

Recasting the Social Critic: Social Commentary in Selected Novels of Charles Dickens and Terry Pratchett

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the progression in portrayal of key themes that relate to social commentary in selected novels by Charles Dickens and Terry Pratchett. Charles Dickens has been considered a social commentator and critic by modern critics as much as his contemporaries. His novels aided in exposing several social problems present in Victorian England, which include the treatment of London's poor and the corruption of London's courts. As these social problems evolve with time, this dissertation argues that the presentation of social commentary in novels also change. Terry Pratchett's fantasy writing has been noted by various reviewers and critics to also contain similar elements of social criticism, with some going as far as to call him a "Dickens of the 20th century".

This dissertation critically explores the claim that Pratchett is a modern-day Dickens and investigates the nature of Pratchett's social commentary by comparing it to the criticism voiced by Dickens. The study is guided by both textual and discourse analysis, using Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism for its focus on the social aspect of language. Three themes, namely corrupted governing structures, race and social class and the individual in a growing technological society are analysed in two novels by each author: *Bleak House* and *Hard Times* by Dickens and *Going Postal* and *Snuff* by Pratchett. Analysing these novels according to Bakhtin's theory of polyphony and heteroglossia reveal that character voices in the works of both novels become stratified, turning into representatives of oppressive and rebelling voices.

An analysis based on Bakhtin's theory of the carnival also reveals that both authors emphasise the importance of imagination and fancy in a time of social change. Dickens sets out to deliberately focus on and expose social problems with the aim to inspire reform. Pratchett's social commentary, on the other hand appears more subtle, with a focus on humorous portrayals that subjectively inspire reform and investigates methods by which such reform can be achieved. In this sense Pratchett's social commentary acts as both a recast, and a progressed version of that which Dickens did for the Victorians. Finally, a measure of responsiveness is noticed between the novels of Dickens and

Pratchett, albeit unintentional. This bears resemblance to Bakhtin's theory of an open-ended dialogue, constantly forming and reforming meaning. Here different meanings are attributed specifically to the nature of the social commentary present in the novels. Dickens criticises possible industrialised futures while Pratchett looks back in his novels to satirise Victorian ideals and critically inspect the technological era that the industrial future has become and adds to this conversation by contemplating a future beyond this.

Keywords

Terry Pratchett, Charles Dickens, Mikhail Bakhtin, social commentary, social criticism, satire, industrialisation, dialogism, polyphony, heteroglossia, carnival, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, *Going Postal*, *Snuff*, fantasy, fantasy fiction, Victorian fiction.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie ondersoek die progressie van die uitbeelding van belangrike temas wat geassosieer word met sosiale kommentaar in uitgesoekte romans van Charles Dickens en Terry Pratchett. Charles Dickens word deur vele kritici beskou as 'n sosiale kommentator en kritikus. Sy romans het gehelp om vele sosiale probleme in Victoriaanse Engeland bloot te lê, onder andere korrupsie in Londen se howe en die wyse waarop die armes in Londen behandel is. Hierdie studie voer aan dat die aanbieding van sosiale kommentaar in die romans ook verander, nes die probleme mettertyd ontwikkel. Volgens vele resensente en kritici, waaronder 'n paar wat Pratchett beshou as die "Dickens van die 20ste eeu", beskik Pratchett se fantasie-werke oor soortgelyke elemente van sosiale kommentaar.

Hierdie studie oorweeg die bogenoemde stelling krities en ondersoek die aard van Pratchett se sosiale kommentaar deur dit te vergelyk met die van Dickens. Die studie maak gebruik van beide tekstuele- en diskoersanalise met spesifieke fokus op Mikhail Bakhtin se teorie van dialoogvoering, weens die fokus op die sosiale aspekte van taalgebruik. Drie temas, naamlik korrupte bestuurstrukture, ras en sosiale klas en die individu binne 'n samelewing vol tegnologiese voortuiging, word geanaliseer in twee romans deur elke skrywer: Bleak House en Hard Times deur Dickens en Going Postal en Snuff deur Pratchett. Deur gebruik te maak van Bakhtin se teorie oor polifonie en heteroglossie in hierdie analise, word 'n stratafikasie van die karakters se stemme onthul, wat of onderdrukkend of rebels is.

