

MASARYK UNIVERSITY IN BRNO
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An Analysis of Terry Pratchett's Wyrd Sisters

Major Bachelor's Thesis

Eva Homolková

Supervisor: Mgr. Pavel Drábek, Ph.D.

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I declare that I have worked on this bachelor thesis independently using only primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with a novel *Wyrd Sisters* by Terry Pratchett. In my thesis I would like to analyse several aspects of the book that seemed to be of high importance for its creation. This thesis does not only concentrate on the most important motifs that appear in Pratchett's novel, but also focuses on the themes and topics that appear in two works that Pratchett used as the main source of his novel: *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare. I would like to explain how Pratchett deals with the material he takes from Shakespeare and find out what goals does he achieve by employing it in *Wyrd Sisters*.

The first chapter of my thesis provides basic information necessary for understanding Pratchett's work in general. This chapter briefly introduces the author himself and the literary style and genre of his books. A short passage is dedicated to the sources that Pratchett works with. The chapter further provides information about the Discworld novels, a series of Pratchett's books, to which *Wyrd Sisters* belongs. Finally, a summary of the storyline of *Wyrd Sisters* is offered.

The second chapter focuses on archetypes. Firstly, the chapter introduces the topic and basic terms as well as the historical background. Then it concentrates on explaining the process of creation of archetype-based characters from original archetypes. The chapter briefly mentions what function do the archetype-based characters have in parody in general as well as in Pratchett's novel in particular.

The third chapter discusses parody. It introduces parody as a literary genre and provides basic information about its origin. The chapter does not intent to describe exhaustingly all the characteristic features of parody in general; it rather aims to

explaining how parody works – it does so mainly by focusing on the relation between parody and its precursor text. This chapter tries to apply the general findings to Pratchett's novel and come up with some concrete examples; the aim is to describe the relation between Shakespeare's plays and a parody on them, *Wyrd Sisters*.

The fourth chapter of this thesis focuses on the motif of magic in Discworld novels and *Wyrd Sisters* in particular. The chapter offers an overview of the most important kinds of magic that may be encountered in the Discworld novels and then concentrates in more detail on one particular – the one connected with the main characters of *Wyrd Sisters*. This chapter also comments on headology, a special non-magical method that Pratchett's main characters employ in *Wyrd Sisters*.

The fifth chapter concentrates on the theme of words in Pratchett's novel, which it analyses on the background of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This chapter is concerned, above all, with the power of the words and it focuses on the function of this theme in both *Hamlet* and *Wyrd Sisters*, mainly in one particular scene of both works. The chapter tries to explain the differences and similarities between the two works, concerning this particular theme.

1. INTRODUCTION TO WYRD SISTERS

1.1. Terry Pratchett

Sir Terry Pratchett was born on 28 April 1948 in Buckinghamshire in central England. His first work published commercially was a short story called *The Hades Business*. By the time it was published, Pratchett was only fifteen years old. Two years later he left school and started working as a journalist for the Bucks Free Press. He married Lyn Purves in 1968 and several years later their daughter Rhianna was born. In 1983 the first of the Discworld novels was published. By then, Pratchett had been working as a publicity officer for the Central Electricity Generating Board and writing had been only his past time activity. After he had finished the third Discworld novel in 1987, Pratchett decided to turn into a full-time writer. Very soon his books became best-sellers; this made him the 1990's best-selling living fiction author in Great Britain. In July 1999, Pratchett received an honorary degree in literature from the University of Warwick and only two years later another one from the University of Portsmouth. In 2003 a third honorary degree came from University of Bath and a year later a fourth one from Bristol University. Pratchett has recently received two more - one from Buckinghamshire New University and another from Dublin University.

The December 2007 meant a turnabout in Pratchett's life as he was diagnosed with a rare form of Alzheimer's disease. He became a patron of The Alzheimer's Research Trust and donated one million dollars to help hasten the research of this disease. He announced publicly that in spite of the disease, or more precisely as long as his condition allowed him to, he was determined to continue to write.

At the end of the year 2008 Pratchett's name appeared on the New Year's

Honours List – an annually issued list of British citizens that are chosen to be honoured by the Queen of England's knightly title. Terry Pratchett was appointed the Knight Bachelor for “services to literature.” Pratchett has more than fifty-five millions of his books sold and his novels translated to over thirty languages. Without a doubt, he is an outstanding author.

1.2. The Discworld

Terry Pratchett is first and foremost famous for being the author of a series of more than thirty fantasy novels called the Discworld novels. These books deal with many various themes. They introduce several different protagonists and a wide range of minor characters, including supernatural creatures of many forms. The stories take place on the Discworld, Pratchett's fictional world. The Discworld is a planet in a shape of a disc, which is supported by four elephants that stand on the back of a gigantic turtle A'Tuin. Pratchett describes it almost in every Discworld novel; in *The Discworld Companion*, for example, he characterises it as “a geological pizza but without the anchovies.” He comments on the origin of the idea in the foreword of a reprinted version of the first Discworld novel – *The Colour of Magic*:

If I had a penny for every time someone asked me where I got the idea of the Discworld, I'd have - hang on a moment - £4,67. Anyway, the answer is that it was lying around and didn't look as though it belonged to anyone. The world rides through space on the back of a turtle. It's one of the great ancient myths, found wherever men and turtles were gathered together; the four elephants were an Indo-European sophistication. The idea has been lying in the lumber rooms of legend for centuries. All I had to do was grab it and run away before the alarms went off.

In his Discworld novels, Pratchett dedicates relatively enough space and effort to describing this world. He offers many arguments to explain both the differences and similarities between the Discworld and planet Earth. Pratchett concentrates on offering

rational explanations of the scientific and natural laws of the Disc as well as of the social, cultural and spiritual sphere. Pratchett's Discworld novels also contain many interesting philosophic ideas. Some of these were adopted by Pratchett from the sources he works with and some are the ideas of his own. Pratchett's philosophic and scientific theories are supported by a network of arguments and they form a complex system. Presently, there are more than thirty Discworld novels; since Pratchett's system of argument is so vast, each of the novels is only able to contain a fragment of it. However, not long ago Pratchett has created a novel that comments on the majority of his scientific and philosophic theories. With help of Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen, Pratchett summarizes in this novel his ideas contained in the whole Discworld series; *The Science of Discworld* (published in 1999) was followed by two sequels: *The Science of Discworld II: The Globe* (2002) and *The Science of Discworld III: The Darwin's Watch* (2005).

The Discworld is a magical world. The motif of magic is one of the most significant aspects of Pratchett's writing – an omnipresent element in his novels. Pratchett employs this motif in his Discworld novels also for the reason that it allows him to incorporate in the books his ideas and theories more easily.

Nevertheless, the Discworld series attracts the attention of the readers mainly for one reason: they are parodies full of Pratchett's original humour.

