree to which details are plausible, feasible, and without contradiction" (M. Wolf 43). This is relevant for both individual novels, as well as a series as a whole. Some continuity mistakes are bound to occur simply due to human error, especially in a series as long as *Discworld*, but provided they are infrequent and not overly jarring, readers may overlook them (48). Pratchett himself noted that while fans took an interest in geographical continuity and did not like errors, he did not think that readers expected complete consistency (Hills 218). It is notable that many of *Discworld*'s major inconsistencies mostly occur within the first few novels of the series, such as the hierarchies and characters within the Unseen University, where most of Discworld's wizards study and live. Many of these early errors can be attributed to the fact that, at the time, Pratchett had not yet found his footing with the series, which may be why longtime readers are willing to let these errors go by ("Part 1"). Additionally, his fictional world has, as Matthew Hills puts it, a "narrative presence, impact and legibility" despite such inconsistencies (219). This is partly why the earliest novel I chose to analyze is *Small Gods*, as by this point the concept of Discworld – as both a storyworld and a series – appears to have solidified.

[1] Since many of *Discworld*'s differences from the actual world arise from its genre, I will not delve into them too deeply here. Instead, I analyze some examples of invention which are more unique to *Discworld.*

2.2 Environments and Societies

Environments, both natural and man-made, are a typical subject of description. They help establish locations which occur in the narrative, and in doing so, construct the readers' understanding of the world. Over the course of the series, *Discworld* explores a wide variety of places, although the novels individually tend to be limited to only a few. That said, three out of my four chosen novels explore areas beyond the borders of their main settings, with only *The Truth* taking place entirely within the city-state of Ankh-Morpork, arguably the series' most central location. Even here, the characters frequently travel around different areas of the city and deepen readers' knowledge of it.

Often, the most uninterrupted descriptions of places are given when they are first introduced within the narrative. *Carpe Jugulum*, for example, begins with something bright falling over a mountainous landscape:

> Snow glowed briefly on the mountain slopes when it crackled overhead.
>
> Under it, the land itself started to fall away. The fire was reflected off walls of blue ice as the light dropped into the beginnings of a canyon and thundered now through its twists and turns.
>
> The light snapped off. Something still glided down the moonlit ribbon between the rocks.
>
> It shot out of the canyon at the top of a cliff, where meltwater from a glacier plunged down into a distant pool.
>
> Against all reason there was a valley here, or a network of valleys, clinging to the edge of the mountains before the long fall to the plains. A small lake gleamed in the warmer air. There were forests. There were tiny fields, like a patchwork quilt thrown across the rocks. (*CJ* 9)

Here, the readers are given a number of details of the geography of the area, with the path of the falling object directing what is described. A large swathe of land is covered quite briefly, but effectively: mountains, canyons, cliffs, and valleys all evoke a sense of scale, as well as the climate and shape of the terrain. The fields, in turn, suggest human (or other sentient beings') settlement. The following paragraphs mention heathers and furze on the ground. This description is not very detailed, but it is clear that it is not necessary to list every plant, rock, and stream for readers to gain a vivid image of the area. The passage also includes the arrival and introduction of the Nac Mac Feegle, a race of small, blue, and above all warlike pixies (who will become part of a later sub-plot), before going on to describe the setting:

> The little cup of valleys, glowing in the last shreds of the evening sunlight, was the kingdom of Lancre. From its highest points, people said, you could see all the way to the rim of the world.
>
> It was also said, although not by the people who lived in Lancre, that *below* the rim, where the seas thundered continuously over the edge, their home went through space on the back of four huge elephants that in turn stood on the shell of a turtle that was as big as the world. (10–11)

This more or less continuous description (interrupted only briefly by dialogue) is one of the longest in the novel. It establishes both the broadest strokes of the storyworld – a disc on four elephants and a turtle – as well as a more specific area within it. Furthermore, it demonstrates instances of invention, as defined by Mark Wolf. The landscape is one which could be found in the actual world, but the Nac Mac Feegle could not, and their existence implies that others like them may also exist. The same applies to the nature of Discworld in general: its absurdity sets a precedent for all that exists and happens within it, which in turn means that *Discworld*'s myriad eccentricities are less likely to seem out of place.

This does not mean that *Discworld* is without logic, which is reflected in the characters and societies they form within the storyworld. The workings of these societies appear to have been a central interest of Pratchett's, as they tend to be a frequent focus of description and exploration. The above example quickly shifts in focus to the people of Lancre: "It wasn't that they didn't take an interest in the world around them. On the contrary, they had a deep, personal and passionate involvement in it, but instead of asking, 'Why are we here?' they asked, 'Is it going to rain before the harvest?' […] In fact, Lancre's position and climate bred a hard-headed and straightforward people who often excelled in the world down below" (*CJ* 11). The culture and philosophy of the people of Lancre is a logical result of where and how they live, which stands in contrast to people from other areas.

Ankh-Morpork, too, is usually described in terms of the people who live there. *The Truth* opens as follows:

> The rumour spread through the city like wildfire (which had quite often spread through Ankh-Morpork since its citizens had learned the words 'fire insurance').
>
> *The dwarfs can turn lead into gold…*
>
> It buzzed through the fetid air of the Alchemists' quarter, where they had been trying to do the same thing for centuries without success but were certain that they'd manage it by tomorrow, or next Tuesday at least, or the end of the month for definite.

> It caused speculation among the wizards at Unseen University, where they knew you *could* turn one element into another element, provided you didn't mind it turning back the next day, and where was the good in that? Besides, most elements were happy where they were.
>
> It seared into the scarred, puffy and sometimes totally missing ears of the Thieves' Guild, where people put an edge on their crowbars. Who cared where the gold *came* from?
>
> *The dwarfs can turn lead into gold…*
>
> It reached the cold but incredibly acute ears of the Patrician, and it did that fairly quickly, because you did not stay ruler of Ankh-Morpork for long if you were second in the news. He sighed and made a note of it, and added it to a lot of other notes.
>
> *The dwarfs can turn lead into gold…*
>
> It reached the pointy ears of the dwarfs.
>
> 'Can we?'
>
> 'Damned if I know. *I* can't.' (*TT* 11–12)

The first impression of Ankh-Morpork in *The Truth* is of a citizenry best characterized as entrepreneurial, optimistic, and opportunistic, but also as diverse in their ways of thinking and ways of life. As one of Discworld's largest and most influential cities, this kind of variety is natural – in fact, a lack of variety could be conspicuous. Furthermore, the list of people here is clearly incomplete, and those that are mentioned imply further details. The existence of fire insurance, for example, suggests that there is at least one insurance provider within the city, either private or government-owned, and everything that comes with it. Similarly, the Thieves' Guild alludes to the political structures within the city. Later, other guilds are mentioned, with one in particular – the Engravers' Guild – becoming part of the plot. Without being explicitly told (although some *Discworld* novels make it explicitly clear), readers could infer that Ankh-Morpork has a guild for just about every profession in the city, and what that entails about the way the city is organized.

Beyond social structures and governmental organization, Ankh-Morpork in particular provides several examples of how people affect their environment, especially over longer periods of time. The city has been built and rebuilt (even on top of itself, sometimes), and both the catastrophes and the daily routines of its citizens have shaped it into what it is during the series. The Unseen University, for example, has had an impact on some areas outside of its campus:

> The map led them to the Thaumatological Park, just hubwards of the Unseen University. It was still so new that the modern flat-roofed buildings, winners of several

> awards from the Guild of Architects, hadn't even *begun* to let in water and shed window panes in a breeze.
>
> An attempt had been made to pretty up the immediate area with grass and trees, but since the site had been built partly on the old ground known as the 'unreal estate' this had not worked as planned. The area had been a dump for Unseen University for thousands of years. There was a lot more below that turf than old mutton bones, and magic *leaks*. On any map of thaumic pollution the unreal estate would be at the centre of some very concentric circles.
>
> Already the grass was multicoloured and some of the trees had walked away.
>
> (*TT* 117)

The university, during its long history, has produced a lot of magical waste, which must be put somewhere. As with poorly handled toxic waste in the actual world, this has a permanent effect on the environment, one which anyone attempting to repurpose the land must deal with. In this case, the solution has largely been to ignore it and live with the consequences. Once again, this suggests something about the nature of the people living in Ankh-Morpork, and the growth of the city. Garbage is not always disposed of responsibly (whether out of laziness, expense, or both), nor is the fallout dealt with satisfactorily, and the need for more land to meet the requirements of a growing city sometimes leads to settling for sub-par areas. These decisions and missteps give readers the sense of a city that is lived in and has great deal of history because of it, rather than a static, artificial setting. As Matthew Hills notes, Discworld's spaces can affect the narratives that occur within them, which they would not be able to do if they were intended as merely backdrop (223).

Something similar is seen in *Thud!*, although it is not a result of magic as such, according to a footnote:

> *Empirical Crescent was just off Park Lane, in what was generally a high-rent district. The rents would have been higher still were it not for the continued existence of Empirical Crescent itself, which, despite the best efforts of the Ankh-Morpork Historical Preservation Society, had still not been pulled down.
>
> This was because it was built by Bergholt Stuttley Johnson, better known to history as 'Bloody Stupid' Johnson, a man who combined in one frail body such enthusiasm, self-delusion and *creative* lack of talent that he was, in many respects, one of the great heroes of architecture. […] Only Bloody Stupid Johnson could have twisted common matter through dimensions it was not supposed to enter. And only Bloody Stupid Johnson could have done all this by *accident*.

> His highly original multi-dimensional approach to geometry was responsible for Empirical Crescent. On the outside it was a normal terraced crescent of the period, built of honey-coloured stone with the occasional pillar or cherub nailed on. Inside, the front door of No.1 opened into the back bedroom of No.15, the ground-floor front window of No.3 showed the view appropriate to the second floor of No.9, smoke from the dining-room fireplace of No.2 came out of the chimney of No.19. (*T* 212–213n)

Bloody Stupid Johnson is a recurring character and joke throughout the series. While he is never seen in person – he presumably dies or is already dead early on in the series – his work turns up time and time again, never achieving what was intended but doing so spectacularly.

When discussing the logic of the novels, it should also be noted that not only is the current state of any given society a result of its past and present circumstances, the novels also track changes as they happen. Ankh-Morpork, in particular, is usually at the center of that change. During the series, an industrial revolution of sorts takes place. While it is not the focus of any of my chosen novels, where this revolution is either still in its early stages, or the changes which have already taken place are simply not very relevant, the growth of the city is clear to the characters themselves:

> First the dwarfs had come, William thought as he went back to his desk. They'd been insulted because of their diligence and because of their height, but they had kept their heads down, and prospered. Then the trolls had come, and they got on a little better, because people don't throw as many stones at creatures seven feet tall who could throw rocks back. Then the zombies had come out of the casket. One or two werewolves had crept in under the door. The gnomes had integrated quickly, despite a bad start, because they were tough and even more dangerous to cross than a troll; at least a troll couldn't run up your trouser leg. There weren't that many species *left*.
>
> The vampires had never made it. […] So now it was dawning on the brighter ones that the only way people would accept vampires was if they stopped *being* vampires. (*TT* 136–137)

Ankh-Morpork has become – and is still in the process of becoming – the home of a more and more diverse population. The city's economic prosperity attracts immigration, and as these new groups begin to integrate, the cultural landscape changes. They are met with resistance, as seen in the above quote, and they deal with it in their own ways. This description suggests a complicated and chaotic process of change in demographics, which is reinforced both by other descriptions throughout the novels, as well as their respective narratives. One such issue is the discord between dwarfs and trolls which is at the heart of the narrative of *Thud!*.

Another example of the difficulty involved in these changes can be shown in how, despite the events of *The Truth* where Otto becomes an accepted member of the *Ankh-Morpork Times*, these prejudices are still current later in the series: "The crowd had placards. 'Bloodsuckers out!!', Vimes read, and 'No fangs!'" (*T* 19). The protest is in response to the City Watch intending to hire its first vampire officer.

Taken together, such details demonstrate that not only do various cultures exist within *Discworld*, they interact and clash and blend in many ways. Some clashes are shown explicitly – such as the animosity of humans toward non-humans, as well as between different non-human groups – and others are only implied. These conflicts also range in severity, from mere cultural misunderstandings (such as Goodmountain attempting to describe dwarf marriage customs to William [*TT* 253–254]) to the outright violence in *Thud!*. The political and cultural complexity suggests not only a complete and consistent storyworld, but a living one where various systems impact one another and develop, with or without the actions of the protagonist of any given novel. Thus, Discworld appears to exist independently beyond the constraints of the novels.

2.3 Magic, Science, and Technology

As it is set in a fantasy storyworld, it comes as no surprise that the *Discworld* series features magic and magical beings. However, *Discworld* also takes care to incorporate this magic into its other elements, particularly technology in what is called "technomancy" (*T* 78). Here, I first analyze descriptions of magic separately, as magic is one of the central aspects of the Disc's natural world and its practitioners have a long history, predating most of Discworld's current technological innovations. It is, in other words, part of the storyworld's foundations. I then analyze both magical and non-magical technology. In both cases, I also examine how these elements impact the storyworld at large, mostly through their effects on people and people's effects on them.

Magic is practiced primarily by the wizards of the Unseen University in Ankh-Morpork, or the witches around the world, who generally live in more rural areas. The differences in setting underline the differences in the way magic is practiced: the wizards, most of whom spend their lives at the university, are academics, and their use of magic tends to involve specific rituals. Magic is, to them, something to be studied. Witches, on the other hand, live among the regular people of their communities, and often act as healers for both people and livestock, and as a result are respected and feared. Their magic tends to be more

mundane when compared to the flashy spells of the wizards, but it is much more practical and generally used as a means to an end. The gendering of magic is itself something which the series comments on in several ways in many of the novels, sometimes in passing and sometimes at the center of their respective stories.[2] Beyond witches and wizards, many of Discworld's non-human inhabitants can use some form of innate magic (such as vampires, who are capable of mind-control) or are magical by their very construction (such as the golems, who are animated by magic).

The existence of magic itself is often left out of descriptions in the *Discworld* series, as it generally does not need to be stated. Readers are likely to assume it exists as a given due to the series' nature as fantasy, and pre-existing knowledge of the archetypes of wizards, witches, and magical creatures (see 4.2). Instead, it is usually the ways magic is used which are either directly or indirectly described, and the way in which it is done often helps normalize magic's existence. For example, when Granny Weatherwax responds to a medical emergency at the beginning of *Carpe Jugulum*, her departure is described:

> There was a small drop on the other side of the clearing, with a twenty-foot fall to bend in the track. The broom hadn't fired by the time she reached it but she ran on, swinging a leg over the bristles as it plunged.
>
> The magic caught halfway down and her boots dragged across the dead bracken as the broom soared up into the night. (23–24)

There is nothing here that would indicate that the existence of a magic broom is abnormal, although it could be concluded that this particular one does not work very well. Neither Granny nor the boy who came to get her react to it at all: it is clearly an ordinary item to them both, simply a vehicle at Granny's disposal. Furthermore, while very short, the passage implies that the broom works through its own magic (or magic that was imbued into it at some point prior), rather than by any magic Granny might actively be using – it is the *broom* that has not fired by the time Granny makes her leap. In fact, it seems to work like an old car. This example shows how even short descriptions can lend to readers' understanding of how a storyworld works. When considered with all of the other descriptions in the novel, small details accumulate to form a bigger picture.

However, not all of Discworld's descriptions are quite so short. One lengthy description can be found in footnote to a conversation between Agnes and Magrat, explaining

[2] *Equal Rites*, the third book in the series, is about a female wizard joining the university, despite their rules excluding women. Conversely, *The Shepherd's Crown*, the last book in the series, features a man becoming a witch.

one of the more notable uses of magic: “Agnes nodded. Nanny had warned her about it but, even so, it was unnerving to turn up at Granny’s cottage and find her stretched out on the floor as stiff as a stick and holding, in fingers that were almost blue, a card with the words: I ATE’NT DEAD*” (*CJ* 56). This is followed by one sentence explaining that Granny is somewhere else, seeing the world through the eyes of some animal. The bulk of the description is as follows:

> *When there was nothing much else to occupy her time Granny Weatherwax sent her mind Borrowing, letting it piggyback inside the heads of other creatures. She was widely accepted as the most skilled exponent of the art that the Ramtops had seen for centuries, being practically able to get inside the minds of things that did not even *have* minds. The practice meant, among other things, that Lancre people were less inclined towards the casual cruelty to animals that is a general feature of the rural idyll, on the basis that the rat you throw a brick at today might turn out to be the witch you need some toothache medicine from tomorrow.
>
> It also meant that the people calling on her unexpectedly would find her stretched out apparently cold and lifeless, heart and pulse barely beating. The sign had saved a lot of embarrassment. (*CJ* 56n)

Using footnotes to provide additional details in this way is very common throughout the series. Arguably, the body of the text already provides enough information for readers to understand everything necessary about how Borrowing works, and how it is seen by the people who witness it. Agnes and Magrat are both witches, yet they view Borrowing as something done by Granny rather than as common practice, thus perhaps suggesting that it is rather advanced. The description in the footnote, on the other hand, provides far more details. However, the focus is less on the specifics of this particular use of magic (although the mechanics of it are explained) and more on the implications it has for Lancre. The increased respect for animals in the area is a natural consequence of the fact that not only is Granny capable of Borrowing, she is well-known for it. Since she is in a position of authority – one born out of her skill in medicine, among other things – the citizens of Lancre have many reasons to avoid crossing her.

Thus, the footnote demonstrates how a description reveals both details of the storyworld as well as their underlying logic. This particular use of magic, albeit somewhat unusual, is nevertheless a part of the storyworld that impacts the lives of the community, and the inhabitants change their behavior as a result. Similarly, Granny has changed her own behavior in a small way: she has made and uses the sign to prevent confusion caused by the

effect Borrowing has on her. Finally, the description implies something about the general relationship between characters and magic: the people of Discworld (or at least the people of Lancre) are accustomed to magic and can adapt to it where necessary. Moreover, throughout *Carpe Jugulum*, magic is shown to have many forms, which vary in how common they are, and the skill required. Broomsticks are normal enough not to elicit any kind of reaction from witches and non-magic users alike, whereas Borrowing is much less common, and it is implied to be quite difficult.