'n Analise gebaseer op Bakhtin se teorie van die kanavaleske dui aan dat beide skrywers die belangrikheid van verbeelding en giere in 'n tyd van sosiale verandering beklemtoon. Dickens gaan te werke deur te fokus op sosiale probleme en die probleme bloot te lê met die oog op hervorming. Pratchett se sosiale kommentaar is meer subtiel met 'n fokus op humoristiese uitbeeldings wat hervorming op 'n subjektiewe wyse inspireer. Metodes om hierdie hervorming te bewerkstellig word op 'n soortgelyke wyse deur Pratchett benader. Pratchett se sosiale kommentaar tree op as beide 'n omwerking en 'n gevorderde

weergawe van die kommentaar wat Dickens op die Victoriane gelewer het. Laastens is daar 'n mate van ooreenkoms waargeneem tussen die romans van Dickens en Pratchett, al is dit nie so bedoel nie. Hierdie ooreenkoms herinner aan Bakhtin se teorie van 'n oop-einde dialoog, wat konstant betekenis vorm en hervorm. Verskille in betekenis word hier toegeskryf aan die sosiale kommentaar wat teenwoordig is in die romans. Dickens kritiseer 'n geïndustrialiseerde toekoms, terwyl Pratchett in sy romans Victoriaanse ideale en die tegnologiese era wat gelei het na 'n geïndustrialiseerde toekoms krities ondersoek. Pratchett voer die gesprek verder deur na te dink oor 'n toekoms verby hierdie punt.

Sleutelwoorde

Terry Pratchett, Charles Dickens, Mikhail Bakhtin, sosiale kommentaar, satire, Industrialisering, dialoogvoering, polifonie, heteroglossie, karnaval, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, *Going Postal*, *Snuff*, fantasie, fantasie fiksie, Victoriaanse fiksie.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Beneath any jollity there is a foundation of fury.

- Neil Gaiman¹

Neil Gaiman, in a tribute to his friend and colleague, the late Sir Terry Pratchett (1948-2015), observes an anger in Pratchett's writing that powers the creation of his novels, specifically his Discworld series (Gaiman, 2014). While many readers of Pratchett enjoy this fantasy series, with its colourful characters and quips, Gaiman asserts that it all comes from a serious place. The anger he describes is directed towards "pompous critics", and "those who think serious is the opposite of funny" and ultimately cultivates an exploration (or a sense of) "fairness" in his writing (Gaiman, 2014). This sense of what is fair and what is not, nurtures a seed of social commentary that is very often observed in Pratchett's work.

Pratchett has developed a reputation producing serious satirical texts as much as the comical fantasy novels he is famous for. In his own words he states that his Discworld novels have "spun on such concerns as the nature of belief, politics and even journalistic freedom. But put in one lousy dragon and they call you a fantasy writer" (Pratchett, 2001a). Here he also illustrates the readiness to poke fun at his own work. He admits that his first novels were aimed at satirically criticising bad fantasy and science fiction. After the release of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* series in 1954 and 1955, the fantasy genre experienced an upsurge in publications as it grew in popularity. However this resulted in what Pratchett describes in his opinion as bland, flat "quasi-medieval creations" (Pratchett, 2011a).

Although the definition of the term "fantasy" is very diverse and still disputed, at its core the term is derived from the Latin word "phantasticus", meaning that which is made visible (Jackson, 1981:13). In this sense all imaginary works can be considered fantasy. Kristiansen distinguishes "modern fantasy" as a genre used by Pratchett, which focuses on a story and contains elements that contradict

¹ Gaiman, 2014.

our experience of what is plausible (Kristiansen, 2003). Pratchett argues that although fantasy may contradict what is possible, it should still have the potential to be real (Pratchett, 2011a). The criticism of what he terms as “bad fantasy” thus centres on that which seems wholly “unreal”, even for the fantasy genre. This is noted in the parodying power of his early works. Clute describes Pratchett’s first recognised novel, *The Carpet people* (1971) as a “selection of episodes from *The Lord of the Rings* as told by Asterix the Gaul” (Clute, 2004:20). With its unheroic characters and its reflective nature, it illustrates what many fantasy novels of the time got wrong (in Pratchett’s opinion) and is considered by some to be a “model” for his future works (Clute, 2004:19).