1.3. Sources

Pratchett's Discworld novels are parodic, which implies that there must be some sources that Pratchett draws on. In his novels Pratchett uses literary works of other authors and adopts whole plots, main themes, characters or individual motifs from them.

Apart from this, Pratchett draws inspiration from various world mythologies, legends and fairytales. He also parodies phenomena of our own world such as politics, religion or culture and real life situations in general. In different words, Pratchett's Discworld novels parody almost every aspect of modern society. The main inspiration for *Wyrd Sisters* was drawn by Pratchett from two of William Shakespeare's plays: *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. *Wyrd Sisters* contains several quotations and paraphrases and various direct and indirect references to both the Shakespeare's plays and also Shakespeare's own life.

1.4. The Genre

Pratchett's books almost undoubtedly belong to the genre of fantasy literature. Timmerman argues that this genre has six basic characteristics: “story, common characters, evocation of another world, use of magic and the supernatural, a clear sense of good and evil and the quest.” He claims that the protagonists of fantasy literature are common characters; this means that the readers perceive them as very close ones – these characters are “like ourselves [the readers].” Even if they are of non-human nature (e.g. aliens, elves or dwarfs), it is easy to sympathise with them. Timmerman further points out that fantasy evokes another world. However, according to him, it is not a non-existent dream world but rather a world parallel to the real one, with which it shares many features. In this world magic is employed and supernatural phenomena quite commonly observed. Timmerman argues that in fantasy literature these two elements – magic and supernatural – become not only important but very often crucial for the development of the stories. However, they do not only serve as a high-profile feature to attract the readers but rather as the most powerful element in the fictive world; they usually play a central role in the plot. Timmerman claims that there is a clear distinction

between good and evil forces in fantasy literature. He argues that a two-sided system of good and bad exists there. When the imaginary equilibrium between these two sides is disturbed, then the main characters feel the necessity to act since they seem to be obliged to fulfil a quest of restoring the balance. In a very similar manner, the antagonistic characters are driven by this system to obstruct the main characters in their effort, which then becomes their quest. It is not difficult to realize that all of the features Timmerman comments on in his essay are present in Pratchett's Discworld novels. Firstly, the Discworld obviously represents another world, which, however, shares many features with its real-world predecessor planet Earth. Secondly, magic and supernatural has a very similar function as Timmerman describes in his essay: they are likely to be seen as the most important phenomena in this world. Pratchett's heroes are common, i.e. easy to be perceived as very close to the readers. And finally, the heroes of Pratchett novels, similarly to what Timmerman describes in his work, are driven to fulfill their quests by the need to restore the equilibrium.

According to Dentith, parody usually provides both the genre and a parody of it (75). This implies that the features of a certain genre are brought to parody rather as a result of the process of parodying than being inserted by the author. As if the genre in parody was subject to the same process as the precursor text (i.e. at certain moments it is imitated by the parody and in others the parody deviates from it). In both cases, the effect appears to be similar: the juxtaposing leads the readers to realize the differences between the parody and precursor text or the genres of these two.

Apart from the most obvious influence of the genre of fantasy literature, the influence of several other genres may be noticed in the Discworld novels. As it may be observed, the whole Discworld series is subdivided into several groups according to the

main characters that appear in each of the novels. The main characters also suggest what are the themes that the novels deals with and subsequently which genre has the influence on that particular novel or group of novels. In the Discworld series there are the City watch books, the Rincewind books, the Death books, the witches books and so on. In the individual subgroups of Discworld novels, a variation of the genre becomes quite obvious. The genre of each of these subgroups differs due to the topics that the particular novels parody: for example the City watch books deal primarily with crimes' investigations. They obviously parody detective stories and the genre thus becomes a mixture of fantasy, which constructs the background or the general setting of the book, and a detective story, which is the genre of the story itself. *Wyrd Sisters* belongs among the witches books, a subgroup of Discworld novels that mainly parody legends and fairytales. The influence of these genres in *Wyrd Sisters* is undeniable, there are many references to fairytales in the novel.

1.5. *Wyrd Sisters*

1.5.1. Etymology of the Title

The *Online Etymology Dictionary* defines the word “wyrd” as an Old English word meaning “fate, destiny.” Obviously enough, it is an ancestor of Modern English word “weird.” There seems to be a record that around 1815 this word was used with different connotation - meaning “strange, odd.” The shift probably emerged thanks to the use of the Middle English phrase “weird sisters” which was used to denominate the Fates.

Weird sisters are fictional characters also called the three witches, the creatures who prophesy the destiny. The term Weird Sisters was first used by Scots writers as a sobriquet for the fates of Greek and Roman mythology. Through its appearance in Raphael Holinshead's Chronicles,

the expression passed to William Shakespeare.
(*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

According to Tolman, the term was very soon connected with Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and this subsequently lead to the shift of meaning¹. The title of *Wyrd Sisters* may be therefore seen as the first reference to Shakespeare that may be found in Pratchett's novel.

1.5.2. The Plot

Wyrd Sisters is the sixth Discworld novel and it was first published in 1988. It tells a story of a small Kingdom of Lancre. The King of Lancre is murdered by his cousin Verence, wherefore the King's only son (and the legitimate heir of the throne) is in danger. Fortunately, he is taken away from the castle by the last of King's loyal servants. Rushing through thick woods of Lancre, with the baby-prince in one hand and the royal crown in the other, chased by Verence's guards, the servant accidentally enters a place of a sabbath of three witches. Almost without thinking, the witches help to save the child. However, this makes them face a complicated situation: the child must be taken away from Lancre to be made safe, they can not keep it. The witches finally decide to leave the baby with an elderly couple of owners of a strolling players' company. Little Tomjon leaves the kingdom and is kept in anonymity. Unaware of his royal origin, he begins to learn acting in the theatre company of his adoptive parents. Before Tomjon leaves Lancre, each of the witches – his godmothers – gives him one attribute as a gift. Later on in the story all of these prove very important.