Making magic (and other fantastic elements) into a mundane part of life and incorporating its logical consequences is part of what Farah Mendlesohn calls *immersive fantasy*, and perhaps more specifically, *rationalized fantasy*. This kind of fantasy approaches its elements in a more scientific way – that is, with a focus on how things work and the logic therein. For his part, Daniel Lüthi argues that Pratchett's approach to magic is more akin in style to science fiction than fantasy, as *Discworld*'s magic is often rooted in real-world science and concepts, albeit pushed to absurdity (132–134). This approach imposes a (pseudo-)scientific kind of logic on *Discworld*'s magic. Mendlesohn stresses the importance of coherency in the storyworld, within which "the actors can predict the consequence of their actions on the world" (63). The goal of worldbuilding in immersive fantasy, Mendlesohn claims, is to "create something that can be existed in" (71). Thus, characters adapting to the circumstances of their environment and changing them in turn is part of what makes Discworld a believable storyworld. Furthermore, the ways characters react and adapt helps both normalize fantastic elements and highlight abnormal circumstances when they happen, which is necessary for constructing narratives. When a storyworld has coherent rules, readers, too, are able to understand the actions of characters, and extrapolate consequences and further details.

In the *Discworld* series, this coherency can also be seen in the development of technology. Throughout the novels, new innovations are introduced, and their impact explored to varying degrees. In fact, while not the focus of any of my chosen novels, Discworld undergoes an industrial revolution, culminating in the invention and implementation of the railroad in the fortieth novel, *Raising Steam*. Of the four novels I analyze here, *The Truth* is the one most focused on technological development: at the heart of its narrative is the printing press and movable type. Prior to its invention, William de Worde relied on the Guild of Engravers, where he would take his newsletter to be carved into a woodcut template. The process was time-consuming and expensive, and these factors limited

both the frequency and scale of production of his newsletter. With the printing press, he is able to print faster, more frequently, and much cheaper.

The developments do not end here. When *The Ankh-Morpork Times* hires Otto Chriek to be their photographer, he suggests a way to incorporate image plates into the printing press:

> 'How? You can't engrave, can you?'
>
> 'No, but… all ve are printing is black and vite, yes? And zer paper is vite zo all ve are really *printink* is black, okay? I looked at how zer dwarfs do zer letters, and zey haf all zese bits of metal lying around and… you know how zer engravers can engrave metal viz acid?'
>
> 'Yes?'
>
> 'Zo, all I haf to do is teach zer imps to *paint* viz acid. End of problem. Getting grey took a bit of thought, but I zink I haf—'
>
> 'You mean you can get the imps to etch the picture straight on to a plate?'
>
> 'Yes. It is vun of those ideas that are obvious ven you zink about it.' (*TT* 143)

While given entirely in dialogue, this passage functions mostly as description (which I discuss in 2.5). Otto describes some of the workings of the printing press, and using his knowledge of engravers' practices, he is able to adapt and develop it further. This demonstrates several features: a character's ability to extrapolate and adapt information, the logic of the storyworld, and the process of innovation. Despite the fact that it is a new technology, the printing press is quickly modified to better suit the needs of the people using it, and the logical extension of this is that the same process happens elsewhere within the storyworld as well, even if it is not directly described.

This is corroborated by other technologies that are mentioned throughout the series. For example, the personal organizers (known as Dis-Organizers) seen in Ankh-Morpork are mentioned at various points. In *The Truth*, one of the main antagonists carries a Dis-Organizer Mark Two in order to record conversations for blackmail (118), whereas later in the series, in *Thud!*, Sam Vimes reluctantly uses a Dis-Organizer Mark Five, "'The Gooseberry'™" which was given to him by his wife. He remarks that he cannot get rid of it, because whenever he tries, she buys him a "*better* one" (78). Even without Vimes' comment, there is a clear implication of development and successive iterations of this device, based on the mark numbers. The process of development is not described, but readers are likely to assume that it happens regardless, in much the same way real-world consumer electronics are upgraded over time.

The Dis-Organizers are also a good example of how magic is adapted, that is, it is incorporated into technology. The Dis-Organizers are created by binding a small imp (a "creation of biothaumic particles" (*TT* 118), possessing some degree of intelligence) to the device through unspecified means, where it can then carry out various tasks. Since imps have a perfect memory but cannot lie because they have "no imagination whatsoever" (*TT* 146), they are suitable for accurately recording things. Similarly, they are capable of painting what they see in photorealistic detail, and this is what Otto is talking about in the above example, where he suggests that the imps could paint with acid on metal. His box camera (and presumably, the Discworld's other cameras) contains an imp, and the flash powder lamp of the real-world equivalent is replaced by a cage of magical salamanders. As in many real-world myths, salamanders are associated with fire in *Discworld*: "They *liked* heat. Their ancestors had evolved in volcanoes" (*TT* 362), and it is for this reason that they are capable of emitting light. In effect, the camera combines *Discworld*'s natural, magical, and technological elements, and allows readers to see how these three aspects of the storyworld can fit together. As with the Dis-Organizers, they demonstrate characters' creativity and their inclination to experiment with and recreate the things around them. By having these developments happen explicitly (as with Otto) and implicitly (as with the Dis-Organizers), readers are given the illusion of a complete storyworld which functions independently of the characters of each novel, but which is also affected by their actions.

Finally, the development of technology is shown to have a broader impact on the storyworld by demonstrating how it affects and changes things on a societal level. In *The Truth*, for example, the Patrician acknowledges that the clacks (Discworld's version of the semaphore, a precursor to the telegram) has impacted the city and its politics:

> '*If it was a fine day*,' he said sharply, 'you would see a big semaphore tower on the other side of the river. Words flying back and forth from every corner of the continent. Not long ago it would take me the better part of a month to exchange letters with our ambassador in Genua. Now I can have a reply tomorrow. Certain things become easier, but this makes them harder in other ways. We have to change the way we think. We have to move with the times. Have you heard of c-commerce?'
>
> 'Certainly. The merchant ships are always—'
>
> 'I mean that you may now send a clacks all the way to Genua to order a… a pint of prawns, if you like. Is that not a notable thing?' (*TT* 49)

As the ruler of Ankh-Morpork, Havelock Vetinari has a good view of the implications and repercussions of various events on a grander scale than most other characters do. This helps

demonstrate how changes, such as technological innovations, have far-reaching consequences, greater than may be assumed based on any individual novel alone. Many of Discworld's technological developments begin in Ankh-Morpork – itself a logical consequence of the fact that the city is an economic powerhouse which attracts people to come and work, including entrepreneurs – but they do not end there. Where these consequences cannot always be explored within the narratives of the series, they can be acknowledged in descriptions, as in this example.

Without the coherency, interaction, and sense of consequence shown above, the technological and magical aspects of the storyworld could seem tacked-on and superficial, rather than meaningful parts of a world which is shaped by its own rules and the actions of its inhabitants. Even those elements which are intended as comic – such as the Dis-Organizers – are incorporated into the logic of the storyworld, and thus contribute to building it. This approach to the details of the storyworld appears to have been entirely deliberate on Pratchett's part. In a short essay from 2007, he recommends that aspiring fantasy authors apply logic to their worlds, especially the fantastic elements: "Fantasy works best when you take it seriously (it can also become a lot funnier, but that's another story). Taking it seriously means there must be rules. […] Joking aside, that sort of thinking is the motor that has kept the Discworld series moving for twenty-two years" ("Notes" 84). The consistency and coherence of the magical and technological facets of the storyworld – among other details – is a cornerstone of the *Discworld* series' worldbuilding.

2.4 Characters and Focalization

Using characters to motivate the dissemination of information (including descriptions) is very common in fiction. Christine Brooke-Rose notes that while this is one of the common features of realistic discourse, it is by no means limited to realism (87–92). Characters with various areas of expertise and knowledge can justify explaining concepts to readers in a way which allows the implied author to remain unobtrusive. Brooke-Rose's analysis compares the features of realism and science fiction, but her observations can be applied to works of fantasy. Werner Wolf, too, underlines how literature during and after the nineteenth century "was linking descriptions to the internal perspective of focalizers," to the effect of making descriptions seem more plausible within the narrative (55). I would argue that the effects of focalization go beyond simply justifying the use of descriptions.

Discworld novels are mostly focalized through their respective protagonists, occasionally through other characters for scenes where the protagonist is not present, and with an omniscient narrator filling in when necessary. Characters who have lived their entire lives in the storyworld naturally find the fantastic elements therein to be normal, and this in turn adjusts readers' attitudes toward what they are shown. According to Mendlesohn, this casualization of fantasy allows the abnormal (or even absurd) to appear ordinary. The demotic voice, in particular, is well-suited to this end (73–74). Sam Vimes is one of the best examples of a such a voice, although every respective protagonist of the chosen novels fits this definition to some degree. Vimes was born into poverty (although he has since married into one the city's richest, most influential families), and as the commander of the City Watch, he regularly sees the worst Ankh-Morpork has to offer. His deep familiarity with the city and its inhabitants (as well as the opinions he has formed over the years) means that the descriptions focalized through him allow readers to view Ankh-Morpork as he sees it. Mendlesohn notes that "Pratchett uses [Vimes'] cynicism to tell us about the city, to tell us about its bones" (91). This provides a lot of information to readers, but as shown in the example below, this includes Vimes' own biases and blind spots.

While a character's view of the world is a part of their characterization, the fact that different people with their own perspectives and backgrounds exist suggests that the storyworld is complete and complex enough that no one character can possibly know everything about it. For example, in *Thud!,* Vimes comes across Otto Chriek taking pictures for *The Ankh-Morpork Times* of the protest against the Watch hiring a vampire officer, despite being a vampire himself. Vimes realizes that the crowd is leaving Otto alone, and after a brief conversation, thinks the following:

> But yes… Little fussy Otto, in his red-lined black opera cloak with pockets for all his gear, his shiny black shoes, his carefully cut widow's peak and, not least, his ridiculous accent that grew thicker or thinner depending on who he was talking to, did not look like a threat. He looked funny, a joke, a music-hall vampire. It had never previously occurred to Vimes that, just possibly, the joke was on other people. Make them laugh, and they're not afraid. (*T* 20)

Here, Otto is described through Vimes' view. The more objective details of Otto's appearance (cloak, shoes, haircut) are recontextualized for readers and Vimes himself, in a way that they never directly were in *The Truth,* where they are either taken at face value, or then Otto's more dangerous abilities are shown without juxtaposing them with his carefully constructed façade. Vimes' thoughts contribute to his characterization, which I discuss further in 3.4.

However, Vimes' thoughts also demonstrate the kinds of changes that people like Otto need to make in order to be accepted within the city – and even then, they are likely to face prejudice in one form or another. While the focus here is on vampires, readers can still infer that other inhabitants of Discworld may do the same, out of any combination of choice, necessity, social pressure, and local cultural expectations. Furthermore, the fact that this description is presented as something of a revelation to Vimes (a native of Ankh-Morpork, whereas Otto is an immigrant from the country of Überwald) suggests that characters do not always understand these pressures when they are not subject to them, which in turn can result in misunderstandings and, at worst, prejudiced behavior.

Vimes represents only one view of the storyworld. His background and profession provide him with a great deal of insight into the workings of the city, but his perspective is neither objective nor complete. In contrast, William de Worde's life has been very different: he was born into a wealthy noble family, who he has since distanced himself from. He resents his father's bigotry and sense of superiority, as well as that of the rest of the noble class. William supports himself through work as a scribe and writer of newsletters, as his education has ensured he can write at a much higher level than the average Ankh-Morpork citizen. Despite his conscious efforts to avoid being like his father, however, some of the condescension of his upbringing occasionally comes through:

> 'It's a block prepared for a woodcut,' said William. He wondered how he could possibly explain the idea to a dwarf from outside the city. 'You know? Engraving? A… a sort of very nearly magical way of getting *lots* of copies of writing? I'm afraid I shall have to go and make another one now.' *(TT* 26)

The dwarf he is speaking to is Gunilla Goodmountain (cf. Gutenberg, see 4.3), one of the inventors of the printing press, who only failed to recognize the engraved block because it had been run over by Goodmountain's cart. William, however, assumes that a dwarf (or perhaps, anyone) from outside of the city could not possibly be familiar with the concept, and does not recognize his mistake until the dwarfs manage to make a new copy of William's letter in less than a minute, and correct a printing error they make even quicker. His limits as a focalizer are thus made clear early on, and his human fallibility is highlighted. However, as with Vimes, this does not invalidate all of the observations he makes, or the parts of the storyworld which are described through him. In many ways, his perspectives even overlap with those of Vimes, as William's work as an investigative journalist makes him see and interact with a large variety of Ankh-Morpork.

One of the more interesting perspectives William can provide to readers is an outsider's understanding of Sam Vimes. As the protagonist of every novel centering on the City Watch, Vimes is the focalizer for a significant part of the series. As such, readers learn a lot about who he is, how he thinks, and what motivates him. From William's point of view, however, he is someone in a position of authority who is unwilling to share information with the public, and who directs the Watch to follow suit. For new readers of the series, Vimes could seem gruff and unsympathetic, an obstacle to be overcome. However, as Edward James points out, readers who are familiar with the City Watch novels will understand Vimes much better than William ever could, and sympathize with him (194). Returning readers could either know from subsequent novels, or guess based on preceding ones, that to Vimes, William and *The Ankh-Morpork Times* are a nuisance which threatens, in many circumstances, to make things worse by interfering with active investigations. Similarly, readers familiar with *The Truth* will read City Watch novels with a better understanding of who Vimes appears to be from an outsider's perspective. Their mild mutual antagonism arises from different ideals, and this conflict once again suggests variety in the storyworld. In fact, Mark Wolf notes that having major characters from one story appear as minor characters in another "can be a powerful way to evoke the world extending beyond the confines of a particular story; and one can imagine that every minor character […] has as complete and detailed a life as the main character does" (172). This is something that occurs frequently in the *Discworld* series, and holds true each time.

William's background means that he is also intimately familiar with how the upper classes see the Watch and the law: "The Watch, in other words, was a regrettably necessary sub-set of the criminal classes, a section of the population informally defined by Lord de Worde as anyone with less than a thousand dollars a year" (*TT* 149), and later: "* William's class understood that justice was like coal or potatoes. You ordered it when you needed it" (150n). The entitlement of the rich upper classes is brought up quite often in *The Truth*, as well as several other *Discworld* novels (particularly those taking place in Ankh-Morpork), and these passages are generally focalized through a character who comes from the middle or lower classes. Even when this class conflict is not the central theme of a given novel's narrative, it is often present as a background tension and contributing factor to a number of circumstances. As this occurs within certain locations, such as in Ankh-Morpork, this once again suggests a multitude of viewpoints and interests which do not always align. In other words, no country or culture is shown to be a monolith in terms of how its inhabitants think and behave.

2.5 Typography and Images

Werner Wolf argues that images, too, can function as a form of description. Unlike verbal descriptions, they are limited to portraying static visual details, but they can provide a level of precise detail which verbal descriptions cannot (38–39). As images can be highly mimetic, they can be seen to require "only a relatively **low degree of recipients' share** in the concretization of depicted objects, since it permits the beholder to experience those objects in a way that is much closer to real-life perception than is the case, e.g., in written literature" (39). In other words, readers (or viewers, in this case) need to do far less work in order to form a mental model of a described object.

While none of my four chosen novels are illustrated, they nevertheless make use of a visual element in their storytelling, namely, typography. The various instances seen throughout the series range in pictorial quality from very simple visual adjustments – such as formatting – to changes in font and other visual flourishes. Each of the examples I discuss here involve a verbal component, as they all contain readable text. Nevertheless, I would argue that the visual aspects function in a pictorial fashion, even the simplest examples, as they are visually distinct from the main text.

One of the simpler instances of this can be found in *Small Gods*, when Om comes across the philosopher Didactylos in Ephebe:

> And this impression was given some weight by the sign chalked on a board and stuck to the wall over the barrel.
>
> It read:
>
> DIDACTYLOS and Nephew
> Practical Philosophers
>
> No Proposition Too Large
> 'We Can Do Your Thinking For You'
>
> Special Rates after 6 pm
> Fresh Axioms Every Day

> In front of the barrel, a short man in a toga that must have once been white, in the same way that once all continents must have been joined together, was kicking another one who was on the ground. (*SG* 179)

The text of the sign is differentiated from the rest of the text by the layout of the page: the first two pairs of lines are centered, while the last pair is pushed to the left without the same paragraph indentations which are used elsewhere. The font and point size are the same as the surrounding text, but the spacing between line pairs is double. While this excerpt only uses layout, it is very effective in conveying what the sign looks like. Readers are likely to be familiar with how typical signs and adverts look, and coupled with the short description of "chalked on a board," they can easily imagine what this sign is supposed to look like. Arguably, the use of layout here limits the possible interpretations of the description of the sign, which allows it to feel more concrete.

Another (significantly more common) typographical feature of the novels is the use of different fonts and types of typographic emphasis to express unusual speech or handwritten elements. The most prevalent of these is how Death's speech is portrayed. Death – an anthropomorphic personification taking the form of a skeleton in a black robe – appears in some capacity in almost every *Discworld* novel, and his speech is consistently rendered in small capitals throughout:

> I MUST SAY YOU HAVE AN AMAZING PERSISTENCE OF VITALITY, said the horseman. It was not so much a voice, more an echo inside the head. IF NOT A PRESENCE OF MIND.
>
> 'Who *are* you?'
>
> I'M DEATH, said Death. AND I REALLY AM NOT HERE TO TAKE YOUR MONEY. WHICH PART OF THIS DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? (*CJ* 29)

Death's speech is clearly marked as different from that of a normal character, such as that of the spirit of the recently deceased highwayman shown in the excerpt above. This particular example includes a description of Death's voice – or lack thereof – but the qualities of Death's voice can be inferred from the choice of font: small capitals appear more severe, emphatic and abnormal than regular speech. Simultaneously, the choice of font avoids having the connotation of shouting that regular capitals would have, as that is used elsewhere: "I SAID TVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS IS A LOT OF MONEY, VILLIAM!" (*TT* 272). Moreover, the fact that Death does not actually speak aloud is shown through the lack of quotation marks. As small capitals are only ever used for Death (and anyone with Death-related powers), readers will always associate them with his character, and will always recognize him

from his speech, even if given no other descriptions of either his voice or his appearance. This is highly appropriate for Death, as both a character and a concept.