What followed were two titles that garnered him a reputation as a humorous writer (Hunt, 2001:91). *The Dark Side of the Sun* (1976) and *Strata* (1981) saw Pratchett experimenting with the creation of alternative worlds, dabbling more in the genre of science fiction than fantasy. The flat world found in *Strata* serves as an introduction to what would soon become the Discworld: a large flat disc, supported by four elephants, riding on the back of A’tuin, a gargantuan star turtle that swims through space. After exploring many planets and spaces, this becomes the universe in which Pratchett settles his stories, starting with the first Discworld novel, *The Colour of Magic* (1983). This return to fantasy not only saw Pratchett expanding his commentary and criticism beyond the genre, but also introduced a change in his own idea of what the genre should include. In an author’s note to the second edition of *The Carpet People* (1992c) he admits that “I wrote [*The Carpet People*] in the days when I thought fantasy was all battles and kings. Now I’m inclined to think that the real concerns of fantasy ought to be about not having battles, and doing without kings” (Pratchett, 1992c:7).

Joined with his early thought describing the potential for fantasy to be real, this brings about Pratchett’s ability to not only criticise flat fantasy worlds, but also to express concerns that are part of life in general. In discussing his inspiration to write, Pratchett refers to what he calls his first “Bolshie thought”. While reading *The Wind in the Willows*, he was confused by the fact that the caravan-pulling horse could not speak, while all the other animals, (a rat, a toad and a mole) could speak. His sympathy here lay with what he calls the “down-trodden

workers” as it were, even if it was just in a fable (Pratchett, 2011a). This sympathy found its way into his novels. In *The Colour of Magic*, sympathy is shown to the highly incompetent and accident-prone wizard Rincewind, who turns out to be the unruly hero of the novel. This trend, focusing on unheroic characters continues throughout the Discworld series, which has expanded into over 40 novels following multiple storylines. With time, the content of the novels also evolve and become more complete. The scattered locations featured in *The Colour of Magic* become structured states and prominent cities, the confusing collection of characters is distilled into a selection of growing identities that reoccur throughout the series and themes become more complex. Pratchett admits that this progression is necessary, as the Discworld “has to evolve to keep going” (Pratchett quoted in Langford, 2015:42). The overarching storylines these novels follow can be categorised according to the characters they focus on. The novels also follow particular themes that enable Pratchett’s social commentary to emerge between the lines.

The novels referred to as the “witches sequence”, start with the wise Granny Weatherwax and features the second class of characters to enter and reoccur in the series after the wizards in *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic* (1986) (Sayer, 2004:131). The novels that focus on the witches include *Equal Rites* (1987a), *Wyrd Sisters* (1988b), *Witches Abroad* (1991b), *Lords and Ladies* (1992a), *Maskerade* (1995) and *Carpe Jugulum* (1998a). Studies on Pratchett often focus on the witches sequence for its presence of feminist views, as observed by Dorthe Andersen (2006) and Lorraine Andersson (2006). The witches also feature in what is referred to as the “Tiffany Aching” novels, which include *The Wee Free Men* (2003b), *A Hat Full of Sky* (2004a), *Wintersmith* (2006), *I Shall Wear Midnight* (2010a) and *The Shepherd’s Crown* (2015).

The “death” novels focus on Death as a character. Although death features in most of the Discworld novels, the novels in which he is a main character explore very broad themes that continue to grow in complexity. Researchers have explored this growth in maturity, starting with a study on the nature of work and duty as explored by Moody (2004) in *Mort* (1987b), *Reaper Man* (1991a) and *Soul Music* (1994b). From here studies expand to include an existentialist reading

of *Hogfather* (1996) presented by Keeping (2014) and a discussion of metaphysics and ethics explored by Hanes (2004) in *Hogfather* and *Thief of Time* (2001b).