The murderer Verence and his wife Lady Felmet begin the search for the child, who represents the last obstacle between them and the royal throne. Meanwhile, the

¹ What comes to mind, considering the exact cause of such a shift, is the possibility that it might have been mainly the physical appearance and/or the performance of the witch characters in *Macbeth* that lead to such a shift.

despotic rule of Lord and Lady Felmet begins to upset the whole kingdom. The three witches encounter the ghost of the dead King who asks them for help. The land itself is made angry by being ill-treated by Lord Felmet and does not want to wait any longer for its rightful king to come. Persuaded by the spirit of the kingdom that raises in search for help, the witches finally decide to help the desperate kingdom of Lancre. There is only one possibility that may solve the situation: a very complicated and risky ritual must be performed to cast an ancient spell. This would make the whole kingdom sleep for fifteen years. It is the only possible way to hasten the growth of prince Tomjon so that he be able to take over the rule over his kingdom. Meanwhile, Lord Felmet, who is upset with the worsening situation of his kingdom and the growth of disrespect among the peasants, decides to send his jester to Ankh-Morpork, the largest city of the Discworld, to fulfil a certain quest. He should find a theatre company that would perform a play flattering the ruler and thus change the opinion of people about him. By coincidence, the jester brings the very same company that was earlier chosen by the witches to take care of the small prince. And so it happens that the rightful King of Lancre returns to his kingdom, fifteen years older and equipped with the powers that were given to him by his three godmothers, the witches. The theatre company performs the play; however, due to the intervention of the destiny itself, the plot of the play happens to be incredibly similar to the events that took place in the castle of Lancre when the former King was murdered. So convincing is the play that Lord Felmet finally breaks down and confesses to his crime. At the end, all the villains are punished, Tomjon gets hold of the rule over his kingdom and the equilibrium is re-established.

2. ARCHETYPES

2.1. What is an Archetype?

The *Online Etymology Dictionary* defines the term archetype as the “original pattern from which copies are made” (from Greek “archetypos” - “pattern, model”). *Encyclopaedia Britannica* further points out that in literary criticism the term is perceived as “a primordial image, character, or pattern of circumstances that recurs throughout literature and thought consistently enough to be considered a universal concept or situation.” The *Encyclopaedia* further claims that the term was popularized by Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung – among others the author of the theory of collective unconscious. The concept of collective unconscious is based on Jung's finding that many various primitive cultures act in a surprisingly similar manner on certain occasions, even though they may come from entirely different parts of the world with hardly any possibility of mutual contact. Jung postulates that, in spite of this fact, there seem to be similar tendencies in several cultural spheres such as storytelling, totem building or ritual performing. Jung argues that the reason for this is that human experience becomes genetically coded and then transferred to successive generations in the form of an archetype. He defines the term archetype as an “archaic type” or a “psychic residue of repeated patterns” (5). Jung further claims that there seem to be certain universal patterns which have existed since time immemorial. According to him, archetypes help to both pre-structure and classify any random experience that an individual or a group of individuals encounter (Jung, 5). The pre-structuralization is possible due to the process of generalizing (simplification). Every new experience is perceived primarily in its most simplified form with the emphasis on general and most

significant features it bears. This generalized image of the experience becomes juxtaposed (i.e. compared) to former experiences. Consequently, the perceiver is able to classify the experience according to the similarities and differences that exist between the newly encountered experience and those already known, i.e. according to the notion that the perceiver already has about similar events. The archetypes enter the process at the moment of comparison when they act as a part of the acquired notion of the perceiver and help to classify new pieces of information. This shows quite clearly that archetypes may be also understood as an exemplification of observed patterns of behaviour. According to Jung, these patterns may be observed quite commonly in every culture. This shows that they must be formed as soon as on the elementary level of every culture. Archetypes are commonly present, for example, in tribal rituals, mythologies, fairytales and dreams (6).

2.2. Archetype-Based Characters

Jungian archetypes in literary works are represented by unambiguous and easily understandable characters that always follow the same pattern of behaviour and act in a simple, straightforward and predictable manner. Such characters are, for instance, a mother, a storyteller, an old wise man, a hero or an old hag. Archetypes may be encountered quite commonly in literature, yet in some literary genres they are found more often than in others. For example, in classic fairytales the majority of characters is represented by archetypes. The employment of these characters in fairytales is quite understandable since the purpose of this genre is, above all, to teach the readers certain lesson. The straightforwardness of archetypes helps to make clear distinction between good and evil in the stories and subsequently the moral is delivered more easily. Other

genres, since they need not have a similar intention, do not necessarily seek the same straightforwardness and excessive predictability of the behaviour of the characters. Although this is what works well in fairytales, in other genres it may be seen as redundant or even obtrusive. Thus in most literary genres the archetypes are used only as the bases for characters which are then developed further on. The author provides the characters with additional features – both good and bad – whereby he evolves them into fully-fledged characters whose behaviour transcends the limits of the original archetype. Due to this process, the resulting archetype-based characters become less predictable and the number of probable outcomes of their behaviour increases rapidly. This provides the author with a wider range of possibilities to employ these characters in his story since he is no longer bound by the limiting characteristics of the original archetype.

2.3. Archetype-Based Characters in Parody

Quite obviously, every literary character stimulates the readers to develop certain expectations. In case of archetype-based characters, whose behaviour appears to be easy to predict (even though the predictability is reduced compared to the original archetypes), the expectations seem to develop more easily than in case of characters that do not have a connection to archetypes. The author of a parody who employs the archetype-based characters may then work with the expectations: he may either fulfil them or not. By following the way that the readers presume the character to act, the author establishes a link between the character and the original archetype. When the link is constituted (and thus classification and categorization according to the Jungian pattern commences), then the author may deviate from what is expected from the character. Deviating from the expectations brings surprise, which may have many forms (for

example amusement or shock). This process appears to function on very similar basis as the process of parodying – the expectations are caused by the relation of parody to its precursor text and they prepare the ground for subsequent deviations. These subsequently affect the readers in a certain way. This chapter will not provide a more detailed explanation since the process of parodying as well as the relation between parody and the precursor text will be discussed in the following chapter. It is only important to bear in mind that the same findings, as provided by the third chapter, may be made about the function of archetype-based characters in a text. At this point we may conclude with a statement that the employment of archetype-based characters facilitates the creation of parody.

2.4. Archetype-Based Characters in *Wyrd Sisters*

It is quite obvious that in the Discworld novels, Pratchett uses a very similar approach to the formation of his characters as described above. The archetype bases of his characters are quite apparent. However, Pratchett transcends the boundaries of archetypes by developing his characters further on; he provides them with additional features and qualities. His characters no more blindly follow the patterns of behaviour that the original archetypes do wherefore they become more universal and may be employed in more ways in the novel.

The three witch characters, protagonists of *Wyrd Sisters*, are Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg and Magrat Garlick. Pratchett characterizes each of them differently, thus it may be said that they represent three different Jungian archetypes. Nanny Ogg, described by Pratchett as an elderly good-humoured corpulent lady who looks after a large family clan of her own grown up children and their grandchildren,

clearly represents the archetype of “a mother.” Granny Weatherwax is presented as a stiff, determined and well-respected teacher-like figure; she doubtlessly represents the archetype of “a spinster.” Finally, there is Magrat Garlick: an absent-minded young witch novice portrayed as an unbelievably sincere and naïve young girl who lacks life experience; she obviously represents the archetype of “a virgin.” However, it is also possible to perceive the three characters from a slightly different perspective and thus claim that they are a representation of a single archetype. Together, the three may be seen as the archetype of “a woman” in its three different life stage portrayals. It is obvious that in *Wyrd Sisters* (as well as in other Discworld novels that belong among the witches books) Pratchett emphasises the unity of the three witches. He shows on many occasions the importance of their connection. If one of them acts independently of the others, her power remains limited by her own personality. Pratchett demonstrates in his novels, that only when they join together, are they able to achieve greater goals. They complement each other and together form one powerful entity.