Changing the point size for various effects is also common in the series. Of particular note are the instances where this is used to communicate differences in volume. For example:

> No one saw the tiny speck, tumbling down from the sky.
> Don't put your faith in gods. But you can believe in turtles.
> A feeling of rushing wind in Brutha's mind, and a voice…
> —obuggerbuggerbuggerhelpaarghnoNoNoAarghBuggerNONOAARGH— (*SG* 361–362)

Similarly, when Vimes attempts to use the newly installed speaking tubes at the Watch House:

> 'Put me through to through to the cells, will you?'
> 'Wizzip? Wipwipwip?'
> 'Say again?'
> 'Sneedle flipstock?'
> 'This is Vimes!'
> 'Scritscrit?' (*TT* 186)

In both cases, the point size – that is, a visual property of the text – is used to describe an aural quality. This could have been done verbally (which is arguably to closer to hearing), but as with the sign in *Small Gods*, a visual representation is both more efficient and more evocative of the object of description. While these examples are no closer to "real-life perception" (W. Wolf 39) than a verbal description would be, as neither text nor images have a true aural component, they demonstrate how varied and effective typography can be employed as a tool of mimesis.

Of the four novels analyzed here, the visual elements at the most pictorial end of the scale are used in *The Truth*. The news articles portrayed therein are often formatted in columns with black borders, and with headlines in a large point size and the article in a small point size. More strikingly, a page header for the newspaper is introduced fairly early in the novel:

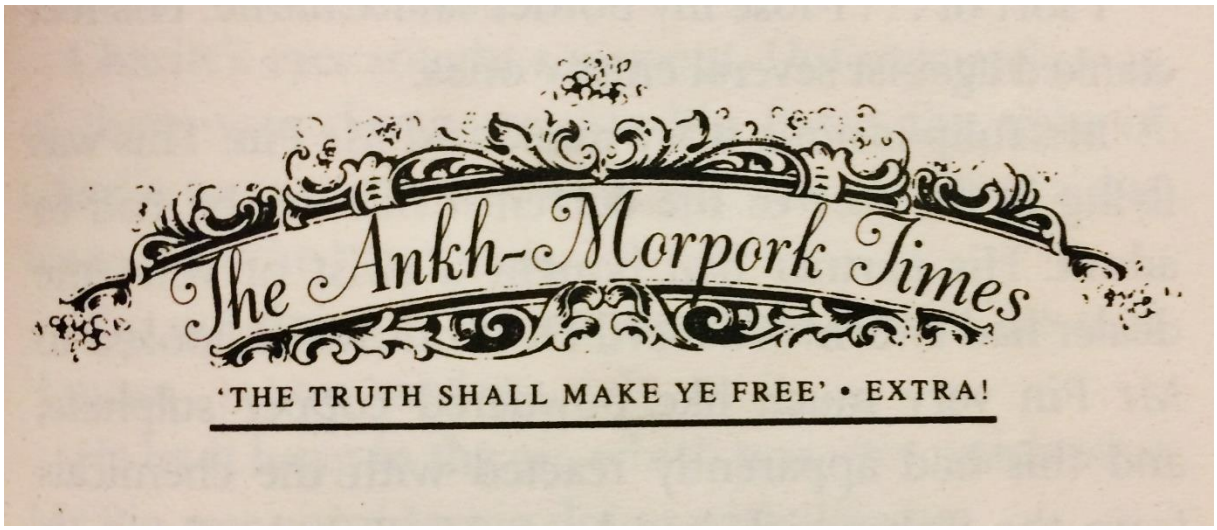

Figure 1 A-M Times header (*TT* 125)

This header is used three times in the novel, and the last two include the front-page headlines of their respective issues, as well as a running joke of "FREE" being misprinted as "FRET" (179) and "FRED" (233). The ornamental edges – which William refers to as "fruit salads and leaves and things" (125) – are drawn to mimic either an uneven application of ink, or an imperfectly engraved printing plate. This lends the header, and the newspaper overall, a sense of verisimilitude, as the image mimics not only the appearance of the header's design, but the quality of printing as well. As with Didactylos' sign (and arguably to a much higher degree), this provides a tangible image for readers, alleviating the need to imagine it based on verbal description alone. Furthermore, in making this particular object seem more real, the surrounding objects, characters, and events are implied to be on a similar level of solidity and reality as well. Ultimately, this is the effect of each of the examples cited here: by making short passages visually distinct in specific ways, Pratchett is able to evoke various details without verbal description acting as a proxy, so to speak. In doing so, he creates the illusion of a storyworld which exists beyond the medium of text alone.

2.6 Dialogue

Finally, let me briefly discuss the use of dialogue. While dialogue is generally a part of narrative, there are many instances where dialogue contributes to worldbuilding and, in effect, functions as description. Characters often discuss aspects of the storyworld which are not directly relevant to the plot, but which provide a great deal of details about the world. I would argue that this is an extension of justifying description through characters (discussed in 2.4), as a character's spoken dialogue is very similar to their internal monologue, which in

turn is how these descriptions usually come across. As seen above, several of the examples I have used thus far have included some dialogue.

The most clear-cut examples of description within dialogue are those where characters explain something to someone else. In *The Truth*, this is frequently done by Otto, who has a great deal of knowledge in his area of expertise which he is eager to share:

> 'Vell, I am vorking on an obscurograph.'
>
> William's forehead wrinkled. It was turning into a long day. 'Taking pictures with darkness?'
>
> 'Viz *true* darkness, to be precise,' said Otto, excitement entering his voice. 'Not just absence of light. Zer light on zer *ozzer* side of darkness. You could call it… living darkness. Ve can't see it, but imps can. Did you know zer Uberwaldean Deep Cave land eel emits a burst of dark light ven startled?' (*TT* 144).

Otto is a rather scientifically minded character, and it is reflected in the topics of his speech. He elaborates on this description later, explaining that dark light can illuminate the past, present, and future due to the nature of the passage of time being "qvantum fluctuations in zer fabric of space-time" (224). This reveals some of the workings of the storyworld of *Discworld* at the ontological level, the deepest level of invention, as opposed to the nominal or cultural levels (M. Wolf 36). This excerpt clearly draws from real-life scientific concepts and science fiction (which is discussed further in 4.3) and contributes to establishing world logic. The use of dialogue, specifically, allows for this description to be given despite Otto not being the focalizing character in either passage quoted here. Effectively, this diminishes the limits of focalization through characters rather than an omniscient narrator by allowing non-focalizing characters to contribute their viewpoints to the narration.

Similarly, one of the two main antagonists of *The Truth*, Mr. Tulip, frequently comments on the art and architecture of Ankh-Morpork. In doing so, he highlights an aspect of the city's cultural sphere, while also connecting it to that of other countries: "'Well — me, it's a —ing da Quirm,' he said. 'I seen a print of it. *Woman Holding Ferret.* He did it just after he moved from Genua and was influenced by —ing Caravati'" (*TT* 83). When he elaborates on his observations, they include detailed analysis of brushwork, sculpting, or construction, among other things, which suggests that he has studied art, and by extension, implies the existence of a field dedicated to the study of fine art. Mr. Tulip picking out forgeries based on his knowledge also indicates that as in the actual world, scammers have targeted the Disc's art

world as well. Much like Otto, Mr. Tulip is rarely the focalizing character, but his dialogue allows for his knowledge and perspective on the world to be explored.

At other times, the descriptive aspect of dialogue is less clear. In *Carpe Jugulum*, the daughter of Queen Magrat and King Verence is mistakenly named "Esmerelda Margaret Note Spelling of Lancre" (72) due to the priest reading aloud a note left by Magrat. In the ensuing argument, the dialogue reveals how Lancre's naming ceremonies work, the weight they hold, and the unintended consequences this sometimes has. The name Magrat, for example, is shown to have been a misreading of Margaret. This exchange, while relatively brief, reveals another advantage of dialogue as vehicle for description: as the discussion takes place between multiple characters with varying levels of knowledge, they are each able to contribute to the details of the storyworld. Dialogue between characters, particularly arguments, can bring different and at times contradicting worldviews into focus. In *Small Gods*, Brutha's perspective is challenged by other characters several times, especially after being taken to Ephebe. Here, the philosopher Didactylos describes what he saw when he visited the Omnian Citadel:

> 'You shouldn't do this,' Brutha said wretchedly. 'All this…' His voice trailed off.
>
> 'I know about sureness,' said Didactylos. Now the light, irascible tone had drained out of his voice. 'I remember, before I was blind, I went to Omnia once. This was before the borders were closed, when you still let people travel. And in your Citadel I saw a crowd stoning a man to death in a pit. Ever seen that?'
>
> 'It has to be done,' Brutha mumbled. 'So the soul can be shriven and—'
>
> 'Don't know about the soul. Never been that kind of a philosopher,' said Didactylos. 'All I know is, it was a horrible sight.'
>
> 'The state of the body is not—'
>
> 'Oh, I'm not talking about the poor bugger in the pit,' said the philosopher. 'I'm talking about the people throwing the stones. They were sure all right. They were sure it wasn't them in the pit. You could see it in their faces. So glad it wasn't them that they were throwing just as hard as they could.' (*SG* 198–199)

Such discussions play a central role in Brutha's character development, but also highlight the differences in how the two countries approach faith, learning, and knowledge. Based on these details, readers can infer that similar conflicts exist between other countries, societies, and philosophies. Dialogue can embody these differences and clashes at the level of individuals who are affected. In sum, the descriptions at the general level and at the character level provided by dialogue serve to create believable cultural facets within the storyworld. Like

focalization, dialogue illustrates the diversity of backgrounds and worldviews, with the added factor of interaction.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

Descriptions constitute a significant part of worldbuilding. They are at the core of how a lot of the information about a storyworld is conveyed to readers, ranging from small details about characters' daily lives to the inner workings of societal systems to the ontological foundations of the world itself. *Discworld*, absurd as it is, runs on a logical set of rules which are exemplified and built upon through the details which are revealed through its descriptions. The world contains interlinking systems of magic and technology, which are developed further during the series as a result of characters interacting with them and adapting them to suit their own purposes, both within and outside of what the novels explicitly recount. By providing numerous details which are congruent with each other and follow rules readers can use to extrapolate further details (what Mark Wolf calls "world gestalten" [53]), Pratchett ensures that his storyworld is immersive, as I have shown here.

While they can be effective, no one description alone can communicate the full extent of a storyworld. Rather, the details accumulate over the course of a novel, and in the case of *Discworld*, the entire series. Together, they create a sense of a complete, consistent, storyworld. Furthermore, by having its various elements and broader systems interact, however disparate they may at first appear, the storyworld creates a sense of logic and causality, which in turn makes it far more believable. Delivering descriptions through a character's limited perspective and through their dialogues with one another as well as typography further reinforces the illusion of a complex and above all living, breathing world.

3. Narrative

Worldbuilding is largely achieved through the use of descriptions and exposition, which can provide both the broad strokes and details of a storyworld. Some of this information is given directly, but as Elaine Auyoung points out in her exploration of the use of details in fiction, some of it must be inferred by the reader based on the incomplete descriptions given in a novel (582). However, as anyone who has read a novel can attest, authors tend to do more than recite information about a storyworld. There is almost always a story being told, involving elements such as characters, plots, and themes within the world: in other words, a narrative. In this chapter, I focus on the role played by narrative and its components in worldbuilding.

3.1 Theoretical Background

A storyworld itself may serve simply as a background to a narrative, or it may be foregrounded and worked into the story as a major consideration. Mark Wolf demonstrates this in his work *Building Imaginary Worlds*, where he argues that while stories take place within secondary worlds and worlds can have stories embedded in them, the processes of storytelling and worldbuilding are in fact separate and at times even in conflict (29). In his view, worldbuilding is often curtailed by the needs of telling a concise story, out of narrative convention or by the mandate of an outside power, such as an editor or publisher, among other possible reasons. As a result, Wolf claims, worldbuilding is largely limited to what the narrative needs in order to function.

It is true that the form of the novel may inherently place limitations on length and thus the amount of worldbuilding that can be done. This is a limitation that, it should be noted, is true for a narrative as well. However, I am not convinced that storytelling and worldbuilding are always as separate as Wolf makes them out to be. He seems to define worldbuilding as description, which does not contribute to narrative development but expands on the features of the storyworld, while most everything else is narrative (29). In the works I analyze, there are cases where the distinction between description and narration is clear and potentially useful, but there are others where it does not seem productive. Wolf himself acknowledges that the telling of a story necessarily implies the existence of the world it takes place in (no matter how sparse its world descriptions may be) and that the processes of worldbuilding and storytelling usually work in tandem to enrich each other (29). In fact, Wolf explores how

narratives work in secondary worlds in a later chapter of *Building Imaginary Worlds*, including how narratives and details provided by description together make a coherent world (200). This exploration, if anything, leads me to further question why Wolf separates the processes of storytelling and worldbuilding so definitively: while I do not contest that the two processes can be separate, I would hesitate to claim that this is always the case. In contrast, David Herman suggests that narratives are themselves "blueprints for a specific mode of world-creation" in his work *Basic Elements of Narrative* (105). While Herman's approach in this particular work is more focused on the semiotic aspects of a narrative, I believe the idea of a "blueprint" also holds merit for my approach. In this chapter, I study how the unfolding of the plot of a narrative as well as the related character development contribute to the worldbuilding of my chosen works.

3.2 Plot

When Mark Wolf claims that the needs of narrative limit the amount of worldbuilding that can be done, it seems he mostly means plot. In his chapter focusing on narrative, he defines it as "a series of events which are causally connected, and narrative units as the events themselves, each of which consists of some actor or agent taking part in some action" (199). Plot is what dictates where the characters go, what they do, and ultimately, which parts of the storyworld are shown. This runs the risk of limiting a storyworld to one which does not appear to exist beyond the narrative, whereas a fully realized storyworld could exist without one, or as the host of many (29–30). However, I would argue that the plots of such an independent storyworld would have to intersect with the background systems and details of the world, and can thus both expand on and exemplify them. Furthermore, the fact that characters interact with the details of the world rather than are merely described can be what makes them seem more "real," from static background to places and events, as seen in several examples above. That is, they have an impact and can in turn be acted upon. As I discuss in 3.4, the processes of characterization can inform readers of the storyworld, because the characters are products of and agents within it. Similarly, plots arise out of circumstances within the world, and follow the world's internal rules as they unfold.

In his study *How Literary Worlds Are Shaped*, Bo Pettersson discusses the three categories of common themes found in literary narratives: "*challenge* to understand or to perform a task; *perception* (of *what* and *how*); and *relation* (from cordial to hostile) – all centring on human or human-like agents and their experiences" (121–122). All three (and

combinations thereof) are present to varying degrees in my chosen novels, with challenge and relation being the most prominent. Challenge as a central theme is clear: in *Small Gods*, Brutha and Om must understand and fix the problem of Om's missing powers, which then leads to the need to understand Omnia's true oppressive nature and needing to put a stop to Vorbis' plans for war. *Carpe Jugulum*'s plot centers on the witches finding a way to defeat the vampire family that has invaded Lancre, whereas that of *The Truth* involves the staff of *The Ankh-Morpork Times* building up their newspaper and solving a crime. *Thud!*, too, begins with a crime to be solved, which leads into the prevention of hostilities between two historically warring races, the dwarfs and the trolls. Relations, too, are evident in each of these novels, and I discuss them further in 3.4, where I explore characters and their development.

In more detail, *The Truth*'s plot deals with the invention of the printing press and the subsequent rise of journalism, as well as an attempted coup by framing the Patrician for a crime so that he would be removed from power and be replaced with a puppet head of state. The plot follows the main characters as they investigate the alleged crime (whether or not the City Watch approves), and slowly reveal what actually happened and then clear the Patrician's name. The novel takes place in Ankh-Morpork, as many of the novels in *Discworld* do. As a large influential city, it has various structures and systems which make up its daily operation, as well as both internal and external political concerns. The plot, then, must contend with these elements, many of which have already been set up in previous novels. The plot of *The Truth* quickly reveals something about the politics of the city: there are a number of groups within the city, attempting to serve their own best interests. The primary antagonists, Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, do not act on their own, but are hired by some of the city's elite, made up of Guild leaders and noble families. Their indirect approach to removing Vetinari from office reflects the politics of power:

> Absolutely no one needed to say: A lot of the most powerful men in the city owe their positions to Lord Vetinari.
>
> And nobody replied: Certainly. But to the kind of men who seek power, gratitude has very poor keeping qualities. The kind of men who seek power tend to deal with *matters as they are*. They would never try to depose Vetinari, but if he was gone they would *be practical*. […]
>
> No one said: Character assassination. What a wonderful idea. Ordinary assassination only works once, but this one works every day. (*TT* 241)

The man they intend to elect in Vetinari's stead is a "useful idiot" (241), whom they can direct to rule the city in their favor. The antagonists, too, face the challenge of performing a task, and in this particular case, it is combined with the importance of perception. If Lord Vetinari is merely killed or not discredited before he is deposed, the "Committee to Unelect the Patrician" (96) would face significant backlash from the public and other leaders. Thus, they must appear to be following the political rules of the city for their conspiracy to succeed, which in turn illustrates these rules for readers. The plot demonstrates that there is a status quo and tangible consequences to failing to uphold it. The politics of Ankh-Morpork are also seen extensively in *Thud!*, where the rising of tensions between dwarfs and trolls in the city threatens to ripple outwards:

> 'Much hangs on this, Vimes,' said Vetinari. 'It's bigger than you know. I have this morning had a clacks from Rhys Rhysson, the Low King. […] *Listen* to me. If Rhys falls, the next Low King will *not* be one who is prepared to talk to the trolls. Can I make it simple for you? Those clans whose leaders have been dealing with Rhys will in all likelihood feel they have been made fools of, overthrow said leaders and replace them with trolls too belligerent and stupid to *be* fools. And there *will* be a war, Vimes. It'll come here. It won't be a gang crumble such as you thwarted last night. We won't be able to hold fast or stand aloof. Because we have our own fools, Vimes, as I'm sure you know, who'll insist we pick sides. Koom Valley will be everywhere. Find me a murderer, Vimes. […] It is rumour and uncertainty that is our enemy now. The Low King's throne trembles, Vimes, and thus do the foundations of the world.'
>
> […] Vimes was still trying to cope with the international news digest.
>
> 'All this over one murder?' he said, trying to stifle a yawn.
>
> 'No, Vimes. You said it yourself: all this over thousands of years of tension and politics and power struggles.' (*T* 239–241)

In terms of plot, this discussion establishes what is at stake if Vimes and the Watch fail to solve the murder and manage the violent clashes threatening to spark in the streets of the city. However, it also demonstrates the interconnectedness of the storyworld, particularly of its most influential components, as well as one of the many ways that events at a societal level are affected by individuals, and vice versa. The narrative of *Thud!* ties together and explores some of the history and cultures of Discworld, and it is this kind of interaction between systems which contributes to the formation of the world logic that governs the various structures and details of the storyworld (M. Wolf 53).