James (2004) groups six of Pratchett's works together under the title, the "city watch" novels. These are led by members of the Ankh-Morpork city watch and usually follow the unlikely policemen, Samuel Vimes and Carrot Ironfoundersson (James, 2004:193). James explores themes of prejudice and justice in these novels, focusing specifically on racism in *Feet of Clay* (1997a) and *Men at Arms* (1993). The other titles he groups under the "city watch" novels include *Guards! Guards!* (1989a), *Jingo* (1997b), *The Fifth Elephant* (1999) and *Night Watch* (2002). Later novels, including *Thud!* (2005) and the novel that features in this study, *Snuff* (2011) was published after James's study, but also belongs to this group as they involve the city watch.

There are many other categories that have been attributed to the Discworld collection, including the "Rincewind" and the "Wizard" novels, which feature the wizards of Unseen University. This includes *Sorcery* (1988a), *Faust Eric* (1990a)², *Interesting Times* (1994a), *The Last Continent* (1998b) and *Unseen Academicals* (2009b). The miscellaneous "Discworld cultures" novels do not follow any of the other named characters specifically, or follow characters that do not feature again. In this category we find *Pyramids* (1989b), *Small Gods* (1992b) and *Monstrous Regiment* (2003a). These have not yet garnered a lot of focused research at this point in time, except for *Small Gods*, which features in Moody's study, as well as a discussion on religion and stories by Gruner (2011). One of the smaller categories (which features in this study) follows the character named Moist von Lipwig and features three novels namely: *Going Postal* (2004), *Making Money* (2007) and *Raising Steam* (2013). While not much research exists on these novels, the first in this series has been selected for this study.

Pratchett's novels seek to expose and ridicule issues found in his contemporary surroundings, but remove the haunting seriousness by placing the novels in the

² This novel is a parody of the tale of the German legend, Dr Fausto, or Faust. To accentuate this, the title of the novel was stylised to appear as *Faust-Eric*.

Discworld fantasy universe. Here, where witches and wizards rule and vampires and werewolves wage war, a hidden but strong layer of social commentary is visible. While illuminating human behaviour – how people think, reason and consequently act – Pratchett’s novels make people think about the human condition and the influence this has on society. As the above summary explains, the Discworld novels reflect various stages of human development that can be related to key themes in human history. This ranges from the role of women in the workplace (explored in *Equal Rites*), to the nature of religion (explored in *Small Gods*) and racial discrimination (found in *Jingo*).

Literary criticism on Pratchett’s work, while still rather scarce, is gradually increasing. Whether due to his status as a fantasy writer or as a popular contemporary author, most current sources on Pratchett come from dissertations, websites or a slow trickle of articles. The most useful academic source is *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*, edited by Butler et al (2004). While it does not pretend to be Pratchett’s *locus criticus* and admits its shortcomings in terms of scope in its introduction, it draws the most accurate correlation between Pratchett’s novels and the contemporary English society for which they were written. Recently two more compilations have surfaced to add to this. *Discworld and the Disciplines*, edited by Alton and Spruiell (2014) broadly explore critical approaches to Pratchett’s work and include techniques ranging from visual analysis to linguistics. *Philosophy and Terry Pratchett* edited by Held and South (2014) take a philosophical approach to the texts and ideas behind them. Unfortunately accessibility to these resources were too much delayed for them to be actively included in this study.

This emerging literary interest, together with a wave of book reviews, interviews and other sources surround Pratchett with a variety of statements. Pratchett has been described as one of England’s most popular writers (Andersson, 2006:1), and numerous critics have built on this by comparing Pratchett to another popular English author, Charles Dickens. Some have claimed his characters to be the “bizarre offspring of Charles Dickens’s comic grotesques” (Forshaw, 1996:50) and some state that he is the “most single-minded writer since Dickens: stubbornly, resolutely concerned with examining and illuminating the gears and

cogs of the human condition” (Coward, 1996). Butler quotes *Mail on Sunday* critic Mark Thomas going as far as calling Pratchett “the Dickens of the 20th century” (Thomas quoted in Butler et al., 2004: viii). This is a powerful statement when taking into account the household name Dickens was in his day. This also raises the question, why is Pratchett compared to Dickens in particular, and what does this mean for Pratchett’s genre of choice?