3. PARODY

3.1. What is Parody?

The origins of the genre of parody, as well as the term itself, are connected with Ancient Greece. The word “parody” comes from old Greek and consists of two words: *para-* meaning “besides” or “parallel to” and *-oide* meaning “song, ode.” In connection to parody, Aristotle mentions the name of Greek poet Hegemon of Thasos, who achieved ridiculousness in his poems by changing words of well-known poems of other authors of that period. Hegemon may be seen as the inventor of this genre, since his name is the first one mentioned along with the term “parody” itself.

During the following centuries several more terms have been coined and became included under parody: imitation, burlesque, pastiche, mock-heroic, spoof and travesty; the term parody gained more general meaning. A definition of parody may be found in every modern dictionary, some of these definitions are more complex while others very straightforward. *The Free Dictionary*, for example, defines parody as “a literary or artistic work that imitates the characteristic style of an author.” It also says that the purpose of the imitation is to have “comic effect.” However, parody does not necessarily have to be comic. On the contrary, it may provoke a variety of reactions: some parodies rather aim at offending or provoking. A more precise definition of parody should therefore be: an artistic work that imitates the characteristic style of an author with the intention to make the perceivers react to the parody in some way.

Parody in its most general sense is a part of daily life; it forms an essential element of cultural and social environment. Dentith claims that parody is only one of many possible ways of reacting to any everyday situation (to the impulses that are

provided to people by the environment). Dentith says that “parody in writing, like parody in speech, is a part of everyday process by which one utterance alludes to or takes its distance from another” (6). In different words, parody is a form of reaction that expresses an attitude of its author to an impulse. It is therefore obvious that parody has a certain evaluative aspect in it.

3.2. How Does Parody Work?

At this moment it would be quite redundant to examine all the possible variations of parody such as parody in speech, parody on a work of fine art or parody in music; let us therefore concentrate only on parody in writing. Literary parody imitates the characteristic literary style of an author. The readers are expected to acquire notion of certain literary work which preceded the parody; such literary work may be also called a precursor text. Parody contains references to this text: passages that imitate the style of the author of the precursor. As soon as the readers have decoded the references, and thus understood which text is the precursor, they start to compare (juxtapose) it to the parody and search for further references. Parody does not only imitate the style of the precursor text but also deviates from it. The deviations (differences in style) that exist between the two texts are recognized immediately by the readers due to the process of juxtaposing. By deviating from the style of the precursor text, the author of the parody expresses his attitude to this text. If the readers both succeed in understanding which text is imitated by parody and for what purpose, the message conveyed in parody is delivered. The readers then react in a certain way to this message (e.g. by being amused) whereby the process of parodying is completed. It is quite apparent that the readers are an active element in this process: they must determine the precursor text,

juxtapose it with the parody in search for more references, detect the deviations to be able to perceive the message conveyed in parody and finally react to it.

3.3. Parody and the Precursor Text

The etymological definition of parody (“parallel to an ode”) implies that for understanding certain work as a parody it is essential that the readers were familiar with the work it parodies; in case of literary parody it is the precursor text. The knowledge of it seems to be required so that the process of decoding of parody may be successful. Since the main aim of parody is to show an attitude of its author to the precursor text by imitating and deviating from a typical style of it, it seems quite logical that the readers must be familiar with the text to be able to identify the references. Fortunately, it seems that a tremendously profound knowledge of the precursor text is not required; usually it is quite sufficient if the readers are familiar with basic concepts and topics of the precursor text, since parody mostly refers to these rather than to marginal ones. Parody may refer to the precursor text both directly (quotations and paraphrases) or indirectly (allusions and hints). The success of the process of decoding then depends on the number of the references and their comprehensibility. If they are insufficient in number, far too indirect or even imperceptible, the readers may fail to determine the precursor text even if they are familiar with it.

3.4. *Wyrd Sisters*: a Parody of Shakespeare

The precursor texts of Terry Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters* are two works of a great Renaissance author. *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare created the frame of Pratchett's novel – it is not difficult to realize the reflection of these two works in *Wyrd*

Sisters. Both of the two plays, however, were not given the same importance. The references made by Pratchett to *Macbeth* are far more frequent and direct than those to *Hamlet*. The first play may be therefore seen as the central source while the latter as an additional one, which rather helped to complete Pratchett's novel. The central theme of both the plays, which has also become the central theme of *Wyrld Sisters*, is the murder of the King.

The title itself of Pratchett's novel may be seen as the first reference to Shakespeare. According to Tolman, the phrase “weird sisters” (wyrld sisters being only an older spelling variant) became closely connected with Shakespeare's *Macbeth* already in Renaissance. Another reference may be found as soon as on the first page of *Wyrld Sisters*; the very first paragraph of the novel is a reformulation of the opening scene of *Macbeth*. For comparison, I cite both the works; the first quotation is from *Macbeth* and the second from *Wyrld Sisters*:

(Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches)
First Witch: *When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?*
Second Witch: *When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.*
Third Witch: *That will be ere the set of sun.*

*The wind howled. Lightning stabbed at the earth erratically, like an inefficient assassin. Thunder rolled back and forth across the dark, rain-lashed hills. [...] In the middle of this elemental storm a fire gleamed among the dripping furze bushes like the madness in weasel's eye. It illuminated three hunched figures. As the cauldron bubbled an eldritch voice shrieked: □ When shall we three meet again? □
There was a pause.
Finally another voice said, in far more ordinary tones: □ Well, I can do next Tuesday. □*

This reference is a very explicit one: it evokes the notion of the precursor text. The readers instantly create a mental concept of *Macbeth* and start juxtaposing it with Pratchett's novel. All the further references in the novel thus no longer have to be as

obvious as the very first one and still would be discoverable for the readers. By using such a direct reference at the very beginning of his book, Pratchett makes the whole process of understanding the parody much easier for his readers.

The two passages may be also used to show an example of deviation of parody from its precursor text. In both the texts, there is one sentence to be found: “When shall we three meet again?” It functions as a reference to *Macbeth* and Pratchett uses it to assure the readers that this really is the precursor text of his parody. However, Pratchett immediately deviates from the style of the precursor text by not providing an expected answer to this question but instead the following one: “Well, I can do next Tuesday.” Due to the process of juxtaposing, the strikingly non-Shakespearean informal style of the answer offered by Pratchett makes the readers come to the conclusion that Pratchett no longer imitates the style of the precursor but deviates from it. The resulting effect of this particular deviation is a comic one. Pratchett's novel offers many similar references to the text of the two Shakespeare's plays, however – since all of them work in a similar way as the example given above – it does not seem necessary to explore in detail every one of them.