Another structure of Discworld which contributes to shaping a number of the series' plots and providing an obstacle to overcome is the economy of Ankh-Morpork, and by extension, the rest of the world. This is demonstrated in *The Truth*, when paper availability becomes a concern:

> 'Dwarfs Buggered For Paper.'
>
> '*What?*'
>
> 'That's a direct quote from Mr Goodmountain,' said Sacharissa. 'I don't pretend to know *exactly* what it means, but I understand they've got enough for only one more edition.'
>
> 'And if we want any more it's five times the old price,' said Goodmountain, coming up. 'The Engravers are buying it up. Supply and demand, King says.'
>
> 'King?' William's brow wrinkled. 'You mean Mr King?'
>
> 'Yeah, King of the Golden River,' said the dwarf. 'And, yeah, we could just about pay that but if them across the road are going to sell their sheet for 2p we'll be working for practically nothing.' (198–9)

As soon as *The Ankh-Morpork Times* becomes successful, it threatens to put the Guild of Engravers out of business. In retaliation, they start their own newspaper, and try to put *The Ankh-Morpork Times* out of business several times. In other words, an established element of the worldbuilding of Ankh-Morpork reacts to the change brought about by the plot, by then using the economic systems of the city to their benefit. Mr. King, a minor recurring character, is one of the city's wealthiest businessmen. He has made his fortune after realizing people would pay him to do unpleasant jobs for them, such as emptying out the privies behind pubs. Such narrative elements illustrate in microcosm how the city works: how its different pieces interact with each other, how the people within them are affected, and how those people adjust accordingly. The impact of what would otherwise be considered background details makes them more believable. By following the rules laid out by the worldbuilding, the plots show those rules in action in a way that descriptions alone may be hard-pressed to do. Furthermore, narrative generally helps readers remain engaged enough with a storyworld to be interested in learning about it in the first place (M. Wolf 29). When the characters are forced to contend with the world's various players, the importance of minor and background figures is in focus. By demonstrating the impact of one agent, such as Mr. King, the novels can imply that similar interactions occur regularly beyond the instances in the text. Ankh-Morpork is particularly good for this kind of worldbuilding. As a large city, it has a vast and diverse population, all of whom must keep the city going one way or another.

The background processes that ensure that Ankh-Morpork can function come up in some form in the narratives of every novel that takes place there. The plot of *Thud!*, for example, intersects with the city's traffic on several occasions. The most important is Vimes realizing that the dwarfs digging under the city must be transporting the dirt out somehow, and begins to compare the reports he receives about outgoing traffic:

> Vimes had instigated record-keeping at the gates not because he had a huge interest in the results, but because it kept the lads on their toes. It wasn't as if it was security duty. Ankh-Morpork was so wide open that it was gaping. But the cart census was handy. It stopped watchmen falling asleep at their posts, and it gave them an excuse to be nosy.
>
> You had to move the soil. That was it. This was a city. If you were a long way from the river, the only way to do that was on a cart. Blast it, he thought, I should have asked the thing to see if there's been any increase in the stone and timber loads, too. Once you've dug a hole in the mud, you've got to keep it open— (*T* 126)

The results show that each city gate saw a slight increase in wagons leaving the city, with the total suggesting that a vast quantity of earth had been moved six months prior and the mines are bigger than Vimes had realized, meaning that the item they were looking for (later revealed to be a recording device, containing the last words of two dwarf and troll kings) is extremely significant (186). The narrative requires this information to move forward, but it simultaneously provides readers with details about the workings of the city, and as with descriptions, these details imply more than is stated in the text. In order for a cart census to be useful (even if only for keeping watchmen awake), for example, there must be enough of them going in and out of the city. As a metropolis, it is natural to assume that a great deal of materials are transported every day, which is supported later when Vimes must get home from across the city through, among other things, "one of the city's most fashionable traffic jams" (154) – a natural consequence of a crowded city.

The same can be said for the development of technology throughout the series. As I have noted, over the course of the novels, Ankh-Morpork (and through it, the rest of the Disc) undergoes what is essentially an industrial revolution, introducing new technologies such as the clacks (a semaphore network), color photography, and toward the end of the series, the railroad. The printing press is part of that revolution, and thus *The Truth* is also about the integration of this new technology into the pre-existing systems of the city. In an interview from 2000, the year *The Truth* was published, Pratchett states that he is "allowing a bit of technological innovation while still keeping it firmly a fantasy universe," and that the "galvanizing" effect of this (especially the semaphore, which was implemented in the

previous novel) is changing the series going forward ("Part 2"). Indeed, this is what happens: like the clacks, in the novels that follow *The Truth*, newspapers have clearly become prevalent despite the initial problems and the free press is now one of the many factors of the city's inner workings. For example, in *Thud!*, the existence of newspapers is a fact of life: "Vimes unfolded the copy of the *Times* that Cheery had left on his desk. He always read it at work, to catch up on the news that Willikins had thought it unsafe for him to hear whilst shaving" (38). The newspaper is an aspect of Ankh-Morpork that the City Watch has to consider and deal with, but it is ultimately not a significant plot element. In other words, the plot of one novel (as well as its consequences) becomes the backstory of the novels that follow. While not always overt, these consequences can inform returning readers of the way the Discworld reacts to events, develops, and functions along with its inhabitants, as in this case. This is most often seen through references (as shown with the example of Brutha in *Carpe Jugulum* in 3.4) or through the changes which accumulate over the course of the series and are treated as a normal part of the world, just as the newspaper. Unlike a series which follows a continuous plot, *Discworld* does not rely on readers having an understanding of everything that happened before any given novel, and as such the implications of many of these details can slip by unnoticed, but they lend coherence to the world for returning readers.

The use of parallel plots contributes to the completeness of the storyworld. It is very common for a *Discworld* novel to have a subplot (at times, apparently unrelated) running alongside the main plot and merge with it toward the end of the novel. Mark Wolf calls intertwined narrative threads such as these *narrative braids*, which form part of the larger *narrative fabric*, the sum total of the narrative material present in a work, including elements which are only implied (199–200). When major characters of some novels appear as minor characters in others, it helps to create the sense that the storyworld exists beyond any individual narrative, and suggests that minor character have as much depth as major characters do (172). Similarly, when narratives include multiple threads running parallel and intertwined, it creates a sense of simultaneity. That is to say, the rest of the storyworld does not come to a halt while the main narrative plays out. No matter what the protagonist may be dealing with, other characters, be they major, minor, or background, continue with their lives, both independent of and influenced by the events in any given novel.

An example of this can be seen in *Carpe Jugulum*, where the subplot revolves around the royal falconer, Hodgesaargh, who finds evidence of a phoenix in Lancre, attempts to track it down and eventually discovers that the reason every phoenix sighting in the country's history differed in description is that they are shapeshifters. This narrative thread crosses with

the main threads several times but does not fully tie in until he is joined by Granny Weatherwax, who takes the phoenix with her to Überwald after they find it. The central narrative thread, too, often splits up as its protagonists go their own way, and these threads become entwined again when they regroup. As Mark Wolf puts it, "a narrative fabric also allows the audience a synchronic way to the slice the events of a world, since a dense fabric contains many simultaneous events" (201). This provides readers with a broader view of the storyworld, and through different characters acting as focalizers (as discussed in 2.4), a broader understanding of various viewpoints, all contributing to the completeness of the world.

Plots can dictate and limit what is described and can thus conflict with worldbuilding (M. Wolf 29). However, plots can just as easily be viewed as an opportunity to explore the details of a world in way which demonstrates not only their existence, but the way they function and change within the storyworld. In each of the examples above, plot and worldbuilding cannot be easily separated: details of the world are intertwined with the events at hand, affecting and being affected by the actions of the characters.

3.3 The Narrative Imperative and In-Universe Narratives

In a work cowritten by Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen, *The Science of Discworld*, the authors discuss what lies at the heart of the *Discworld* series: "It is *narrative imperative*, the power of story." This power, which they also refer to as *narrativium*, is "what causes [things] to be what they are and continue to exist and take part in the ongoing story of the world" (10) Narrative is, in itself, a central force of the storyworld, that is, a kind of magic that runs everything on the Disc. Pratchett et al. emphasize that the Disc does not run on science, but rather along the lines of common sense, "one of science's natural enemies" (12–13). Human thought tends to, above all, narrativize things, leading to certain patterns of thought which, while inaccurate in the actual world, are made real in *Discworld*. One of these is how privatives – absences of things – are treated: even in the real world, we may speak of "keeping out the cold" despite the fact that, in truth, it is a matter of keeping heat from dissipating. On the Disc, however, these absences are treated as things of their own right: they are reified (182–185). This kind of thinking is, in large part, what makes Discworld work in the minds of readers – it is built along a line of reasoning we, ourselves, are predisposed to follow. Furthermore, fantasy fiction itself has a tendency to "use figurative language literally" (Brooke-Rose 83).

Lüthi, too, notes that people tend to interpret events so that they form a narrative, ranging from their own lives to the discourse of science, thus forming a *mental narrativium*. The fact that Discworld is "a world literally driven by stories" allows it to use this tendency to make sense in a way that such an absurd world otherwise might not (135–139). Pratchett draws extensively from familiar narratives in this process, both in specifics and in broader terms. He points out that, throughout human history, we have built up systems of information and belief which we project on the real world, forming patterns "driven by the irresistible force of narrativium, the narrative imperative, the power of story. Some scholars call the patterns *motifs*, others *topoi*, others *memes*. The point is, they're there, everyone knows them, and they go on and on" (Pratchett and Simpson 22). Hence, narrative as worldbuilding overlaps a great deal with genre as worldbuilding, which I discuss at length in chapter 4. The use of narrative expectation, in particular, is present in both. Since I explore this in 4.3 in relation to satire, I here attempt to approach it from the perspective of building narratives, with a focus on the Disc's own in-universe stories. However, the two discussions unavoidably cover some common ground.

Narrative expectation is at the ontological foundation of the Disc, which means that things are the way they are because they are expected to be: "Dragons don't breathe fire because they've got asbestos lungs – they breathe fire because everyone knows that's what dragons *do*" (Pratchett et al. 10). This informs everything from the Disc's equivalents of the laws of physics to nature to the characters' understanding of the world. At times, this is referenced fairly directly: "Vetinari sighed. Sometimes the weather had no sense of narrative convenience" (*TT* 49). More frequently, however, the narrative imperative is built into the plot of a novel. This is evident in *Carpe Jugulum*, where what "everyone knows" about vampires – that is, their narrative expectations and genre-awareness – becomes the very thing that allows the Magpyr family to become a threat:

> 'What're we going to *do*?' said Agnes.
>
> 'Do? He invited 'em. They're guests,' said Nanny. […]
>
> 'But *vampires*… what'd Granny say?'
>
> 'Listen, my girl, they'll be gone tomorrow… well, today, really. We'll just keep an eye on 'em and wave 'em goodbye when they go.'
>
> 'We don't even know what they look like!'
>
> Nanny looked at the recumbent Igor.
>
> 'On reflection, maybe I should've asked him,' she said. She brightened up. 'Still, there's one way to find them. That's something everyone knows about vampires…'

> In fact there are many things everyone knows about vampires, without really taking into account that perhaps the vampires know them by now, too. (86–87)

Discworld's vampires have all the same weaknesses as those found in real-world folklore and subsequent popular culture interpretations, including sunlight, garlic, and holy symbols. The phrase "Everyone knows that, who knows anything about vampires" is used in some form several times throughout the novel, including once by one of the vampires themselves. The Magpyrs have used their knowledge to their advantage, slowly acclimatizing themselves to these various aspects and becoming immune to them, thus rendering the witches' initial attempts to defeat them useless. Count de Magpyr, the head of the family, frames vampires' weaknesses as "cultural conditioning" (49), and in a way, he is right. The cultural expectation of vampires is the narrative expectation of vampires, which, due to the narrative imperative, makes them what they are. Nor does the vampires' narrative understanding erase these weaknesses: after they bite Granny in an attempt to turn her into a vampire, she uses her skill in Borrowing (see 2.3) to infect their minds with her own, throwing them off balance enough to lose the focus necessary to maintain their immunity. The vampires' heightened awareness, then, makes them even more susceptible: "You've taught us how to see hundreds of the damned holy things! They're everywhere! Every religion has a different one! […] Everywhere I *look* I see something holy! You've taught us to see *patterns*!" (381). The plot of *Carpe Jugulum* is rooted in characters understanding the storyworld and using that understanding against each other. *Carpe Jugulum* is thus, in many ways, a narrative about narratives, arguably to a higher degree than my other chosen novels, despite the fact that in-universe narratives and their effects appear in each one.

The power of narrative is further enforced in *Carpe Jugulum* by the old Count Magpyr, whom the family had attempted to surpass. The old Count is, as Nanny Ogg realizes, a sportsman who deliberately gives his victims a fair chance at defeating him: "That way he never gets totally wiped out and the lads of the village get some healthy exercise" (328). The old Count embodies many of the tropes associated with vampires, especially those based on *Dracula* and as portrayed in the films of the 1950s and 1960s (Pratchett and Simpson 135–136). However, he also occupies a specific narrative role, which Granny Weatherwax comments on after he puts a stop to his family's attempted takeover: "'People need vampires,' she said. 'It helps 'em remember what the stakes and garlic are for. […] Teach your children! Don't trust the cannibal just 'cos he's usin' a knife and fork! And remember that vampires don't go where they're not invited!'" (*CJ* 404). Unlike the younger vampires, the old Count

neither frames his actions as a benefit that others ought to be grateful for, nor does he attempt to implement his ways on a governmental level. Still, he is far better for the community than the others: in being an obvious evil who *can* be defeated, he reminds the villagers how to fight back against those that would do them harm. This works on two levels: first, as social commentary (see 4.3) and second, as demonstration of how narrative functions on the Disc. The characters' lives are shaped by stories, consciously and unconsciously, from the ontological to the sociocultural.

The importance of narratives manifests slightly differently in *Thud!*, with a greater emphasis on the political implications. The novel begins with the dwarfish creation myth, "The Things Tak Wrote" and a troll description of the Diamond King, the born king of trolls. Both are presented as excerpts from translations of old texts, with the latter being based on troll pictograms estimated to be 500,000 years old. The former is longer, and details how Tak wrote himself, the Laws, the world, a cave, and a geode into existence. The geode hatched into two beings which would become the first dwarf and the first human. Finally, it describes how the geode became the first troll, "wandering the world unbidden and unwanted, without soul or purpose, learning or understanding." The translator's note, however, explains that the last paragraph "appears to have been added by a much later hand" (*T* 7–8). These excerpts, particularly The Things Tak Wrote, provide several details pertaining to world history and culture for readers to build upon, the most important of which is the conflict between trolls and dwarfs. Specifically, the implication that the story that may be used to justify the conflict has been edited to suit this purpose is necessary information moving forward. Throughout the novel, the two most referenced stories are The Things Tak Wrote and Koom Valley, where the last large battle from about 1000 years ago between the two races took place and both sides accuse the other of ambush.

When referenced, different attitudes to the myth are shown. Dwarfs believe it to be true, and humans appear to accept it as the true version. Due to being a human raised by dwarfs, Captain Carrot Ironfoundersson calls himself "the brothers united" in reference to the myth when trying to get more information on the murdered dwarf in the mines (173). Sergeant Detritus, the Watch's foremost troll officer, holds the opposite viewpoint. When he – rightfully – calls Vimes out on his (and the Watch's) preferential treatment of dwarfs, he says "I'm hearin' now where Captain Carrot, he tellin' the dwarfs he the Two Brothers. You fink that make me happy? We know dat lyin' ol' dwarf lie, yes! We groan at it lyin', yes!" (260). The events of Koom Valley, too, are endlessly debated and used as a springboard for further hostilities, particularly by characters such as the grags, the dwarf community leaders. As

fundamentalists, they take a strict view on what it means to be a dwarf, a definition that excludes most city-dwelling dwarfs:

> *Please come and say the death words over my father… Please advise me on the sale of my shop… Please guide me in my business… I am a long way from the bones of my grandfathers, please help me stay a dwarf…*
>
> This was no time to be *d'rkza*. Strictly speaking, most Ankh-Morpork dwarfs were *d'rkza*; it meant something like 'not really a dwarf'. They didn't live deep underground and come out only at night, they didn't mine metal, they let their daughters show at least a *few* indications of femininity, they tended to be a little slipshod when it came to some of the ceremonies. But the whiff of Koom Valley was in the air and this was no time to be *mostly* a dwarf. So you paid attention to the grags. They kept you on the straight seam. (82)

As tensions rise, the importance of "being a real dwarf" does too, and suddenly the narratives of Koom Valley and Tak become not only commonly held truth, but something to base one's identity on. These stories come to inform the characters' understanding and perception of the world and themselves, and shape the relations between individuals and entire races, to the point that when these narratives are proved to be mistaken, the grags decide to destroy the evidence. In the climax of the novel, it is found that the item the grags came to Ankh-Morpork to find contains a recording of the two kings – dwarf and troll – who went to Koom Valley not to wage war, but to sign a treaty. The ambush of Koom Valley was a mutual mistake caused by heavy fog, and the ensuing storm trapped both armies in the caves beneath the valley. Finally, the recording contains what is, presumably, the original version of The Things Tak Wrote, differing in its final lines:

> '…uh… Then Tak looked upon the stone and it was trying to come alive, and Tak smiled and wrote: "All things strive",' said the dwarf, raising his voice above the growing commotion around him. 'And for the service the stone had given he fashioned it into the first Troll, and delighted in the life that came unbidden. These are the things that Tak wrote!' (438–439)

When they cannot destroy it, the grags instead try to discredit the recording, and are once again unsuccessful. However, as Vimes notes, finding the truth will not be enough to completely dismantle thousands of years of hatred: the cave the two armies were trapped in will have to be reopened time and time again to ensure people remember (446). Narratives, once set, can be difficult to change. When compared to *Carpe Jugulum*, the in-universe narratives of *Thud!* play a role which, while different, impacts characters' lives and shapes

Discworld for readers. In both, narratives are used against others, but unlike the things everyone knows about vampires, the stories told in *Thud!* are not true. They are, in fact, deliberately altered to suit an agenda to control the relations between opposing groups and prevent understanding. Being heavily linked to Discworld's history, myth, and culture, the in-universe narratives provide insight into the backstories of two major races, whereas the plot of the novel demonstrates the impact – past and ongoing – of these stories. Readers, just like the characters, depend on narratives for their understanding of the storyworld and the characters' places in it.