Certainly, Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is celebrated for the social criticism his novels showcase. Some name him “one of the most important social commentators” in England for using fiction to effectively “criticize economic, social, and moral abuses in the Victorian era” (Diniejko, 2012). A similar measure of anger is visible in his work. George Orwell imagines Dickens as a man “with a touch of anger in his laughter” and describes him as a “generously angry” man (Orwell, 1940). Vast amounts of research have been produced on these subjects and even today his works still receive much critical attention. Early researchers pegged Dickens as a practitioner of realism; however recent studies have expanded to include deconstructive and new historic approaches to his novels (Karl, 2003:593).

In examining the continuous critical fascination with Dickens, Smiley argues that readers continue to be enthralled by the impressions that characters leave on them. That “people and institutions often do populate our inner lives not as who they are but as what they mean to us, and that we often do not see them whole and complex, but simple and strange” (Smiley, 2002:5). Sanders observes that, much like Shakespeare, Dickens deals with “‘natural’ emotions, not with mental contrivances and theories” (Sanders, 2006:56). One reason attributed to the memorable and lasting effect of Dickens’s social commentary lies in his ability to merge the tragic and the comic to present the reader with serious issues in a light, satirical manner. This appeals to the reader’s attention, but also emphasises the importance of the issues being discussed. He approaches his subjects with a broad and sympathetic nature, and uses a common, recognisable narrative to deliver this. Through this he is able to expose the cruel oppression of impoverished children as found in *Oliver Twist* (originally published 1838), the effects of poverty on the individual in *Little Dorrit* (originally published 1856) and

the nature of identity and ambition in *Great Expectations* (originally published 1861). The key factor is that the story always returns its focus to the individual, making it easy for readers to identify with what they are reading, rather than providing a mere sketch of what is wrong with society.

This personal quality and focus on the individual has also been noted in Dickens's writing style. Novelist George Gissing started an early discussion in 1898 on the personal quality of Dickens's narration as he moves from omniscient perspectives to first person narrators in his later works (Gissing, 2007). George Orwell's notable essay on Dickens arguably also endorses this focus on the individual as Orwell maintains that the target of Dickens's work is "not so much society as 'human nature'" and that his criticism is "almost exclusively moral" (Orwell, 1940). Watts incorporates Dickens's love for the theatre in his discussion of Dickens's narrative discourse as a method of creating a "fictional display text", aiming to have the reader imagine the text as an amusing play (Watts, 1981:111). Alternatively, Flint (1986) saw the voices of Dickens's characters as aid to establishing a manipulative tone, while Jaffe argues that Dickens's narrative presents a "fantasy" of omniscience to accentuate the tension between personal and impersonal narratives (Jaffe, 1991). More recently, Stewart explores narratology in Dickens, investigating the relationship between the syntax of his words and the plot of his novels (Stewart, 2008).

However, Dickens wrote for an audience that differs dramatically from readers in the twenty-first century. Although similar themes are still discernible today, the audience has changed and with it, the reception of his works. Contemporary readers note Dickens's attention to detail and find the satiric characters enjoyable, but often do not focus on the social commentary given as it no longer feels relevant to them and their way of life. A survey on Dickens's relevance today includes comments stating that his works are "mildly interesting from the perspective of what life was like at the time" but say they "reflect the values and concerns of a bygone age" (Blacklock, 2012). For this reason, some of Dickens's works have been adapted to relate to a modern world. Since the inception of film many of Dickens's works have been adapted for the big screen, including two productions of *Great Expectations* in the last decade. This proves, as Beneke

mentions in her study on the 1998 version of *Great Expectations*, that many of the themes Dickens explored are still relevant, as the similarity in themes overcome the differences in historical or cultural contexts (Beneke, 2008:131). Just as the theme of identity is modified (as is explored in Beneke's study), so the themes associated with social commentary can be modernised.