The storyline of *Wyrd Sisters* seems to be closer to the storyline of *Macbeth* than to *Hamlet*; as it may be observed, the former is given more importance in Pratchett's novel than the latter. However, neither of the two plays is followed literally in terms of plots – Pratchett rather employs several individual themes from each of the plays. The central theme of *Wyrd Sisters* is a murder of the King, which is a theme that appears in both the plays, even though in each of them it is viewed from a different perspective. In *Macbeth*, it is pictured very directly and no space is left for doubt about the agents who commit the crime. On the other hand, in *Hamlet*, serious doubts may arise. The play

pictures the situation in a way which makes it impossible for the readers to be sure whether the King was really murdered. The only piece of information on the act of murder is, in fact, provided by an apparition of the late King himself. There is no assurance whether the ghost really exists or whether it is just an emanation of Hamlet's imagination that proves his madness. This different approach to the theme seems to be in agreement with the main aim of each of the plays. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare concentrates on the motif of struggle with guilt. The emphasis is on the characters of the murderers wherefore it seems important to prove to the readers who these are. In *Hamlet*, it is the character of Prince Hamlet who is analysed; the play seems to be viewed from his subjective perspective and, in general terms, the readers are only provided with the information that Hamlet has. Since he may not be sure about the crime, nor may be the readers, which seems quite understandable. The resulting image of this situation in *Wyrd Sisters* is a combination of the two versions: the murder is described objectively in third person terms in Pratchett's novel, wherefore no doubt may arise about the participants of the act, but it also viewed subjectively by several characters. This Pratchett's tendency to meet a certain midpoint between the two plays is apparent on many motifs that appear in the novel.

In *Wyrd Sisters*, Pratchett works with several characters from Shakespeare: the three witches and Lord and Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth* and the ghost, which appears in a slightly different form in both *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Interestingly enough, the character of the ghost is given much more space in *Wyrd Sisters* than in Shakespeare. However, this should not be surprising; Pratchett's novel is set in a fictional magic world where supernatural creatures do not seem to be supernatural anymore but, quite reversely, they are very common there. This allows Pratchett to employ them more

freely and in a larger variety of situations. In both the Shakespeare plays the character of ghost acts in a very restricted way or, to be more specific, as an archetype. The character of the ghost in *Wyrd Sisters* transcends the boundaries of the original archetype since it is developed further by Pratchett; it is no longer limited in its actions by the pattern of archetype and therefore becomes a fully-fledged character. The same observation may be made in case of the characters of the three witches, who undoubtedly came to *Wyrd Sisters* from *Macbeth*. In this play, each of them represents an archetype of a witch. This no longer is true in *Wyrd Sisters*, where the archetype bases of the characters are provided by Pratchett with further characterisations. However, these are not the only characters in Pratchett's novel that underwent this process. In Shakespeare's plays in general, there is a large number of characters that act within the limits of archetypes or very close to them. Several other characters, that Pratchett borrowed from Shakespeare, had been subject to similar changes as in case of the character of the ghost or the three witches: for example, the characters of Lord and Lady Felmet (based on Shakespeare's Lord and Lady Macbeth) were adapted by Pratchett in a very similar way.

Pratchett has also borrowed several minor motifs from the two Shakespeare's plays; most important of these appears to be the motive of a theatre play. In *Hamlet*, Prince Hamlet, organises a theatre play about a murder of a monarch. He believes seeing this play would make the ones he suspects to be guilty of the murder of his royal father confess to their crime. However, none of the characters seem to react to the play as Hamlet expects. In Pratchett's novel, the idea of performing a theatre play comes from the murder of the King himself who decides to organise a play that would make him seem more attractive to the people of Lancre, since the rumour that he had murdered the former King starts to spread. However, performing the play does not change public

opinion in favour of the ruler of Lancre but, quite reversely, forces him to confess the truth about his crime. In Pratchett's novel, this motif performs a more important role than in *Hamlet*. Pratchett seems to fully use the potential that this motif has: in his novel it leads to the denouement of the story.

In *Wyrd Sisters*, several minor references to the two plays may be found (most of them are only one phrase long paraphrases) as well as short references to some other Shakespeare's plays. As it seems, none of these references perform an important role for the development of the story. Their importance lies in the fact that they help to maintain the notion of Shakespeare throughout Pratchett's novel whereby they reinitiate the process of juxtaposing and thus make the readers notice subsequent deviations more easily. Pratchett goes even further by referring to Shakespeare himself and his environment. For example, Pratchett employs the motif of a company of strolling players, which undoubtedly serves as a reference to the groups of players that toured Europe in Shakespeare's times. Pratchett also chose the name "Dysec" for one of the theatre buildings that appear in the novel. In the context of the Discworld, this practically equals the name of Shakespeare's own theatre "The Globe." All of these small references help to maintain the connection of Pratchett's novel to its precursor texts.

3.5. *Wyrd Sisters*: a Parody of the Real World

Pratchett's Discworld novels do not only parody concrete literary works but also the real world. His novels, since set in a different world, provide the possibility to show certain phenomena of the real world from a different perspective. Pratchett's fantasy world is only bound by the rules that the author provides it with, wherefore, if the author

wishes it to, it may transcend certain limits that our world has. This creates distance, which then allows the readers to see certain phenomena approached differently from what they are used to. Pratchett comments on the phenomena that become the subject to his parody. It may be observed, that Pratchett's novels parody almost everything: politics, religion, culture, philosophy, technology and human behaviour. In general, each of the Discworld novels conveys certain messages about the topics it parodies, which the readers may discover while reading the book. Some of the messages are very clearly put and decoded by the majority of the readers unanimously, while others seem to partially depend on the attitude of each reader wherefore decoding them may lead the readers to slightly different conclusions. This thesis does not dare to go into more detail considering particular messages conveyed in *Wyrd Sisters* since the process of decoding and understanding the messages seems to be dependant on individual experience that every single reader has with Pratchett's novels and therefore not analysable universally. Let us therefore rather concentrate on the phenomena of the real world that Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters* deals with. The most obvious topics that Pratchett comments on through this book are the political system of monarchy, the phenomenon of theatre, the power of destiny and moral values in general. Apart from these, there is yet one more phenomenon of the real world which proves to have influenced *Wyrd Sisters* to a great extent: the fairytale. The most explicit reference to this particular subject is made by the character of Black Aliss, who is mentioned by Pratchett's witches (Weatherwax, Ogg and Garlick) on several occasions as one of the most famous and skilful witches in the Discworld's history. As described in the novel, her career consisted of deeds such as turning an ordinary pumpkin into a beautiful royal coach, turning princes into frogs and vice versa and, above all, sending a whole castle to sleep for one hundred years by a

complicated spell that involved a spinning wheel and rosebushes. The reference made through this character quite apparently points to classic fairytales, such as *Cinderella* or *Sleeping Beauty*. The reason why the influence of fairytales appears to be of high importance for *Wyrd Sisters* is that it provides the basis of a significant part of the story of this novel. The legend about the castle that was sent to sleep was used by Pratchett's witch characters; it inspired them in case of the problem of the Prince Tomjon's insufficient age and, in fact, provided the idea of how to solve it. It may be concluded that, quite interestingly, after *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, the fairytale of the *Sleeping Beauty* is the third literary work that had the most impact on the storyline of *Wyrd Sisters*. Finally, it is worth pointing out that structurally, *Wyrd Sisters* resembles a fairytale very closely; mainly because of the ending, which is almost as blissful as the famous: “And they lived happily ever after,” which so often appears in fairytales.