3.4 Characterization and Character Development

The *Living Handbook of Narratology* defines *characterization* as "the process of ascribing properties to names which results in agents having these properties in the storyworld," a process which occurs both directly and through inferences made by the reader (Jannidis). This process is itself very similar to worldbuilding, and I believe that in many ways the two are connected. After all, these characters must be a part and result of the world they live in. Relations, as defined by Pettersson, are a central theme in how they are characterized and how characters develop over the course of a narrative. Mark Wolf, too, notes that one of the structures of a storyworld is genealogy, which "[relates] characters to one another, giving them a context within larger frameworks which are familial, ancestral, social, institutional, and historical" (170). The examples above demonstrate the social, cultural, and historical contexts as they relate to both individual characters and entire groups, and how they relate to each other. Let me explore this kind of effect further.

Each of the *Discworld* novels I have chosen focuses on a different cast of characters, but they all use much the same techniques in characterization. The majority of each novel is focalized through their respective protagonists, and occasionally through supporting or minor characters. In this chapter, I discuss the effects of this use of focalization and how it impacts the processes of characterization, through the use of direct descriptions of traits (see 2.4) and the indirect inferences based on their actions, worldview, and other characters' perceptions. Two of my chosen novels, *Small Gods* and *The Truth*, are as it were, one-offs, and feature characters who either do not appear again within the series or only appear in a minor or background role. As such, most of their characterization and development takes place within these novels.

Small Gods's first introduction to its main characters, Brutha and the Great God Om, is fairly brief: Brutha hears Om's voice in one of the gardens of the Citadel (the political and religious capital of the country of Omnia), and believes it to be the voice of a demon (*SG* 14). While this provides an initial impression, it is through a minor character, Brother Nhumrod, that the readers are given a proper description: "The Brutha boy was flat on his face in front of a statue of Om in His manifestation as a thunderbolt, shaking and gabbling fragments of prayer. There was something creepy about that boy, Nhumrod thought. It was the way he looked at you when you were talking, as if he was *listening*" (16). Brutha is further described as having a "big red honest face" and being a perpetual novice, despite being some ten years too old for the rank (17). This section also characterizes Nhumrod himself, an older man who frequently "[wrestles] with impure thoughts" and "heard [voices] all the time" (16). When the focalization switches to Brutha's perspective, Nhumrod's various nervous tics and mannerisms are in turn described as "perfectly normal for someone who had survived in the Citadel for fifty years" (17).

Through this introduction, Pratchett provides traits for the two characters, but in doing so also gives information on the world around them: they are part of the Church of Om and its internal hierarchies, and are thus examples of the kinds of people this environment produces. Their religion pervades their lives and informs how they behave. Both characters are close to the bottom of the Church's pecking order, Nhumrod as the master of novices and Brutha even more so as a novice. This entails that speaking to the head of the Church (the Cenobiarch) is unthinkable to Brutha, despite him starting to believe that Om is who he claims to be: "'I can't go asking the—' Brutha hesitated. Even the *thought* of talking to the Cenobiarch frightened him into silence. 'I can't ask *anyone* to ask the High Cenobiarch to come and talk to a *tortoise*!'" (29). These passages not only point to the existence of the social order of the Church (something which Pratchett also elaborates by descriptions), but they demonstrate how this structure works. More specifically, the passages illustrate how people within the Church are affected by the structures they are surrounded by, which in turn takes the Church hierarchy from a background detail to a functioning, active part of the storyworld. These structures are central to the narrative of *Small Gods,* as they are the challenge Brutha must overcome. The power of the Church and its relation to the people within it is further expanded on later:

> 'Let me put it another way,' said the tortoise. 'I am your God, right?'
> 'Yes.'

> ‘And you’ll obey me.’
>
> ‘Yes.’
>
> ‘Good. Now take a rock and go and kill Vorbis.’
>
> Brutha didn’t move.
>
> ‘I know you heard me,’ said Om.
>
> ‘But he’ll… he’s… the Quisition would—’
>
> ‘*Now* you know what I mean,’ said the tortoise. ‘You’re more afraid of him than you are of me, now. Abraxas says here: “Around the Godde there forms a Shelle of prayers and Ceremonies and Buildings and Priestes and Authority, until at Last the Godde Dies. Ande this maye notte be noticed.”’ (202)

Brutha’s inaction at Om’s order – arguably the highest authority there is – characterizes not only him as a member of the Church, but the rest of Omnia’s citizens as well. The belief in the Church’s authority and the fear of what the Quisition would do if they are perceived to step out of line have a severe impact on their relationship to the institution and to the god behind it.

Pratchett often favors behaviors and thought processes as modes of characterization, as seen above with Brutha and Nhumrod being characterized mostly by their actions and ways of thinking rather than their physical appearances, but he does not rely on these techniques exclusively. In contrast to Brutha’s and Nhumrod’s introduction, the introduction of *Small Gods*’s antagonist, Head Quisitor Vorbis, first focuses on the visible things people always notice about him, all of which portray him as an imposing figure. His behaviors are nevertheless soon brought up, when Vorbis interrogates his ex-secretary whom he accuses of spying. His calm demeanor when ordering the man’s torture to continue shows him to be a cold and calculating manipulator, but also demonstrates how the Church’s system of control that had previously been described works in practice, just as discussed above. The more bloodthirsty nature of the Omnian religion led to characters like the Quisitors, especially Vorbis, who in turn enforces and develops the system. As the face and representative of the Quisition, Vorbis also characterizes the system in turn. The effects of this system and Vorbis’ part in it are seen on a larger scale in the warped way the citizens of Omnia think:

> After all, those who had achieved success in the world clearly had done it with the approval of the Great God, because it was impossible to believe they had managed it with His *disapproval*. In the same way, the Quisition could act without possibility of flaw. Suspicion was proof. How could it be anything else? The Great God would not have seen fit to put the suspicion in the minds of His exquisitors unless it was *right* that it should be there. Life

> could be very simple, if you believed in the Great God Om. And sometimes quite short, too. (*SG* 74).

The Quisition is viewed as an extension of Om, and thus justified in everything it does. The characterization of the citizens and how they view the world once again informs readers' understanding of the storyworld's hierarchies and their impacts.

Small Gods' other protagonist, the Great God Om, provides an example of how different kinds of characters can be used in worldbuilding. For most of the novel, he is stuck in the form of a tortoise with almost no power, as a direct result of the way religions and deities work on Discworld: gods are the result of belief, not the other way around, and their power is proportionate to how many people believe in them. Om's fall from grace, then, demonstrates what happens to the gods who are longer believed in. This explains why Om starts out so arrogant and angry, screaming creative yet powerless curses only Brutha can hear: "The worms of revenge to eat your blackened nostrils!" (48). Om's character is a result of what happened to him, which happened because of the storyworld's rules: his characterization draws on the worldbuilding of the Discworld, and thus provides an avenue for exploring and developing that worldbuilding. Pratchett makes good on this potential throughout the novel with Om's character development and the titular small gods. Small gods are gods without any believers, little more than disembodied, vague thoughts and desires floating around in the wind. Om himself started out as a small god, and once he realizes that his existence depends on Brutha's faith, he fears becoming one again. Small gods are mentioned several times, usually briefly, but do not make an appearance until the last third of the novel, when Brutha and Om cross the desert between Ephebe and Omnia, carrying the injured Vorbis at Brutha's insistence he be saved after a shipwreck. The small gods flock to Brutha when he sleeps, sensing the chance to gain a follower, but Om fends them off (277). However, one remains behind:

> Who are you? said Om.
>
> The small god stirred.
>
> There was a city once, said the small god. Not just a city. An empire of cities. I, I, I remember there were canals, and gardens. There was a lake. They had floating gardens on the lake, I recall. I, I. And there were temples. Such temples as you may dream of. Great pyramid temples that reached to the sky. Thousands were sacrificed. To the greater glory.
>
> Om felt sick. This wasn't just a small god. This was a small god who hadn't always been small…
>
> Who were you? (278)

This dialogue is one where worldbuilding is inextricably blended with the characterization of a (minor) character, and attempting to separate the two into different processes is not productive. In fact, to do so might even subtract from the overall impact of the scene. The small god describes an empire from long ago (the ruins of which Brutha, Om, and Vorbis later stumble upon), building on the history of the Discworld by implying an ancient past and creating what John Clute calls a *time abyss* in the storyworld: "the discovery by the reader that there is an immense gap between the time of the tale and the origin of whatever it is that has changed one's perspective on the world" (qtd. in M. Wolf 166), thus giving the storyworld a greater sense of scale. However, the fragmented delivery and focus on the grandeur and glory of the lost empire portray the small god as a remnant made up of crumbling memories, self-obsessed despite having forgotten its own name. This small god is essentially a manifestation of Om's worst fears, and illustrates the natural outcome of the previously established rules of the storyworld. Exemplifying this outcome makes it tangible in a way it previously was not to both Om and the readers.

A character like Om facilitates further opportunities for worldbuilding. Being an old god, Om has a long (albeit imperfect) memory, one which includes several of the figures that the Church of Om has come to venerate and whose teachings Brutha unquestioningly repeats. Om, on the other hand, can remember them as they actually were. For example, the Prophet Cena is revered in Omnianism, but Om describes him as a far less impressive figure:

> 'Tall fellow? Full beard? Eyes wobbling all over the place?'
>
> 'What?' said Brutha.
>
> 'I think I recall him,' said the tortoise. 'Eyes wobbled when he talked. And he talked all the time. To himself. Walked into rocks a lot.' (*SG* 49–50)

Similar exchanges occur several times during *Small Gods*. In this case, having a character with such a different perspective reveals both the history of the storyworld and what other characters *believe* that history to be. The conflict between the two, in turn, indirectly demonstrates the process of how time distorts regular (even terrible) figures and their writings. As with previous examples dealing with the systems and structures of *Small Gods* and by extension *Discworld*, this takes the backstory that has been both described and implied, and makes it part of a dynamic interaction which influences and is influenced by the agents involved.

Pratchett makes use of the same characterization techniques in the *Discworld* sub-series novels as he does in the one-off novels: characters' traits are often ascribed through

their behaviors and worldviews, with some direct attributions by the narrator or other characters in dialogue. Due to *Discworld*'s structure as a series of related but self-contained stories, readers can thus get a solid understanding of each novel's respective cast, even if they start in the middle of a sub-series. *Carpe Jugulum,* for example, features the witches: Agnes Nitt, Nanny Ogg, and Granny Weatherwax, with Magrat Garlick (who used to occupy the role Agnes now has in the trio before she became the Queen of Lancre) as a supporting character. Each has appeared in at least one prior novel, either individually or as part of a group. As such, each has already had some measure of character development. For readers who have read any or all of these prior novels, such past traits may contribute to their understanding of the character as they appear in *Carpe Jugulum*, and at the very least become part of that character's backstory. The novels themselves (beyond the earliest ones) take these developments into account. In his article, Daniel Lüthi suggests that this is a result of Pratchett's increasing interest in "plot-making," which marked a shift from simple parody to more complex narratives in the *Discworld* series after the first few novels. This shift required taking prior events and character development that came before and incorporating it into later novels (130–131). This process of incorporating past events is what Mark Wolf suggests happens with worldbuilding across a series, specifically as a part of narrative: "each additional story added to a world must take into account all of the narrative material already present in a world" (205). As with plot events, I would argue the same must hold for characters in order for them to appear as a natural part of the storyworld. Similarly, the world seems more coherent when its characters develop and retain that development in a manner that is consistent with their experiences and the world's rules.

This continuity can be seen in most *Discworld* novels. One of the supporting characters of *Carpe Jugulum* is Mightily Oats, a Reverend of the Church of Om. While it is not clear how much time has passed between the two novels, it has been enough for Brutha's reforms to have caused a significant change in the way the Church treats both its members and those outside of it. This is reflected in Oats' approach to attempting to convert others: "[The poster] read: GOOD NEWS! Om welcomes you!!!" (*CJ* 33). Brutha himself is mentioned a few times throughout the novel (e.g. 34–35 and 317), always in the context of Oats quoting religious figures, in the same way Brutha quoted others in *Small Gods*. As with Brutha, this characterizes Oats as clinging to the ideas of those he sees as spiritual authorities. To readers unfamiliar with *Small Gods*, this helps characterize Oats, but leaves Brutha a distant, insignificant figure, a mere detail of Omnian religion. Someone familiar with *Small Gods*, however, would recognize the name and know the backstory, which might even turn

these short mentions into subtle characterization for Brutha: he became a highly influential figure, whose character development had far-reaching consequences. This effect is evident toward the end of the novel:

> 'According to the prophet Brutha, to live properly *is* to believe in Om.'
>
> 'Oho, that's clever! He gets you coming *and* going,' said Granny. 'It took a good thinker to come up with that. Well done. What other clever things did he say?'
>
> 'He doesn't say things to be clever,' said Oats hotly. 'But since you ask, he said in his Letter to the Simonites that it is through other people that we truly become people.'
>
> 'Good. He got that one right.' (*CJ* 347)

In every novel she appears, Granny Weatherwax is depicted as someone with an excellent understanding of psychology (which she calls "headology"). Her view of Brutha's ideas suggests that he, too, gained some notable understanding of people, which is congruent with his development in *Small Gods*. This juxtaposition of views also demonstrates how very different characters see the world they live in, and how they deal with the ways other characters see it (see 2.6 and 4.3). Oats and Granny Weatherwax (and Brutha, in a way) agree in this matter, but disagree in many others. This characterizes them individually, while also suggesting a world complex enough to engender many competing, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, worldviews.

As I have demonstrated here, Pratchett has a tendency to depict characters through thoughts, dialogue, and actions just as much, if not more frequently than through direct descriptions. While not all new information about a character informs readers about the storyworld, characterization nevertheless draws on and contributes to worldbuilding. Major, supporting, and minor characters can all be used to this end. As Jannidis puts it, "the storyworld is constructed during the process of narrative communication, and characters thus form a part of the signifying structures which motivate and determine the narrative communication." Characters are an integral part of narrative, and as such, the construction of the storyworld.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have discussed how aspects of narrative, specifically plot and characterization, are involved in the process of worldbuilding in the *Discworld* series. I have demonstrated some of the ways these elements play a vital role in both adding to the details of the storyworld and bringing those details to life through their interactions, such as between

characters and the surrounding world. In fact, a significant amount of Pratchett's worldbuilding is presented through his narratives. The novels are relatively short – *Thud!* being the longest of the works analyzed by its 461 pages – yet despite this limitation, they portray a complex, dynamic storyworld which shapes and in turn is shaped by the characters and events within it. This is further corroborated by *Discworld*'s broad scope of characters and locations, which comes together to present the various facets of the world. Despite a rather restrained approach to world description (especially when compared to archetypal fantasy in the style of Tolkien), Pratchett manages to create a vivid storyworld with a distinct identity.

Provided they give readers information about the world, I believe narrative elements can be considered a part of the worldbuilding process. While I do not claim that storytelling and worldbuilding are always the same, my study shows that the two overlap frequently, at times to the point where claiming they are entirely distinct becomes a matter of splitting hairs, and does not benefit the analysis. Acknowledging the overlap, on the other hand, can allow for the consideration of different approaches to worldbuilding. Ultimately, narratives are what allow readers to see a world in action, and they help construct the whole that is Discworld, one of modern fantasy's most successful storyworlds.

4. Genre

Readers do not approach works of fiction completely without prior contextual knowledge – whether it is the shelves of a library, by word-of-mouth, or by the information provided by the covers of any given book, readers are very likely to have an idea of what they will be reading, and will form expectations accordingly (Pettersson 74). Beyond this immediate context, there is also readers' own experiences with both the real world and with storytelling. Narrative conventions, clichés, popular culture and current storytelling trends, among any number of other factors, all contribute to readers' understanding and expectations of fictional works. Genre is one such factor.

By its popular usage, *genre* is most often taken to mean the categories a fictional work may fall into based on its content: romance, thriller, historical, science fiction, and fantasy are examples of common genre distinctions as seen in bookstores and libraries, as well as everyday discourse. In his work *Genre*, John Frow notes that these common classifications arise from people's natural inclination to categorize things, as well as industry influences – classifications are useful for marketing purposes. Such ongoing processes then affect each other in turn. The categories are, ultimately, arbitrary and at times lacking in coherence, but are nevertheless notable due to their influence (12–13). Lily Alexander, too, argues that genres have "enormous power over our symbolic experiences" in her essay, "Genre" (256). It is a central facet of meaning-making (Frow 10). Genre acts as both a way to classify and interpret works and as a component in the creation of those works themselves – authors are just as likely to be as genre-aware as readers are, if not more so. As such, genre has an impact on how storyworlds are created and interpreted.