With time new social problems arise, or evolve from old problems. While there might not be an outright oppression of poor classes in many countries, class differences are still alive and thriving, causing problems both in the working and social environments. Oppression, liberation and racial discrimination are also major issues dealt with on a daily basis on different scales. Corrupt or oppressive government structures still exist and with the drastic progression in technology, the individual's place in a vastly growing technological society is an issue constantly in debate. Over time, in the same manner as these new problems emerge, writers grapple with these issues in a new way. This resonates with Russian theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin's observation that "every age re-accentuates in its own way the works of its most immediate past" (Bakhtin, 1981:421).

Apart from the nature of his characters, Pratchett's focus on similar issues can be considered one of the reasons that invite a comparison to Dickens. It is this focus that has led me to consider a comparative study on Pratchett and Dickens. What sets Pratchett apart from other writers who have been compared to Dickens is the manner in which Pratchett uses narrative and character creation techniques that are at the same time similar and strikingly different from that of Dickens, with enhanced effects as a result.

* * * *

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the portrayal of social commentary as it manifests in selected novels by Dickens and Pratchett. This will be undertaken with three key points in mind. In the first instance, the claim stating Pratchett as a contemporary Dickens will be critically inspected and reflected on at various stages as the presentation of both authors' social commentary are compared and contrasted. Character exploration and three main themes will primarily be

investigated, namely: corrupted governing systems, race and social class and the place of the individual in a growing technological society. These themes were considered important issues of the time by Dickens and their use results in gripping stories with irony and satire to both entertain readers while presenting and commenting on these same issues. In the same manner Pratchett uses the fantasy genre and satire to present similar issues in a comical light.

The second key point, which relates to the method of this study, is a focus on character and narrative discourse. Next to the discussions of character and theme that feature vividly in studies on Dickens, treatment and function of character and narrative discourse prominently take second place. To aid in this, Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism will be used. The main reason for using Bakhtin centres on his preference for the novel and his focus on the social aspect of language. Although dialogism has several branches, the concepts that will be used here are polyphony and heteroglossia. Both polyphony and heteroglossia add a liberating aspect to discourse in a novel. Polyphony results from characters' voices being granted the same authority as the narrator's voice, making them independent and unmerged from the narrator (Bakhtin 1981:6). Heteroglossia, in turn, is a term coined by Bakhtin to allude to the multiplicity of actual "languages" or speech manners which delineate different characters, their social groups, classes and more. The author's use and merging of these different speech styles allow for his or her own opinion to be isolated to one degree or another, without truly imposing an idea on the reader. These concepts can be applied to help structuralise the creative use of language and narration found in Dickens and Pratchett. Additionally, these theories aid in exposing the layers of social commentary present in the novels without sacrificing the creative nature of the narrative.

Another concept that will be used in this study is the notion of the carnivalesque, which Bakhtin developed during his studies on French Renaissance writer François Rabelais. While carnival is traditionally a festive period before or after fasting or other culturally specific events, Bakhtin uses the concept to highlight that which generally is not emphasised and focuses on the rebellious nature of these festivities. Bakhtin explains that the principle function of these carnivals

was to temporarily break down the hierarchies associated with different classes, ages and castes and to replace this with a utopian other world where freedom and cooperation are possible. Bakhtin states that all were considered equal during the carnival, saying that here “a special form of free and familiar contract reigned among people. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this carnival experience, unique of its kind” (Bakhtin, 1984b:10).

As the carnival celebrates the absence of formality and hierarchy, so carnivalised writing reproduces, within its own practice, characteristic inversions, parodies and decrownings that are found in carnivals (Bakhtin, 1984b:124). He goes on to say that when the carnival spirit enters writing it offers a liberation from what Bakhtin sees as “all that is humdrum and universally accepted” (Bakhtin, 1984b:34). This becomes another aspect by which Dickens and Pratchett’s social commentary can be investigated.