4. MAGIC

4.1. Magic on the Discworld

The motif of magic in Discworld novels is influenced by the fact that Pratchett draws inspiration from many different sources. His novels connect a large variety of motifs taken from different cultural and social environments. The influence of the Greco-Roman, East Asian, African, native American and also Celtic culture is easily noticeable in Pratchett's novels. Mythology is a fundamental constituent of every culture, wherefore the theme of the mythology in the Discworld novels appears to bear features provided by each of these cultures. Since every mythology also contains a certain form of magic, similar observation may be made about in case of this theme in Pratchett's novels – the influence of various cultures on the theme of magic is quite apparent.

In the Discworld novels, magic plays a very important role. It acts as an omnipresent phenomenon which helps to maintain equilibrium in Pratchett's fictional world. Magic has many forms in the Discworld novels. There is, for example, the magic of university educated wizards. The Unseen University is a place where magic-inclined young men of the Discworld study in order to receive a degree in magic. The attitude of wizards to magic is described by Pratchett as follows: wizards love system and order, they perceive their subject of study (magic) as something that may be explained to every detail and codified and they do not acknowledge other authorities on the same field (for example witches). By portraying the wizards of the Unseen University in this way Pratchett ridicules education and science in general and universities, scientist and modern methods of research in concrete; it is quite obvious that Pratchett uses the

Unseen University in his novels to point out all the maladies of the social sector of education and research. The second kind of magic in the Discworld novels is the raw natural magic contained in every single fragment of the Discworld's environment. This kind of magic is responsible for causing the inanimate objects on the Discworld (such as trees and stones) to think or even walk. By employing this kind of magic Pratchett offers to his readers another point of view on the nature. Pratchett provides the nature with the possibility to act in his stories as an individual character. Thus, in many Discworld novels the nature intervenes in conflicts and helps to solve them. This may be observed in *Wyrd Sisters* as well. The last and probably the most important form of magic that appears in Pratchett's novels is the magic of the witches.

4.2. The Three Witches

Pratchett's witches in *Wyrd Sisters* were inspired by the three witch characters in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. However, in this play, the three witches act almost exclusively as archetypes. As opposed to this, Pratchett's witch characters in *Wyrd Sisters* have become fully-fledged characters, i.e. were provided with additional characteristics. Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg and Magrat Garlick are also the most important witch characters in the whole Discworld series (they act as protagonists of eight more novels).

Considering the form of magic connected with the witches, it may be observed that Pratchett often emphasises in his novels that witches and wizards adopt almost an opposite approach to magic and rituals. According to Pratchett, the magic of the witches is less organized and very little codified, wherefore it may seem that it is less evolved. However, the way Pratchett describes this kind of magic in his novels denotes that it is more powerful than magic of the wizards because it still preserves the connection to the

nature and ancient traditions and it is not bound by norms. The witches do not perform their rituals in a strictly prescribed way, i.e. according to magic tomes (as Pratchett's wizards do). They believe that not the exact content but the form is important. A good example of how the form but not the content is followed by the witches in their ritual may be encountered on page 93 in *Wyrd Sisters*:

“We conjure and abjure thee by means of this –” Granny hardly paused – *“sharp and terrible copper stick.”* [...] *“See how we scatter –”* Magrat sighed - *“rather old washing soda and some extremely hard soap flakes in thy honour.”* [...] *And I invoke and bind thee with the balding scrubbing brush of Art and the washboard of Protection,”* said Nanny waving it.

Since they do not have proper magic items, such as “a cauldron, and a magic sword. And an octogram. And spices, and all sorts of stuff” (93), they decide to use everyday household items they have at hand. Obviously, this does not affect the form itself of the ritual – the individual parts of the ritual still follow in a given order and, similarly, the incantation more or less preserves its form. However, a noticeable difference is in the content, i.e. the shape of concrete steps of the ritual, and this also affects the words used in the incantation.

Apart from being another good example of parody in *Wyrd Sisters*, this passage also illustrates how the three witch characters in Pratchett's novels perform their magic and also how they act. They do not respect neither norms nor authorities. Not only do they violate the norms of rituals but also the norms of behaviour in general – they act in a very unconventional way on many occasions. They are ready to break rules, if they find it necessary; moreover they do this deliberately, well aware of the existence of some rules and norms. It is only that they choose not to follow them on certain occasions – when it seems to be the right thing to do. The sense of justice in Pratchett's witches is one of the most evident features of these characters. They use their common

sense to examine all rules that happen to stand in their way and decide whether these are justified or not, in different words: whether they are worth obeying. It seems most probable that through this attitude of his witch characters Pratchett shows how important it is to occasionally question the rules, that exist in the society and that the society has, in fact, created artificially, instead of obeying them blindly without thinking.

Although Pratchett gave his witch characters the power to use magic, he also provided them with great respect towards it and to the nature in general. The message passed to the readers through this is quite obvious: everybody should respect the world they live in. But there may be yet another reason: magic on the Discworld is described as being rather erratic, wherefore the witches see using of real magic as the last option – until it seems completely unavoidable, they prefer to use other methods. In most situations the witches deal with their problems simply by means of their charm or intelligence.

4.3. Headology

Headology is one of the non-magic methods that Pratchett's witches use to achieve their goals. The term consists of a stem word “head” and a suffix “-ology,” which denotes the subject of interest or study. Thus headology may be described as a method of employing logic, intelligence and common sense knowledge or, in different words, using one's head in a sophisticated way. Granny Weatherwax appears to be the proponent of this method in the Discworld novels. She claims that every problem, regardless of its nature, may be solved by thinking. Quite reversely, the youngest of the witches Magrat Garlick rather appears to be the supporter of the more traditional

tendency in magic and she claims it essential that magic artefacts and charms, candles, spices and mighty incantations be fundamental in magic. In the scene of the ritual (93) she expresses her opinion that to perform a magic ritual magic items appear to be essential, to which Granny Weatherwax replies simply: “You don't need none of that. [...] You need headology. [...] It is what you think that matters” (94). In this scene headology provides a substitute for the missing magic material. On the whole, they use headology in addition to and even instead of magic. Furthermore, they are able to use it to blackmail or threaten their eventual enemies in a very similar manner as a weapon would be used. In different words, headology serves the witches to achieve whatever they want only by thinking.