It is for this reason that I analyze the role of genre in worldbuilding in the final chapter of this thesis. From its inception, the *Discworld* series was a commentary and parody of the fantasy genre, particularly the typical fantasy fiction at the time the series was first published. The series has developed a great deal since the first few novels, encompassing in its satire not only other genres, but real-world issues and themes as well ("Part 1"). As genre and allusions comprise such a significant part of the worldbuilding of the series, I would be remiss not to analyze their use within my chosen novels. I do not attempt to catalogue every instance where the novels reference aspects of the actual world, or every time the novels demonstrate metafictional awareness. Instead, I examine some representative examples, and hope to show

how a series that draws attention to its own fictionality so frequently is able to use such instances to its advantage in building a complete and believable storyworld.

4.1. Theoretical Background

While there is a popular understanding of genre as a concept, it is not always useful. For instance, there is a tendency to separate "literary fiction" from "genre fiction," where the former seeks to be art and the latter seeks to entertain, with the implied value judgement suggesting that "genre fiction" is less meaningful. It is clear, however, that defining genre as something which only applies to a subset of fiction is impractical and, when viewed in the light of many suggested theories of genre, simply untrue – genre is something significantly more far-reaching than that (Frow 1–2, Pettersson 64–66). However, exact definitions prove to be elusive. There have been several attempts to define genre and its categories, but as Frow points out, no clear-cut, universally applicable definition or theory of genre has been forthcoming. He nevertheless argues that this does not diminish the impact of genre as an organizing force (13). Genre is a broad term, encompassing frame, format, style, and content, among many other features, and as such it is hardly surprising that there are just as many ways to approach the topic. The various approaches to genre, while not uniform, still provide many valid and useful lenses through which genre and its functions can be analyzed.

One such approach is to view genre as schema. No matter how one may wish to define the term, it is clear that genres involve knowledge about texts and the real world on the part of readers, knowledge which is invoked by cues provided by a given text and its surrounding context. *Schemata*, as defined by Catherine Emmott and Marc Alexander, are "cognitive structures representing generic knowledge, i.e. structures which do not contain information about particular entities, instances, or events, but rather about their general form." We notice patterns in our experiences, learn from them, and are then able to call upon this "generic knowledge" when presented with the associated cues of the schema. Emmott and Alexander illustrate this concept with the example of a restaurant, where the various elements of the setting are enough to trigger the relevant schema and inform a person's behavior, even if they have never visited that specific establishment before. The same holds true for readers: texts contain cues for schemata, which allow readers to fill in gaps where necessary and comprehend the events within a text (Emmott and Alexander). This use of prior knowledge of the world is part of what Elaine Auyoung calls "top-down processing" (583), as I discussed in 2.1. Thus, the process through which the reality effect (as Auyoung describes it) is created at

the level of description and details functions in much the same way at the level of narrative and, at its broadest, genre.

Generic knowledge is not merely a list of cues. Rather, they form a network of relations that can be ordered in many ways. In the restaurant example above, the schema dictating behavior is temporally organized, making it a *script* (Emmott and Alexander). Similarly, the knowledge making up a genre is organized by, among others, "particular communicative functions and situations" (Frow 84). A newspaper serves a different communicative function than a novel, which in turn has a different function than an encyclopedia: readers can identify this at a glance, and accurately infer both function and, to some degree, content. Each of these – and other genres – generates what Frow calls a *projected world*, a "relatively bounded and schematic domain of meanings, values, and affects, accompanied by a set of instructions for handling them," with each projected world differing in how close they are to the real world (85–86). These are not necessarily storyworlds, however, and can be quite limited in scope and detail. The effect is nevertheless a notable one: Lily Alexander points out that the mere mention of genre names can easily evoke associated images, concepts, and emotions (256). Genres, especially well-known and established genres such as fantasy, guide readers' expectations and interpretations of storyworlds.

Alexander's approach to genre is anthropological, and "focuses on the genres' *ritual roots* and *socio-cultural functions* in the development of humanity throughout time" (256). While it is not the approach I am taking in this thesis, there are elements of it which warrant discussion. Foremost is the idea that "[i]maginary worlds are rooted in the collective imagination of early religions and folklore" (257). Genres develop over time and continue changing even after they have been established. In his essay "On Fairy-Stories," J. R. R. Tolkien outlines what he calls the "Cauldron of Story": a metaphorical soup of narrative elements which is continuously added to, stirred, and simmered until it becomes difficult to tell where any one element originated from. Authors choose portions of this soup to use as they see fit and may in doing so add something new to the Cauldron (125–128). Tolkien's essay is focused on fairy-stories and fantasy, but this conceptualization of collective imagination is a useful one. As both Alexander and Frow note, genre has a social function, and this function is what allows genres to be meaningful in the first place (Alexander 256, Frow 10). Genres are, arguably, collective schemata, based on a general understanding of (culturally specific) storytelling patterns. This means that authors can assume certain

knowledge on the part of readers, which can in turn be used to various effects, from being able to leave certain things unsaid to subverting expectations.

In terms of worldbuilding, readers' genre awareness can act as a starting point and shortcut for conceptualizing a storyworld. Readers are likely to assume that the storyworld of a science fiction novel, for instance, is technologically advanced, as this is very common in the genre. Such common elements – generic conventions and clichés – may not require explanation or justification at all, as the genre presupposes their existence, and thus readers do too (M. Wolf 37). This is an example of genres evoking what Peter Seitel calls "generic worlds" which include "time, space, categories of actors and settings, causality, and motivation – and the interpretation they call for" (qtd. in Frow 86). Instead of starting from the real world alone (although many genres situate themselves close to reality and rely on real-world assumptions as a result), readers need only adjust their understanding of a given storyworld's unique details. I argue this process functions much like Ryan's principle of minimal departure, where the expectations derived from the real world are replaced by those of the genre in question: readers assume the storyworld is as similar to their generic knowledge as possible, until told otherwise. This would not, however, preclude the effects of the principle of minimal departure as Ryan defines it, since real-world experiences necessarily inform interpretation of storyworlds, events, and genres themselves.

Discworld, as a fantasy-satire series, is heavily rooted in specific genres and the conventions therein, which is naturally reflected in the storyworld Pratchett has created. In the following sections, I examine how the genres of fantasy and satire, in particular, inform the worldbuilding of my chosen novels. Furthermore, I study how the themes invoked by these (and other) genres, as well as the referential nature of these novels contribute to this process. For this analysis, I set aside all contextual cues – such as the fact that *Discworld* novels are generally shelved in the fantasy section of libraries and bookstores – and I instead focus on what is found in the text itself, since this is the factor which is the same for all readers. This includes ignoring the covers, as they vary between publishers and editions. I also avoid the debate of what, exactly, counts as fantasy, satire, or any other genre, as defining precise genre boundaries (if possible at all) would add little of value to my analysis.

4.2 Fantasy

The *Discworld* series is most recognizably fantasy. The fantasy genre itself is broad and has a long history, and it is difficult to demarcate it. Pratchett suggests it could be defined

as “fiction that transcends the rules of the known world […] and includes elements commonly classed as magical” (“Notes” 83). Rosemary Jackson, too, notes that fantasy is not easy to define, and when doing so, it must be done in terms of its relation to the real world. It is, she claims, a “literature of ‘unreality’” (1–4). Moreover, fantasy is a genre that does not so much invent entirely new worlds as it changes and mixes elements of the actual world into new combinations (8). Similarly, Pettersson argues that the fantastic is mimetic to some degree – that is, grounded in reality – as it would be incomprehensible otherwise (49). Aspects of the real world are reflected and refracted in fantasy, time and time again. Gradually, the genre has gained several well-established conventions, many of which have gone on to become clichés. Even readers unfamiliar with any individual work of fantasy could most likely name at least some of these elements: magic, wizards, witches, elves, dwarfs, dragons, and so on. Fantasy has become a staple of popular culture, be it in the form of books, movies, television series, or games.

Fantasy, with its vast body of works, has resulted in what Pratchett calls the “consensus fantasy universe” in one of his essays: “[it] has been formed by folklore and Victorian romantics and Walt Disney, and E. R. Edison and Jack Vance and Ursula Le Guin and Fritz Leiber [...]. There are now, to the delight of parasitical authors like me, what I might almost call ‘public domain’ plot items” (“Gandalf” 90). In another essay, he describes works which rely too heavily on such generic ideas as “Extruded Fantasy Product” or “EFP,” which he defines as fantasy that is “an unquestioning echo of better work gone before, with a static society, conveniently ugly ‘bad’ races, magic that works like electricity and horses that work like cars.” Representatives of this type of fantasy, Pratchett claims, are virtually indistinguishable from one another. This is not to say that generic conventions should be avoided entirely in his view – in fact, Pratchett considers genres useful repositories for writing material – but rather that authors ought to put them together in ways entirely their own (“Notes” 84). *Discworld*, of course, deliberately and extensively draws on fantasy’s most well-known clichés in order to satirize them, which I discuss in 4.3. The genre expectations of a text, even if they are later subverted, “form the ways in which we read it and the ways in which we can change our minds” (Frow 28). Thus, while *Discworld*’s satire offers a new perspective and approach to fantasy’s various elements, the starting point is nevertheless generic knowledge itself: the consensus fantasy universe.

As noted by Alexander, “triggering” a genre requires very little, and even individual cues can be enough (256). Cognitive scientist Walter Kintsch, for his part, describes knowledge organization in the form of *knowledge nets*, associative networks with schemas

and scripts (among other things) acting as nodes. Nodes become active only as necessary, allowing for the quick and efficient retrieval of relevant knowledges (qtd. in Frow 85). Similarly, Mendlesohn speaks of *nodes of recognizability*, elements we recognize from elsewhere, from broad concepts such as genre to references to specific texts (100). In other words, we naturally use cues and associations to understand the world around us, and this predisposition is what allows readers to both recognize and generate meaning from genres and the components that constitute them. The result is that readers recognize familiar elements quickly and their expectations are formed early on – even when excluding real-world context – as a novel establishes its setting and characters, although these expectations may become altered and more fine-tuned as a novel progresses. Perhaps some of the most recognizable cues of the fantasy genre are its different races and groups, many of whom also inhabit the Disc: *Carpe Jugulum* centers on witches, and being set in Ankh-Morpork, both *The Truth* and *Thud!* heavily feature dwarfs, trolls, werewolves, among others. Of my chosen novels, only *Small Gods* remains mostly focused on humans, and its gods are not necessarily as evocative of high fantasy's typical deities, even if polytheism is common in the genre.

Magic is a major hallmark of fantasy, to the point where readers are likely to assume its presence by default in a work they know to be of the genre. According to many definitions of fantasy, magic is in fact a necessary component. Brief mentions – such as in the excerpt below, when *Carpe Jugulum* brings up Agnes' talent for witchcraft – are enough to confirm its existence in *Discworld*, without explanation. As discussed in 2.3, the series incorporates magic in a number of ways, some more typical of fantasy than others. It is practiced primarily by witches and wizards, with clear differences in how they view and use it: the wizards are academic, while the witches are more practical. Pratchett notes that this kind of division is very common in the genre and points out the unpleasant implications thereof: "in the fantasy world, magic done by women is usually of poor quality, third-rate, negative stuff, while the wizards are usually cerebral, clever, powerful and wise." He suggests there is more to this division than just sexism in how these stories have come about, but concedes that this is how things stand in the consensus fantasy universe ("Gandalf" 92–96). Several *Discworld* novels comment on and challenge this notion, but when doing so, they use this division as a foundation. As a common and quite deeply ingrained idea, magic being practiced differently by men and women does not need to be justified to readers, until the novels themselves draw attention to it. This assumption also means that readers already accept the idea that magic takes many forms, depending on who (or what) is using it: beyond witches and wizards, magic is used by gods and other creatures, as well as being incorporated into technology

everyone can use (as discussed in 2.3). Given the wide variety of magic throughout the fantasy genre, there is much for readers to draw on in making their initial inferences, some of which can be fairly specific, as seen with the division between wizards and witches.

Carpe Jugulum introduces its witches through brief sections, each focalized through one of the three protagonists: Nanny Ogg, Agnes Nitt (and her second personality, Perdita) and finally, Granny Weatherwax. As Nanny is introduced, there is only a brief hint at her being a witch: her pointy hat, a trigger for the witch schema (17). With Agnes, her status is made clearer: first, by her natural inclination toward witchcraft, and second, by what she wears.

> Perdita thought a witch's hat was a powerful symbol of authority. Agnes thought a dumpy girl should not wear a tall hat, especially with black. It made her look as though someone had dropped a liquorice-flavoured ice-cream cone.
>
> The trouble was that although Agnes was right, so was Perdita. The pointy hat carried a lot of weight in the Ramtops. People talked to the hat, not to the person wearing it. When people were in serious trouble, they went to a witch.*
>
> You had to wear black, too. *Perdita* liked black. Perdita thought black was cool. (19)

The mere mention of witchcraft alone is likely to evoke images of a typical witch, but the further description of a pointy hat and the black clothes confirms that the witches of *Carpe Jugulum* fall in line with that expectation, at least in appearance. By reinforcing this image of a generic witch – arguably a schema of its own, albeit a much narrower one than genre – *Carpe Jugulum* also supports the validity of other genre-based assumptions readers are likely to make. Even when this image is challenged slightly by Agnes noting that Magrat Garlick never dressed in black despite being a witch (19), thus suggesting there is more complexity to this group than generic knowledge alone might allow, the effects of assumptions made are not negated. Hence, readers can draw on the fantasy genre in order to fill in the gaps of the text, and thus it becomes the basis for their understanding of the novel's storyworld and its inhabitants.

This process of invoking schemata with specific genre cues applies to the other generic elements included in the novels. However, there are cases where generic knowledge operates differently. While the witches are introduced early on in *Carpe Jugulum*, they are not the first fantastical element to appear. This is rather the Nac Mac Feegle (also known as the Wee Free Men), a race which is more unique to *Discworld* than most other creatures in the series. In this way, readers are less likely to have any generic knowledge of the Feegles as

such. Rather, their individual traits act as genre cues: the Nac Mac Feegle are six inches tall and blue (*CJ* 10). It is later shown that their color is the result of extensive tattoos, but at this point in the novel that is not evident. Readers are thus confronted with details which are clearly at odds with a real-world explanation and must rely on other background information to guide their interpretation. Fantasy, as the literature of unreality, is a much better fit: magical races both larger and smaller than humans abound. Pixies are a comparable example, and in fact the Feegles are referred to as such in the latter third of the novel – but even without this information, readers can accurately identify and respond to cues in the text. Elements which are not necessarily iconic can nevertheless trigger the relevant schema, which in this case arguably happens by process of elimination. Attempting to approach *Carpe Jugulum* as a realist novel, for example, would quickly render meaning-making difficult, as readers would have to reconcile real-world assumptions with the characteristics of the Nac Mac Feegle, whose existence is framed by the novel as a natural part of the storyworld. The assumptions of the fantasy genre, on the other hand, make the novel understandable: the readers' schemata ensure that the text is coherent (Emmott and Alexander).

Beyond aiding in making sense of the text, relying on generic fantasy convention can engender the sense of familiarity with the storyworld. Jacqueline Simpson discusses this in her introduction to *The Folklore of Discworld*, where she attributes this familiarity, at least in part, to Pratchett's extensive use of folklore in writing the series (Pratchett and Simpson 14). While not all folklore is fantastic and not all fantasy is derived from folklore, the two are deeply intertwined: *The Lord of the Rings* is probably one of the most well-known examples, but such a combination can also be seen in works such as *The Witcher*, a fantasy series by Andrzej Sapkowski, which draws heavily on Polish folklore. Many of fantasy's most recognizable elements can be traced to folklore's eclectic collection of traditions, myths, and fairy tales, which continue to be an inspiration for stories to this day. *Discworld* is no exception. By Pratchett's own admission, he thinks of folklore "in much the same way a carpenter thinks about trees" (10). Simpson argues that the familiarity this inspires is part of why readers accept Pratchett's storyworld as it is: "[we've] known about such things for ages, even if we've called them fairy tales, myths, and folklore; now that we're on the Disc, they are real, and we feel quite at home" (14). Mendlesohn in turn notes that this *knowing* of the readers, evoked by reworking the familiar, can be an effective tool for creating a sense of immersion by using "the sense of expectation to seal off the fantastic world and make it real" (99). When constructing a complete and independent storyworld, known settings, story shapes, and characters bring readers closer to the fictional world, where they can then learn

about its details. In other words, understanding the storyworld as "real" is necessary to this end.

Tzvetan Todorov outlines three conditions for the fantastic, but it is only the third which is of interest to this thesis: "the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as 'poetic' interpretations" (qtd. in Jackson 28). While Todorov's conditions are specifically about his conception of *the fantastic* and do not quite account for modern ideas of the fantasy genre, it is true that if a storyworld is to be complete and consistent, it ought to be able to be read literally, although I do not believe it must entirely resist an allegorical reading in doing so. Rather, I argue that the sense of familiarity discussed above is part of what enables readers to approach *Discworld* in this manner. As with genres, folklore is by its nature a collective understanding, something which "everyone knows," and regardless of whether or not this knowledge is true, it feels natural and intuitive. It is thus not that strange for Discworld to be flat and carried on the backs of four elephants and a turtle; after all, the same can be found in Hindu myth. Nor is it odd for the Nac Mac Feegle to call themselves "pictsies" and speak in Scots, as they are based on the Scottish Picts. It makes sense for witches to fly on broomsticks and form covens of three, for salamanders to be fire-resistant, and for vampires to be weak to garlic and holy symbols, because these are things "everyone knows" (Pratchett and Simpson 14, 23, 103–105; see 3.3). Many of the stories that make up folklore and the fantasy genre – the Cauldron of Story, in Tolkien's words – have literal readings themselves, which encourages a similar approach to texts which evoke them.