The third key point in this study discusses the possible responsive effects of Pratchett’s discourse in relation to that of Dickens. Bakhtin suggests that discourse has the potential to become an open-ended dialogue that constantly forges and changes the meaning of its content (Bakhtin, 1981:275). In this sense, it is possible to see some aspects of Dickens and Pratchett’s novels as a dialogue on social commentary (albeit unintentionally). The aim here is not to suggest that Pratchett intentionally sets out to respond to Dickens, but that a growth in understanding takes place between the subject matter of their respective texts.

Against this background, the main questions that arise to guide this study are the following: How does the social commentary in Pratchett’s novels relate to or differ from the social critique articulated by Dickens? How is this social commentary enhanced by the use of what Bakhtin calls polyphony, heteroglossia and the carnival through dialectic discourse? How and to what extent does Pratchett’s social commentary respond to the ideas voiced by Dickens? What does the representational aspects reveal about the notion of an open-ended dialogue on social commentary?

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I will argue that some of the themes presented in selected novels of Pratchett and the manner in which these are presented can be seen as evolved recasts of some of the themes found in Dickens's novels. In terms of a shared social criticism of class, race, unreasonable governing structures and the position of the individual in a growing technological society, Pratchett modernises the technique of satirical commentary on these issues. This can be seen through the various voices or speech manners that Pratchett uses in his narrative discourse, which a contemporary audience will recognise, just as Dickens's audience would have been able to recognise the variety of nineteenth-century voices. Furthermore, a level of responsiveness can be detected between the two authors' texts, changing or evolving the meaning attributed to social commentary in the style of an "open-dialogue".

This study includes a multi-perspective approach, combining discourse analysis and textual analysis. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism forms a structural basis to the study, using Bakhtin's terms, namely, polyphony, heteroglossia and the carnival. This will aid in an exploration of character and narrative discourse in the four selected novels. A discussion of three central themes will provide the platform for the discussion on social commentary. The four novels used are *Hard Times* (1854) and *Bleak House* (1853) by Dickens and *Going Postal* and *Snuff* by Pratchett.

Firstly, the theme of corrupted governing structures will be discussed by comparing and contrasting how narration and the voices of characters are used in *Bleak House* and *Going Postal*. This will focus on the nature of what Bakhtin's terms as diverse, "polyphonic" voices, opposing voices that carry "monologic" characteristics to enhance the satirical portrayal of corruption as theme. Secondly, narrative and character discourse will be examined as they appear in *Bleak House* and *Snuff*, focusing on how a heteroglossia of contrasting voices is used to emphasise social criticism of class and race. Elements of Bakhtin's open-ended dialogue also start to appear as some commentary on Victorian life emerges from Pratchett's writing.

Thirdly the theme of the individual in a growing technological society will be examined by tracking the idea of social change in *Hard Times* and *Going Postal*. As conflicting opinions and voices meet, the moment social change occurs becomes visible, not only in the respective texts, but also in the interaction between the texts. Here the open-ended dialogue becomes more prominent as Dickens criticises possible futures in *Hard Times*, while Pratchett looks back at the Victorian era for meaning in his narrative discourse, before conceptualising a future for the Discworld.

Finally, freedom as a concept is explored in *Hard Times* and *Snuff* with a focus on Bakhtin's concept of the carnival. The characteristic grotesque inversions of Bakhtin's carnival is given emphasis here as it is an aspect that is found in both works, and a focus critics use when comparing Pratchett to Dickens. Pratchett presents social criticism of both Victorian ideals and merges them with commentary on contemporary issues. Dickens in turn provides commentary on Victorian ideals and socially criticises what he perceives to be standards of the future.

This shows that Pratchett is compared to Dickens because both authors utilise creative and humorous narrative and character discourse to drive the satire and social commentary in their novels. The statement that Pratchett is a contemporary Dickens is not entirely true, especially taking into account the different social contexts in which both authors wrote their novels. One of the main differences between the two authors is the level of social reform that is endorsed through the social commentary. Dickens authoritatively educates the public about social injustice in an organised manner. Pratchett's social commentary is messier and more subtle and sets out to find possible solutions to the problems at hand, rather than merely exposing social errors. Despite this, the texts of each author do respond to each other to an extent. This gives some evidence of the changing function and meaning of social commentary in the novel across different genres and time. From this, the tendency of an "open-ended" dialogue also has the potential to be studied beyond Dickens and Pratchett.