Pratchett uses headology in his novels to parody classic fantasy literature where the excessive use of magic without any restrictions what so ever always brings the desired results. Through headology, he points out that there are always alternative ways to achieve what one wants and that it is not essential to use power (regardless of its nature, i.e. magic, force or violence), since every action performed in presence has its consequence in the future the use of power may bring reciprocation similarly powerful. Witch characters in *Wyrd Sisters* are aware of the possible consequences wherefore they use magic only after giving it a serious consideration. Pratchett's headology also shows that not always is the best thing to use the easiest solution (employ magic) without making sure that it would lead to the desired results. As if Pratchett wanted to criticise the attitude of Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth*, who act without being aware of the possible impact of their deeds. There is nothing in Shakespeare's play that would indicate that the witches consider the impact of their behaviour but, quite reversely, their dialogue with Hecate proves that they did not. It appears to be obvious that Pratchett

wanted to point out that this kind of behaviour does not seem to be correct.

5. WORDS AND GUILT

The theme of words plays a very important role in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. As it appears, it was from *Hamlet* that the theme came to Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters*. Although *Hamlet* is a tragedy on the plot level, on the textual level it appears to be closer to comedy. This play seems to be written in a more playful language than usual for Shakespeare – as if he wanted to attract the attention to the theme of words even by the literary style he uses. He discusses this theme in the play mainly through the character of Prince Hamlet; several of his monologues directly refer to the theme of words and this character seems to discuss the power of the words constantly. His lines contain puns and he uses language in a skilful and playful way; he plays with words, twists the phrases and uses ambiguity to ridicule other characters, namely Lord Polonius. However, it appears that in the play none of the other characters pays enough attention to Hamlet's speech to be able realize what his words mean. Since Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark, he is most probably expected to speak in a certain manner and preferably only about certain topics; in different words, he should follow certain protocol. However, the Prince violates this protocol by means of his words. Other characters in the play consider Hamlet to be mad – let us leave aside the decision whether he pretends it or not. His madness gives Hamlet the liberty to say almost anything. The other characters still do not find it offending since they understand it to be only the result of Hamlet's mental state. They do not pay much attention to Hamlet's speeches and none of them expects his words to make much sense, wherefore the messages hidden in Hamlet's lines are not delivered to them.

One of the crucial ideas conveyed in *Hamlet* is that words are such a powerful

phenomenon that they may even serve as weapons. The play shows that certain goals may be achieved by using words in the same way as they may be achieved when using real weapons. This idea becomes apparent in one of Hamlet's monologues: at the end of the second scene of the third act:

*Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
I will speak daggers to [Gertrude], but use none;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!*

Hamlet's goal is to hurt his mother Queen Gertrude by showing his opinion of her behaviour (her getting married too soon after the death of the King), wherefore he begins to deliver to her the following lines:

*Hamlet: Now, mother, what's the matter?
Queen Gertrude: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
Hamlet: Mother, you have my father much offended.
Queen Gertrude: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
Hamlet: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
Queen Gertrude: Why, how now, Hamlet!
Hamlet: What's the matter now?
Queen Gertrude: Have you forgot me?
Hamlet: No, by the rood, not so:
 *You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
 And--would it were not so!--you are my mother.*
Queen Gertrude: Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.
Hamlet: Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
 *You go not till I set you up a glass
 Where you may see the inmost part of you.**

Hamlet continues similarly until the Queen breaks down and begins to beg him to stop:

*Queen Gertrude: O Hamlet, speak no more:
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul [...]
 O, speak to me no more;
 These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;
 No more, sweet Hamlet! [...] No more!*

In this scene Hamlet, in fact, attacks Queen Gertrude verbally. It seems

obvious that he defeats her only by means of his speech. She perceives Hamlet's words as hurtful; according to one of her lines they hurt her in a similar way as “daggers” would, which illustrates that the rightly chosen words have enough power to affect people in the same way as weapons do.

However, the fact that Queen Gertrude reacts to Hamlet's speech also implies that she must be well aware of the true meaning hidden in it. As it appears, she does not think that Hamlet is mad because if she did – as the rest of the characters in the play do – she would not understand his words in the right way. Also, since she becomes hurt by Hamlet's speech, there must be something that makes her vulnerable to her son's words. The most probable reason appears to be that she is feeling guilty, even though this may not be fully justified: it does not necessarily mean that she has done something wrong. In any case, it clearly shows that she is aware of the fact that her actions may be found inappropriate by Hamlet. After all, the faith that awaits her in the play proves that she is experiencing some kind of inner struggle with the feeling of guilt and that this is what makes her react to Hamlet's words in a particular way. The scene proves that words may become weapons that hurt people; however the play also implies that this may happen only in case that people are vulnerable enough to these words. This becomes quite apparent in one more scene from *Hamlet*, where a theatre play is performed in order to convict Claudius, the supposed murderer of Hamlet's father. According to the objective pieces of information provided by the play, Claudius is guilty of nothing more than marrying Queen Gertrude too soon after the death of her former husband. There appears to be no reason why he should be vulnerable to Hamlet's speeches or should be affected by the words of the theatre

play that Hamlet organizes. There is no objective evidence against Claudius in the play – the only testimony against him is provided by the ghost of the late King and this may be, indeed, seen as rather questionable evidence since serious doubts may arise whether the ghost really exists or whether it is only a product of Hamlet's imagination. It appears to be quite understandable that the character of Claudius in *Hamlet* is immune to Hamlet's verbal attacks or the words provided by the theatre play.

Although the motif of a theatre play has the potential to solve the plot, i.e. convicting the real murderer, Shakespeare does not seem to use this potential fully since he is, to a certain degree, limited by his characters. Quite reversely, Pratchett, who employs the same motif in *Wyrd Sisters*, is able to use its potential fully since he develops his characters in a slightly different way than Shakespeare does. Pratchett combines the features of the main characters from both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*; this subsequently provides him with a different variety of choices, considering the possible reactions of these characters. Although the motif of a theatre play comes to *Wyrd Sisters* from *Hamlet*, the characters in Pratchett's novel rather follow *Macbeth*, where the feelings of compunction and guilt in characters play a more important role (the only exception is the character of Queen Gertrude but even in her these feelings are not developed to the same degree as in the main characters in *Macbeth*). Thus Lord Felmet in *Wyrd Sisters* reacts differently to the theatre play than Claudius in *Hamlet* does since he is more vulnerable to the words provided to him by the play because of a very strong inner feeling of guilt. This feeling becomes apparent very soon in the novel and, quite interestingly, is described in a very similar way as in

Macbeth. Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's play begins to suffer from the delusion of seeing blood on her hands after she participates in the act of murdering the King. Lord Macbeth is haunted by the vision of the ghost of Banquo, whom he kills, and a short reference may be found in the play to the Birnam woods that these should be the doom of Lord Macbeth. All of these motifs are used by Pratchett in *Wyrd Sisters* in case of the character of Lord Felmet. Also, all of them are developed into more detail in Pratchett's novel, as a novel has the possibility to dedicate larger amount of space to individual motifs than a theatre play since it is not limited in length or time in the same way as a play is.