Of course, not all elements of a storyworld will be as familiar as a genre's most iconic concepts. However, as seen with the Feegle, generic knowledge can nevertheless be applied in these cases. Furthermore, I would contend that it can be used to integrate less familiar elements into the storyworld, provided these elements are consistent with the more familiar ones. *Small Gods* features a form of magic which, while undoubtedly not completely unique to *Discworld,* is less common in fantasy. The pantheon of the Disc is modeled after those of various mythologies – Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Norse, and so on – and as is common in many of these: the major gods reside on a mountain, Cori Celesti, comparable to Mount Olympus or Mount Meru (Pratchett and Simpson 26–31). This will be familiar to most readers, as will the idea that gods are fickle and powerful, and capable of miraculous (or magical) acts. What is likely to be less familiar is the source of the gods' power: belief. While not directly addressed as magic, belief is a force in its own right in *Discworld,* and its effects would certainly qualify it as a form of magic when compared to the actual world, especially at its most powerful:

> The Great God rose over the Temple, billowing and changing as the belief of thousands of people flowed into him. There were shapes there, of eagle-headed men, and bulls, and golden horns, but they tangled and flamed and fused into one another.
>
> Four bolts of fire whirred out of the cloud and burst the chains holding Brutha.
>
> *II. He Is Cenobiarch And Prophet Of Prophets.*
>
> The voice of theophany rumbled off the distant mountains.
>
> *III. Do I Hear Any Objections? No? Good.*
>
> The cloud had by now condensed into a shimmering golden figure, as tall as the Temple. […]
>
> Another shaft of flame shot out and struck the Temple doors. They slammed shut, and then the white-hot bronze melted, erasing the commandments of centuries.
>
> *V. What Shall It Be, Prophet?* (362–363)

While readers may not necessarily be familiar with belief as a force, they are almost certainly familiar with the concept of magic, capable of shaping reality in different ways, as in the example above. Even as faith in Om is restored along with his powers as a god, belief is molding his appearance: each shape mentioned is one he is believed to have taken at various points in Omnian history, and is thus what his newly returned followers expect to see. This does not require explicit clarification, as the idea of belief-as-magic has by this point in the novel been thoroughly established, although this instance is far more striking than any prior. This case is also one of the clearest examples of genre-typical use of magic – bolts of fire – as combined with *Discworld*'s more original concepts in this novel. In effect, a less familiar element is added to generic knowledge, and functions by the rules set up by the assumptions therein. Together with the background of magic, myths, and fairy tales being understood as literal in *Discworld*, it is not difficult for readers to understand belief as something equally tangible.

Beyond individual components, genres often bring with them stock narratives as well. Detective novels, for instance, generally follow a pattern of some kind of mystery – usually a crime – to be solved, with the protagonists locating clues and coming up with a solution in the climax. Similarly, the fantasy genre naturally has its own generic narrative structures; quests, destinies, and battles between good and evil are all quite common. Typical narrative structures have had their fair share of study, including Claude Lévi-Strauss's mythemes and Vladimir Propp's functions of Russian fairy tales. One of the most famous of these studies can be found in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, where he proposes his version of the "hero's journey" monomyth. Focusing on mythology and religion, Campbell

describes seventeen stages divided into three categories, with the caveat that not all stages can necessarily be found in every myth, and that they do not always occur in the same order (33–36). [3] Campbell's approach – and indeed, the idea of a monomyth itself – has been criticized, and I do not argue that those criticisms are without merit. Nevertheless, the pattern Campbell highlights does occur in at least some myths, and with fantasy's extensive ties to mythology and religion, the same pattern can often be found in works within the genre. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is, once again, a prime example. Of course, this is not to say that this particular narrative structure is ubiquitous in fantasy fiction.

The same applies to *Discworld*: of my four novels, only *Small Gods* arguably follows the broad strokes of the monomyth's three categories: departure, initiation, and return. Brutha embarks on a journey to Ephebe, where he and Om find out why Om has lost his powers – the departure into the "unknown world." When they attempt to return to Omnia, they are shipwrecked and must cross the desert – the initiation. Finally, the return to Omnia where, after Vorbis is killed, Brutha assumes the role of Prophet and reforms the church using the knowledge he has gained during his journey – the return to the "known world" (Campbell 34–35; for a full plot synopsis, see 1.1). Not all of the stages within these three categories occur, and the ones that do are not all in the order Campbell proposes; the "trials" from the initiation phase, for example, arguably continue into the return phase of the story, as the defeat of Vorbis and the prevention of war happen only once Brutha is back in Omnia. Even so, the narrative has a familiar shape, with a familiar set of norms and causality. Since this structure is heavily linked to religious narratives – appropriate for *Small Gods* as the *Discworld* novel that draws most explicitly from religion and mythology – the associations readers are likely to have concerning the hero's journey can thus reinforce the setting, events, and themes on the novel. As with other genre cues, it is not necessary for a work to perfectly adhere to a typical narrative structure in order for a schema to be activated in the minds of readers.

Finally, while generic knowledge and expectations shape both first impressions and interpretations, readers do not adhere to them indefinitely. Rather, they adjust their schemata to be more appropriate to a given situation as they read on (Frow 104). In learning about a storyworld, particularly with a series as long as *Discworld*, it is inevitable that readers form more specific schemata to the works in question by acquiring "text-specific knowledge"

[3] The stages are as follows: The Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, the Crossing of the First Threshold, the Belly of the Whale, the Road of Trials, the Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as Temptress, Apotheosis, the Ultimate Boon, Refusal of the Return, the Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, the Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds, and Freedom to Live (Campbell 34–35).

(Emmott and Alexander). Readers will learn where a storyworld falls in line with genre expectations and where it does not, how the familiar and unfamiliar are combined, and the underlying logic therein. In a fantasy storyworld where anything could potentially happen and be explained by magic, it is important for readers to understand what is and is not normal for that world. In turn, being able to understand the status quo means that readers understand when something out of the ordinary happens, and how the events of the narrative impact the storyworld in both the short and long term. While it can no longer be termed generic knowledge, readers' knowledge of the storyworld still functions in the same way: different cues trigger associated information, which readers can use to fill in what is left unsaid. When the Patrician mentions Omnia in *The Truth* (47), readers of *Small Gods* will recall that it is a highly religious nation bordered by desert on one side and ocean on another, all without being explicitly told so by the text of *The Truth*. Similarly, when Vimes reads an issue of *The Ankh-Morpork Times* at the beginning of *Thud!* (14–17), readers of *The Truth* will not only be able to fill in the paper's history but extrapolate that it has become an entrenched part of the city's culture in the time between the two novels as well. Discworld, in effect, becomes a knowledge net in its own right, with its societies, history, and geography acting as nodes.

As I have briefly touched upon, generic knowledge can also be used in subversion or commentary. Many works explicitly depend on readers having specific knowledges for such purposes. *Discworld* novels are among these works, as a result of their other primary genre: satire.

4.3 Satire

Like fantasy, satire is a genre with a long history and nebulous boundaries, and as with fantasy, there has been plenty of debate as to exactly which elements constitute it. Comedy, irony, and caricature are all among its common features, but not all works involving any of the three could be considered satire. The genre in itself does not contain the same kinds of built-in elements as genres like fantasy and science fiction, and thus does not result in the same kind of schemata-based gap-filling on the part of readers. In *The Cambridge Introduction to Satire*, Jonathan Greenberg notes that due to being more readily identifiable through aspects such as tone and attitude, satire could arguably be more accurately described as a mode rather than a genre, and should it be considered a genre, it is one which "combines, inhabits, or transforms other genres." Notably, satire exists in "ironic or secondary relation to 'higher' genres" (8–10). In other words, satire depends on readers' genre awareness and

knowledges, much more so than other genres do, that is, it requires a target. This relationship is, according to some scholars, a primary characteristic of satire (10). Others point to satire as having a purpose, be it judging, mocking, provoking, inquiring, or exploring (18). Finally, satire references the real world, which is what Greenberg claims is the basis for satire's "disruptive force" (21). As discussed above, no genre is completely disconnected from the real world; satire, however, tends to be far more direct.

George Carstocea explores the use of satire in worldbuilding in his article "Worlds as Satire," where he sets up two central markers of a satirical world:

> first, the presence of structural characteristics that make a polemical, politically charged implied or explicit argument about the workings of the homologous structures in the real world; and second, the use of humorous medium- or genre-specific devices […] that explore the divergence between the constructed world and reality (281)

Discworld meets these criteria for the most part, with the arguable exception of a few of the earliest novels, which focus more on lampooning fantasy's clichés than making commentary about the real world. These novels are often considered to be fantasy-parody rather than satire, with the transition from the former to the latter beginning roughly with the fifth novel. Lüthi attributes this shift to Pratchett's gradual interest in writing more complex plots and his use of recurring characters necessitating consistency and coherence in the storyworld. The narrower focus of parody gave way to broader themes and topics, and in the process, Discworld came into its own as a world (126). Lüthi's distinction between parody and satire could be contested – the two frequently overlap (Greenberg 15) – but his observations about the evolution of the *Discworld* series as well as satire's role in its construction hold true.

Small Gods embodies Carstocea's criteria and provides a useful example. The satire of the novel centers on religion as an institution (but notably, not the act of having faith itself), and the damage that can be done when that institution becomes corrupt. The Church of Om is clearly modeled after the medieval Catholic Church, while the Quisition is a particularly thinly veiled reference to the Inquisition, nearly identical in both name and purpose. In the name of abolishing heresy, the Quisition tortures and kills anyone who questions (or is accused of questioning) the teachings of the church. As head of the Quisition, Vorbis uses his influence to enforce the church's draconian laws, as well as guide Omnia's subjugation of surrounding nations through military means should they refuse to join the Church of Om willingly, thus mirroring the crusades. By drawing so directly on real history and institutions in his worldbuilding, Pratchett is able to create an unmistakable parallel to the actual world

and in doing so directly comment on those institutions, both past and present, and thus meets the first condition provided by Carstocea. The second condition of using humor to explore the difference between reality and the storyworld, too, is met:

> [The mugs] had legends on them like A Present From the Holy Grotto of Ossory, or To The World's Greatest Daddy. Most of them were chipped, and no two of them were the same.
>
> And there were the postcards on the wall. It was traditional that, when an inquisitor went on holiday, he'd send back a crudely coloured woodcut of the local view with some suitably jolly and risqué message on the back. And there was the pinned-up tearful letter from the Inquisitor First Class Ishmale 'Pop' Quoom, thanking all the lads for collecting no fewer than seventy-eight *obols* for his retirement present and a lovely bunch of flowers for Mrs Quoom, indicating that he'd always remember his days in No. 3 pit, and was looking forward to coming in and helping out any time they were short-handed.
>
> And it all meant this: that there are hardly any excesses of the most crazed psychopath that cannot easily be duplicated by a normal, kindly family man who just comes in to work every day and has a job to do. (*SG* 24)

This description of the Quisition breakroom mirrors what one might find in a typical modern office, in sharp contrast to the brutality of the Quisition's work and against readers' likely expectations of how such people would behave at all times – in both the storyworld and the real world. The juxtaposition is combined with the omniscient narrator's wry tone for comic effect, but it also draws attention to this gap in expectation and underlines the fact that, despite what we may want to believe, atrocities are more often than not committed by perfectly normal people. While the passage runs the risk of appearing out of place (the mugs in particular could seem anachronistic to readers, especially to those new to the series), I would argue that the clear real-world parallel and commentary lend a sense of weight to the scene and by extension, the worldbuilding of the novel overall. Furthermore, it suggests the hierarchies of the Church are largely made up of regular people rather than one-dimensional embodiments of evil, or cold, calculating individuals like Vorbis. This gives complexity and a greater degree of completeness to both the background characters and the social structures they are a part of. Pratchett explores such structures and the characters within them throughout the novel, in a number of ways.

Carstocea suggests that "satires which derive their polemic power from complex world-building consequently rely on a polyphony of voices," which "foreground a complex interplay between univocal riffs on a single topic, back-and-forth battles of wit, and multiple,

partial views on the topics at hand" (281). As discussed in 2.6, this is something frequently seen in conversations between various characters. The completeness of the storyworld allows characters of various backgrounds and consequently various ideologies to interact and clash in ways which expand both the characters' and the readers' understanding of the storyworld. Dialogues making use of the humorous devices Carstocea describes (jokes, puns, word play, hyperbole, and so on) to represent different views and arguments are, naturally, common in the *Discworld* series. An example of this can be seen in a discussion between Commander Sam Vimes and Captain Carrot Ironfoundersson in *The Truth*, where the latter updates the former on the Watch's current investigation into the Patrician's alleged crime:

> Carrot nodded. 'Nothing good, sir. No one's found the dog. The Guilds are battening down. Mr Scrope has been getting a lot of visitors. Oh, and High Priest Ridcully is telling everyone he thinks Lord Vetinari went mad because the day before he'd been telling him about a plan to make lobsters fly through the air.'
>
> 'Lobsters flying through the air,' said Vimes flatly.
>
> 'And something about sending ships by semaphore, sir.'
>
> 'Oh, dear. And what is Mr Scrope saying?'
>
> 'Apparently he says he's looking forward to a new era in our history and will put Ankh-Morpork back on the path of responsible citizenship, sir.'
>
> 'Is that the same as the lobsters?'
>
> 'It's political, sir. Apparently he wants to return to the values and traditions that made the city great, sir.'
>
> 'Does he *know* what those values and traditions *were*?' said Vimes, aghast.
>
> 'I assume so, sir,' said Carrot, keeping a straight face.
>
> 'Oh my gods. I'd rather take a chance on the lobsters.' (*TT* 329)

The "values and traditions that made the city great" are only implied, but the fact that they are not worth reviving is made clear through the way the characters discuss them, and because this political sentiment is a common one in the real world as well, the criticism carries over. By invoking such a common phrase, the novel suggests that the history of those values and traditions mirrors that of the real world in that more often than not, it was deeply unpleasant and even dangerous for anyone who fell outside of "responsible citizenship," as defined by a select few. The consequence of this for worldbuilding is that readers can be given direction for filling in the gaps through the novel's commentary, rather than any generic cue such as those discussed in 4.2. This function is arguably fulfilled through the principle of minimal departure, but I would argue that in this case, with a satirical storyworld which draws so

extensively on a vast number of sources, it is helpful to be directed to the real world for background assumptions when necessary.

The same effect can, however, be achieved through other means as well: the details of the storyworld can often speak for themselves. When Brutha arrives in Ephebe – a nation based on ancient Greece – he learns about the world outside of Omnia for the first time, and slowly realizes how oppressive his home country is as a result. Ephebe is Omnia's opposite in terms of how knowledge and the pursuit thereof are handled: where the Church of Om violently suppresses any ideas which even remotely contradict their teachings, Ephebians welcome innovation and debate. This is humorously reflected in the large number of philosophers wandering around, many of them based on real Greek philosophers and mathematicians such as Archimedes, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato ("Small Gods"). Beyond a simple joke, however, is the fact that this has led to Ephebe being more technologically advanced than Omnia, protecting it from invasion up until this point in the novel (*SG* 148–153). In this way, even without ideas being directly contrasted through dialogue, readers can recognize the argument made through the worldbuilding itself. The different outcomes from opposing ways of thinking have shaped the two nations described in the novel. In doing so, Pratchett is able explore their consequences and build a storyworld which can be understood both literally and as a satire and critique of real-world institutions and dogma.

Beyond the real world, the *Discworld* series uses both the broad strokes of other narratives and genres (including fantasy, as discussed in 4.2), as well as more specific references to any number of individual works and clichés for its satire. These are used for various effects, ranging from a simple joke to central narrative concepts. Regardless of their other uses, such instances almost always contribute to building the storyworld in one way or another:

> 'Oh, dear. Zis is so complicated,' said Otto. 'Look, zer philosopher Kling says zer mind has a dark side and a light light side, you see, and dark light… is seen by zer dark eyes of the mind…'
>
> He paused again.
>
> 'Yes?' said Sacharissa politely.
>
> 'I vas vaiting for zer roll of thunder,' said the vampire. 'But, alas, zis is not Uberwald.'
>
> 'You've lost me there,' said Sacharissa.

> ‘Vell, you see, if I vas to say something portentous like “zer dark eyes of zer mind” back home in Uberwald, zer would be a sudden crash of thunder,’ said Otto. ‘And if I vas to point at a castle on a towering crag and say “Yonder is… *zer castle*” a volf would be bound to howl mournfully.’ He sighed. ‘In zer old country, zer scenery is psychotropic and knows vot is expected of it. Here, alas, people just look at you in a funny vay.’ (*TT* 224–225)

This conversation occurs in *The Truth* when Otto attempts to explain how his dark light camera works. His explanation pokes fun at the tendency, particularly in cinema, for the weather and environmental effects to reflect the mood of a scene – Uberwald, as a country largely based on Gothic horror, here exemplifies this trope in its more foreboding form. However, Otto also provides an explanation for why this is so, and thus reveals one of the foundational forces of Discworld: narrative expectation (see 3.3). Satire is metafictional and requires at least some degree of knowledge of its target on the part of readers as a basis for elements such as hyperbole or subversion, and it is common for characters themselves to have a similar awareness in satirical works (Alexander 257). In *Discworld*, these elements are built into the storyworld’s rules, and hence, the characters can be aware of them without necessarily being explicitly metafictional, as seen above. Readers’ genre-awareness also contributes to their understanding of the storyworld, and to the effectiveness of the satire.

A logical approach to the satirical elements contributes to the consistency of the storyworld, despite the potential issues caused by the satire itself. In his article on Discworld, Lüthi’s argument centers on refuting a statement made by Tolkien: “if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away” (Tolkien 114). In Tolkien’s view, to satirize magic is to undermine a fantasy storyworld’s basis and shatter what he terms *secondary belief* or *literary belief*, the ability of readers to believe in a storyworld while still being aware that it is not truly real (132).[4] Even beyond fantasy, parody and satire often draw attention to the artificiality of a fictional world and the events therein, and thus run the risk of pulling readers back into the real world. Lüthi counters this by claiming that Pratchett’s satire is at the heart of what makes Discworld function as a storyworld: much of the humor is, after all, achieved by approaching fantasy seriously and logically (see 2.3). One contributing factor to this, he argues, is that Pratchett often approaches fantasy as if it were science fiction (132–

[4] Cf. Mark Wolf’s concept of immersion and absorption, where readers are “fully engaged with the work at hand” and form a mental model of the storyworld which they access the same way they do real memories (49).