CONCLUSION

Wyrd Sisters is a very complex novel, in which Pratchett combines a large variety of motifs. The book proves to be influenced by many diverse sources. The storyline is influenced, above all, by two plays by William Shakespeare: *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. In *Wyrd Sisters*, several motifs from both the plays are employed, namely a murder of the King, an apparition of a ghost, magic, a feeling of guilt, power of words and a theatre play performed to make the murderer confess. However, as it may be observed, Pratchett does not simply rewrite Shakespeare. He rather combines material from both the plays which helps him to achieve a slightly different portrayal of the motifs. Pratchett adjusts them and makes the variants from the two plays interflow, which subsequently provides a different point of view on each of the motifs. As it appears, in Pratchett's novel all of these motifs are more developed than in the Shakespeare's plays².

There is yet one more literary work that influenced the storyline of *Wyrd Sisters*: the fairytale of *Sleeping Beauty*. It inspired Pratchett's book in case of the less earthly motifs. For example, in the same way as the three godmothers in the fairytale, the three witches in *Wyrd Sisters* give little Prince Tomjon three gifts. However, most importantly, this fairytale inspired the spell that the witches perform to make it possible for the child to claim the throne of the kingdom of Lancre: the spell, which in original version includes a spinning wheel and rosebushes and serves to move a castle hundred years forward in time, serves in *Wyrd Sisters* to the three witches to move fifteen years forward in time the whole kingdom.

² However, this should be also ascribed to the fact that the number of pages in a novel is not limited, as opposed to a theatre play where the length is a crucial factor in preserving the attention of the audience.

Considering the characters of Pratchett's novels it may be observed that they are often derived from archetypes (it seems quite logic if we consider the strong connection of his books to fairytales and fantasy literature, where archetypes are quite common). Pratchett uses archetypes as the bases on which he then builds his characters. By this process, he develops fully-fledged characters that are more universal in their use and thus easier to be incorporated into his novels. In case of *Wyrd Sisters*, the archetype bases are noticeable in the main characters as well as in the characters of Lord and Lady Felmet.

Wyrd Sisters is above all a parody; it does not only parody the two Shakespeare's plays and the fairytale of *Sleeping Beauty* but also many phenomena of the real life such as politics, culture, social life and patterns of human behaviour. In *Wyrd Sisters*, as in the Discworld novels in general, Pratchett comments on these phenomena and expresses his opinion on them by parodying them. Pratchett uses parody to reveal his attitude towards many topics – his eventual criticism or admiration becomes apparent through the way he parodies the topics in his book. In *Wyrd Sisters*, Pratchett shows, above all, his opinion that thinking is the most important of the gifts that were given to human beings (his headology); several other examples were provided in individual chapters. However, Pratchett's parody does not only serve the purpose of passing Pratchett's opinion about certain topics to the readers. More importantly, parody in Pratchett's Discworld novels serves the purpose of amusing the readers. Humour seems to be one of the most significant and important features of the whole Discworld series, including *Wyrd Sisters*.

CZECH RESUME

Bakalářská práce s názvem *Analýza knihy Soudné Sestry od Terryho Pratchetta* se zabývá několika nejdůležitějšími motivy, které se v knize objevují. Práce se snaží objasnit vztah těchto motivů ke zdrojům, z nichž byly s největší pravděpodobností přejaty (tj. jednak ke dvěma divadelním hrám Williama Shakespeara *Hamletovi* a *Macbethovi*, a jednak k reálnému světu obecně), a zjistit, jakou funkci v knize plní.

První kapitola poskytuje základní informace potřebné pro pochopení Pratchettova díla: hovoří o autorovi samotném i o cyklu knih *Úžasná Zeměplocha*, do níž *Soudné Sestry* patří. Jsou zde rovněž krátce shrnuty zdroje, z nichž Pratchett čerpá, a také je zmiňováno něco málo o žánru Pratchettova díla. V závěru kapitoly lze najít podrobnější informace o *Soudných Sestrách* včetně stručného obsahu knihy.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá motivem archetypů. Kapitola hovoří o procesu, jímž jsou z archetypů budovány plnohodnotné postavy, a dále o tom, jak takové postavy fungují v parodii. Kapitola se snaží zjistit, jakým způsobem Pratchett archetypy používá a k čemu jejich použití v *Soudných Sestrách* slouží.

Třetí kapitola zkoumá téma parodie. Kapitola se zaměřuje na vysvětlení mechanismu, pomocí něhož je parodie vystavěna, a na vztah mezi parodií a originálním textem. Kapitola rovněž uvádí některé konkrétní příklady parodie v *Soudných Sestrách*.

Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá motivem magie. Snaží se objasnit, jaký typ magie se objevuje v *Soudných Sestrách*, a také podrobněji zkoumá tři hlavní postavy, s nimiž je tento motiv v knize spojen.

Pátá kapitola se zaměřuje na motiv slov. Zkoumá především spojitost mezi *Soudnými Sestrami* a *Hamletem*, z něž byl právě tento motiv nepochybně převzat.

ENGLISH RESUME

The bachelor thesis called *An Analysis of Terry Pratchett's Wyrds Sisters* concentrates on several important motifs that appear in the novel. The thesis tries to find a relation of these motifs to sources that Pratchett used (above all, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, but also the real life in general); the thesis further analyses the function of these motifs in Pratchett's novel.

The first chapter provides basic information necessary to understand Pratchett's work. It introduces the author, his literary genre and the Discworld novels – a series of books to which *Wyrds Sisters* belongs. The chapter also comments briefly on Pratchett's sources. Finally, information on the novel itself is provided, including a short summary of the plot.

The second chapter discusses archetypes. It analyses the process of creating fully-fledged characters from archetypes and then comments on the effect of employing them in parody. The chapter tries to find out how Pratchett works with archetypes in his novel and for what purpose.

The third chapter concentrates on parody. It analyses the process of parodying and the relation of parody to the precursor text. In this chapter, some examples of parody in *Wyrds Sisters* are provided.

The fourth chapter analyses the motif of magic. It describes the form of magic that appears in *Wyrds Sisters* and then concentrates on the three main characters that are connected with this motif.

The fifth chapter concentrates on the motif of words. This chapter mainly focuses on the relation of *Wyrds Sisters* to *Hamlet*.

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