134). This can be seen throughout the novels, from the development of technology to the workings of magic and the world itself. *Small Gods* demonstrates this approach:

> Expletius had proved that the Disc was ten thousand miles across. Febrius, who'd stationed slaves with quick reactions and carrying voices all across the country at dawn, had proved that light travelled at about the same speed as sound. And Didactylos had reasoned that, in that case, in order to pass between the elephants, the sun had to travel at least thirty-five thousand miles in its orbit every day, or, to put it another way, twice as fast as its own light. Which meant that mostly you could only ever see where the sun had been, except twice every day when it caught up with itself, and this meant that the whole sun was a faster-than-light particle, a tachyon or, as Didactylos put it, a bugger. (*SG* 258)

Om similarly references gods doing miracles through things such as a "quantum-mechanistic tunnel effect, that'd happen anyway if you were prepared to wait zillions of years" (*SG* 171–172). In these specific cases, Pratchett employs concepts from quantum mechanics, a field which may seem beyond Discworld's level of scientific progress. However, such anachronisms are common in the series, such as the printing press and movable type not being invented until after the semaphore, and thus is not out of place with the series' approach to scientific and technological development. Pseudo-scientific though these explanations may be, they very clearly draw from real concepts in physics as a way to both satirize magic – usually portrayed as vaguely mystical and ineffable in the consensus fantasy universe – and rationalize the way Discworld functions. The style of science fiction, itself a genre with its own set of knowledges and expectations, may also suggest to readers a specific mindset for approaching the *Discworld* series, which directs them to look for a certain kind of reasoning within the storyworld. According to Lüthi, this mindset "challenges them to see Discworld as a place where fantasy and rationalism can coexist and magic can be explained scientifically" (139). Pratchett notes that "we're trained in childhood not to ask questions of fantasy" and argues that an author must ask these questions and know how their world works ("Notes" 85). The result is a world where magic is real, but which nevertheless feels entirely grounded.

Establishing the Disc's brand of logic is aided by the characters following the kind of thought of process which the readers are implicitly encouraged to adopt. The people inhabiting the Disc are, in Lüthi's words, "remarkably down-to-earth for fantasy characters" and often have a great deal of common sense, albeit shaped by an absurd world (139). This naturally applies to the protagonists and supporting characters, but is also seen in background characters who are never even properly identified:

> The Pork Futures Warehouse was… one of those things, the sort that you get in a city that has lived with magic for too long. The occult reasoning, if such it could be called, was this: pork was an important commodity for the city. Future pork, possibly even pork as yet unborn, was routinely traded by merchants. Therefore, it had to exist *somewhere*. And the Pork Futures Warehouse came into existence, icy cold within as the pork drifted backwards through time. (*T* 137)

Strange as it is, there is a clear line of thought presented which readers can follow: it is a reasoning which can only work on the Disc, but it nevertheless is logical. This particular example is noted to be the unusual (even by the Disc's standards) result of magic being commonplace in Ankh-Morpork, the citizenry of which is always ready to make the most of any opportunity, and who has adapted to its circumstances in creative ways. While readers may not always be able to make quite the same leaps of logic as the inhabitants of Discworld, by outlining how their thought processes work, the novels can normalize even the more outlandish concepts of the storyworld by fitting otherwise disparate elements together into a coherent whole. This contributes to the characters (and thus, the readers) being able to predict the outcomes of their actions, despite the absurdity of the storyworld (Mendlesohn 63). When visiting the newly opened offices of *The Ankh-Morpork Times* at the beginning of *The Truth*, the Patrician remarks that "whenever some well-meaning soul begins a novel enterprise they always, with some kind of uncanny foresight, site it at the point where it will do maximum harm to the fabric of reality," and appears to be surprised when that is not the case (*TT* 58). Several of the examples he cites are events from previous *Discworld* novels, but even for new readers it is enough to suggest that odd occurrences are the norm in the city. This approach is uniform to the various areas of worldbuilding, ranging from the natural to the cultural to the ontological structures of the world itself. This means that no matter where or when the novels draw inspiration, the world feels consistent. Satire acts as the common thread of the series and allows the world to expand into directions it otherwise may not have been able to.

The use of satire is central to *Discworld*'s worldbuilding in another way, too: it enables Pratchett to make use of narrative expectation and turn the storyworld's artificiality into a part of its ontological foundation (Lüthi 134–139). In effect, Discworld works in certain ways specifically because it is expected to, by both readers and characters. The result of this is that even when the novels are satirizing something, the storyworld is simultaneously being developed. In 4.2, I discussed how belief is treated as a form of magic by the rules of Discworld, but it also illustrates the use of expectation as a shaping force of the storyworld. One of the running jokes of *Small Gods* is the Ephebian Goddess of Wisdom, Patina, who is a

clear spoof of her Greek equivalent, Pallas Athena. Where Athena is symbolized by an owl, Patina is symbolized by a penguin. While at first this is only played for humor – "'Not known for its wisdom. Second most confused bird in the world. […] We don't like to talk about it,' said the barman" (*SG* 169) – it is later revealed that this was not the way things were meant to be:

> God. God needed people. Belief was the food of the gods. But they also needed a shape. Gods became what people believed they ought to be. So the Goddess of Wisdom carried a penguin. It could have happened to any god. It should have been an owl. Everyone knew that. But one bad sculptor who had only ever had an owl described to him makes a mess of a statue, *belief* steps in, next thing you know the Goddess of Wisdom is lumbered with a bird that wears evening dress the whole time and smells of fish.
>
> You gave a god its shape, like a jelly fills a mould. (*SG* 261)

The most well-known image of Patina looks a certain way, and as such, the people of Ephebe expect her to match it, and because of this expectation, she does. In other words, a humorous detail, which could easily have been treated as just a simple joke, is used to expand upon and demonstrate one of the core concepts of the novel's narrative, and one of the fundamental rules of Discworld itself. Similar instances can be found in other novels, such as *Thud!*, where one of the differences between male and female vampires' abilities is briefly explained:

> 'I thought vampires could rematerialize their clothes,' said Angua accusingly. 'Otto Chriek can!'
>
> 'Females can't. We don't know why. It's probably part of the whole underwired nightdress business. That's where you score again, of course. When you're in one hundred and fifty bat bodies it's quite hard to remember to keep two of them carrying a pair of pants.' (*T* 217)

While this dialogue draws attention to the common portrayal of women as opposed to men in other works of similar genres (or indeed, any genre), it also underlines the power of expectation as a force within the storyworld, albeit not as explicitly as *Small Gods* does. What both of these examples have in common is that it is the *characters'* collective expectations of the storyworld which seem to contribute to shaping it. More importantly, because their expectations are the result of a world which was specifically built along real-world genres and narrative patterns, the characters' expectations can mirror those of readers and allow the novels to include clear satirical metafictional awareness and commentary while

simultaneously maintaining the sense of an independent storyworld, one which can "act as if it is impervious to external influence" (Mendlesohn 59).

Of course, no work of fiction is truly separate from the actual world; they are all, to some degree, mimetic (Pettersson 41). Satire, however, deliberately draws attention to this connection to reality through one of its major characteristics: referentiality (Greenberg 21). This is arguably the biggest threat to the literary belief engendered by the *Discworld* series. Real-world references made in the novels range from the subtle to the obvious, and are frequent to the point that in all likelihood, no one reader will notice them all, at least in their first reading of any given novel. Some attempts have been made by fans to find these references, most notably by *The Annotated Pratchett File* website, edited by Leo Breebaart and Mike Kew.[5] As this effort has already been made, I will not be attempting to document the number of references within my chosen novels here. However, for the following analysis, it should be understood how ubiquitous these references are. For the sake of this discussion, I also separate the novels' real-world references from the novels' use of genres as discussed above, including folklore.

On the more subtle end of the scale are details which may not strike readers as references at all unless they are already familiar with the source. Pratchett comments on his use of references in an interview, noting that "The references you missed you didn't notice. Or, you thought was just funny" ("Part 1"). For example, while readers are likely to realize that the dwarf Gunilla Goodmountain is a reference to and direct translation of Gutenberg (who introduced movable type and the printing press in Europe in the 15th century), they may be less likely to recognize the names of the other dwarfs, Caslong, Boddony, and Gowdie, as references to typefaces – Caslon, Bodoni, and Goudy ("The Truth"). Even if recognized, these references are appropriate for the novel's subject matter and the role of the dwarfs, and are unlikely to shatter readers' literary belief. Some references are also more obscured by the narrative itself than others. The death of Vorbis as the result of Om, in tortoise form, falling on his head in *Small Gods* is directly inspired by a similar accident involving the ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus, as Pratchett admits in a short piece on his writing process ("Thought" 4–6). Whether or not readers are familiar with the story of Aeschylus' death, Vorbis' death is thoroughly integrated into the narrative and storyworld of the novel, rather than being merely mentioned as a simple reference.

[5] *The Annotated Pratchett File* has annotated as far as the thirty-second novel of the series, *A Hat Full of Sky*. At the time of writing, the site itself does not appear to have been updated since 2016.

In contrast, there are (far rarer) obvious and apparently out-of-place references which may bring to mind the real world long before any in-universe interpretation: “This suggested the universe had probably been put together in a bit of a rush by an underling while the Supreme Being wasn’t looking, in the same way that Boy Scouts’ Association minutes are done on office photocopiers all over the country” (*SG* 127). While it is entirely possible for a Boy Scouts’ Association to exist on the Disc, it has not been mentioned before or since. Similarly, while there could be some equivalent to a photocopier, it is not something readers have been introduced to, and so early in the series it is still unlikely to exist despite the Disc’s highly varying levels of technological development. Readers will, more likely than not, interpret this as a direct reference to the real world rather than a worldbuilding detail (beyond the effect of its use as a comparison) and have their attention drawn to the artificiality of the work at hand. This is, I would claim, where *Discworld*’s satire serves a further purpose. Greenberg suggests that referentiality is part of the appeal of satire, “a charge of pleasure in guessing who is really being targeted” (22), and something to this effect may happen here, too. Part of the fun of reading *Discworld* lies in identifying its various references, to which end *The Annotated Pratchett File* is also very helpful.

However, in my view, satire, or at least satire as used in *Discworld*, results in a certain flexibility as to the readers’ suspension of disbelief. The novels are clearly referential in nature from the beginning, as they draw on other genres, myths, narratives, history, and modern popular culture, among many other areas. As discussed above, this is all integrated into the storyworld, but that does not remove the referential aspect of these elements. As such, readers are likely to be consistently more aware of Discworld’s artificiality as opposed to a non-satirical fantasy storyworld, where the connection to the real world is usually less evident. In other words, because readers are encouraged to view Discworld in relation to the real world, direct references which do not otherwise contribute to worldbuilding are less jarring than if they appeared in, for example, *The Lord of the Rings*. The mindset engendered by the series’ satire grants it the freedom to play with the borders between the real and the fictional. Furthermore, I would argue that this does not undermine the Disc as a complete, consistent, and immersive storyworld. As Mendlesohn points out, “Pratchett has constructed nodes of recognizability that keep us within what is, after all, a rather silly world” (100). The Disc’s relatability to the real world is in many ways at the heart of series; it could be said that Discworld is positioned to exist *with* the real world, rather than instead of it. The resulting form of suspension of disbelief is thus arguably one which can accommodate this relationship.

As a final note on referentiality, most of *Discworld*'s allusions fall between the two extremes of the undetectable to the potentially immersion-breaking. One of the Disc's more advanced technologies, the Dis-Organizers in *The Truth* and *Thud!*, are an example of this, as they are modeled after real-world personal digital assistants. The model Vimes has makes this particularly clear, as it is called "The Gooseberry™" and includes a function called "Bluenose™ Integrated Messenger Service," easily recognizable as BlackBerry and Bluetooth respectively (*T* 78–79). However, as discussed in 2.3, the existence and workings of the technology involved are based on the rules of the storyworld and are a reasonable result of magic and technology being developed in tandem. Thus, the humor comes from how the Disc's version compares to that of the real world. Similarly, the logos used for *The Ankh-Morpork Times* (see Fig. 1 in 2.5) and its rival, *The Ankh-Morpork Inquirer* are designed to evoke those of real-world publications, specifically those with matching reputations. *The Ankh-Morpork Times*' ornate logo mimics that of newspapers like *The Times* and other broadsheets, which are generally considered reasonably respectable and trustworthy. In contrast, *The Ankh-Morpork Inquirer*'s logo resembles that of red top tabloids, particularly that of *The Sun*, which are generally sensationalist and less concerned with thorough journalism (*TT* 197). This is also mirrored in the headlines from *The Ankh-Morpork Inquirer*: "WOMAN GIVES BIRTH TO COBRA" (196) and "ELVES STOLE MY HUSBAND!" (256). While the aesthetics and rhetoric are references to their real-world equivalents, they also evoke the associations readers have of the different approaches to journalism. The referential nature of satire is, more often than not, an opportunity for worldbuilding, rather than a disadvantage.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

Discworld was deliberately created with an eye on genre, with fantasy at the forefront, but is by no means the only genre used in building the storyworld. With generic knowledge at its foundation, Discworld is able to evoke the broad strokes of its storyworld with easily recognizable genre cues, and then build upon them through unique interpretations, details, and narratives. Readers will almost certainly have some degree of genre awareness when approaching any work, as will authors when writing it. This is an unavoidable result of how we process information and patterns in navigating the real world. Far from being a hindrance, readers' generic knowledge can be useful in constructing storyworlds and making them coherent. As Frow puts it, genre is "a framework for processing information and for allowing

us to move between knowledge given directly in a text and other sets of knowledge that are relevant to understanding it" (80).

In this chapter, I have shown how, with its satire, *Discworld* is able to create a consistent approach to each novel's subject matter and incorporate details from a vast array of sources in ways which could otherwise strike readers as incompatible and jarring with a fantasy storyworld. In doing so, Pratchett is able to show the familiar in a new light, be it the clichés of any number genres, the staples of popular culture, or the very real and influential structures and institutions of the actual world. The Disc exists in an easily apparent relationship with reality, but as my analysis shows, this does not diminish it as a fully realized storyworld of its own right: it is simply intentionally built on readers' expectations, all the while changing and fitting disparate elements together so that they form a coherent fantasy storyworld. In Pratchett's own words, "The genre offers all the palettes of the other genres, and new colours besides" ("Notes" 86). When used well, genres can be powerful worldbuilding tools.

5. Conclusion

Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* features a storyworld which is clearly absurd. Nevertheless, it has cemented itself as one of fantasy's most iconic worlds and will, in all likelihood, remain popular for a long time to come. I would attribute this at least in part to a successfully realized world which, despite being ridiculous, is complete, consistent, inventive, and immersive. The Disc exists in a satirical relationship with the real world, while simultaneously maintaining the sense of an independent storyworld: it can be read literally and as commentary.

In this thesis, I have explored several avenues of worldbuilding. Descriptions and the details they provide form the bulk of the information readers have of a fictional world: provided they are consistent in the rules they follow, details allow readers to fill in gaps and imply a world beyond that which is shown in the text. Such details range from the natural world to the technological, from the ontological to the sociocultural, and cumulatively they inform readers' understanding of the storyworld, on macro- and microlevels. When these details interact with each other and with aspects of the real world in a logical way, they make the storyworld all the more believable.

My analysis shows that narratives are the backbone of such interactions. While the plot may limit the possibilities of description, it does not mean that worldbuilding must be set aside. Through narrative, readers can learn how the storyworld and the characters in it react to events and change as a result. That is, narrative draws readers in by transforming a still image into a dynamic set of systems which impact one another in interesting ways. In the case of the Disc, narrative is built into its very foundations, and to ignore it as a form of worldbuilding would be to miss a crucial element of Discworld's construction.

Finally, genres stem from our innate predisposition for pattern recognition. The schemata readers have inform them not only of real world situations, but of the patterns of fiction, too. Genre-awareness is thus unavoidable: regardless of an author's intention, readers will use their generic knowledge to fill in gaps. However, this presents an opportunity, as readers can be assumed to have some generic knowledge, and by deliberately evoking it, a work can direct readers to approach its world in a certain way, leave what can be assumed unsaid, and focus on where it differs from genre expectation. Furthermore, my study shows that Discworld's satire has a unique relationship with the real world, holding up the familiar

and showing it from a new angle: “It only takes a tweak to make the whole world new” (“Notes” 86).

None of these different levels work in isolation: genre informs readers’ expectations of the narrative and the world that is described; narratives conform to the described rules of the storyworld and what they allow, and are, one way or another, influenced by narratives gone before; and genres are built on the basis of the Cauldron of Story hypothesis, altered over time as new works reinterpret familiar elements and return something new. In this thesis, I have shown how the *Discworld* series exemplifies the way these levels can come together to form the process that is worldbuilding. Further study on the topic could explore the interplay of these levels further, both within the *Discworld* series and in other works. Different storyworlds naturally warrant different approaches to their worldbuilding, and in doing so are likely to vary in the degree and role of each of the three levels outlined here, to various effects. Considering the persistent popularity of storyworlds, particularly those which differ significantly from the actual world, I believe it is worth studying the myriad ways they are constructed.

Pratchett has described Discworld as “a world and a mirror of worlds” (Langford 8): it is a world of its own, but one made of recognizable parts, and thus perpetually relatable and relevant. To some extent, this is true of all fictional worlds, no matter how they are built. A successful fictional world, then, is one which is able to bring both its influences and its originality into an engaging whole, using a variety of techniques afforded by the medium they are made in. At over 80 million copies sold (Smythe), it is safe to say that the titular world of the *Discworld* series is a successful one. Through the levels of description, narrative, and genre, and all they entail, the Disc is built into a living, moving storyworld, one which can simultaneously offer a new perspective on our own.

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