CHAPTER 2: BAKHTIN AND DIALOGISM

All words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency... a generation... Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions.

- Mikhail Bakhtin³

Michael Holquist is considered an expert on Bakhtin, having aided in the original translations of much of his work into English, producing volumes on his theories and ideas and publishing a well-received biography of the Russian theorist. Holquist describes Bakhtin's philosophy as a "pragmatically oriented theory of knowledge" which utilises a combination of modern epistemologies that seek "to grasp human behaviour through the use humans make of language" (Holquist, 2002:13). This is an accurate way of defining the driving force behind Bakhtin's work, which touches and focuses on aesthetics, ethics, culture and the nature of meaning.

Growing up and living through the Russian Revolution of 1917, the civil war that followed, the German invasion of the Soviet Union and the cold war, Bakhtin saw a great deal of political and cultural influences suddenly falling into the laps of the Russians. Partly because of the great number of philosophies that suddenly rose and fought for attention and with socialism standing at the centre of this, Bakhtin did not subscribe to one specific philosophy. Debate on this still continues, but Lodge explains that, as a literary theorist, Bakhtin equally criticised Russian formalists and socialism equally (Lodge, 1990:2).

Bakhtin's basis for criticising Russian formalism centred on an alternative linguistic train of thought, recognising language as a social activity rather than a system. In his earlier work he criticises thinkers, among them Ferdinand de Saussure, for not taking the importance of history and everyday speech into

³ Bakhtin, 1981: 293.

account in his theory of language (Holquist, 2002:8). The emphasis on history and the ordinary assisted in his agreeing with theorists like Immanuel Kant and led to his theory of dialogism also being placed in the context of Neo-Kantism. Holquist explains that Bakhtin accepted Kant's argument pertaining to an unbridgeable gap between mind and world, but he is also able to differ from Kant in his ideas about the identities shaped by the mind and the world (Holquist, 2002:15-16).

This idea of the shaping of identities by the world and mind can be linked to his work on language and society. This study needs to take into account the representational effects of character and narrative discourse in order to explore the subjects and cultures at which this commentary is aimed. The links Bakhtin make between language and society, as well as utterances and meaning, create a good synthesis for this study as it provides a variety of perspectives with which discourse in the novel can be analysed, while keeping a specific social context in mind.

In the introduction to *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), Bakhtin makes the bold statement that "studying other genres is analogous to studying dead languages" while he claims that "studying the novel, is like studying languages" (Bakhtin, 1981:3). This serves as introduction to the subject matter of a great deal of his work, as he not only wrote in firm defence of the novel, but he also studied the discourse and heteroglossic "languages" of the novel. In *Discourse in the novel* (1981), he furthers his argument by bringing the social aspect of the novel into consideration, claiming that a separation of style and language from genre can result in the social tone of a novel being overlooked (Bakhtin, 1981:259). Indeed Bakhtin did not see literary texts as separate from everyday discourse. Holquist explains that "words in literary texts are active elements in a dialogic exchange taking place on several different levels at the same time" (Holquist, 2002:66). Texts, such as the novel, are seen as literary utterances, just another form of communication, and part of what Bakhtin calls the "open-ended dialogue" of life (Bakhtin, 1984a:293).

2.1 Background Theory

Pomorska, one of Bakhtin's initial translators, highlights Bakhtin's keen interest in language, or rather communication, and its significance in literature in the foreword to his dissertation, *Rabelais and His World* (1984):

Bakhtin insisted that art is orientated toward communication. 'Form' in art, thus conceived, is particularly active in expressing and conveying a system of values, a function that follows from the very nature of communication as an exchange of meaningful messages. In such statements, Bakhtin recognizes the duality of every sign in art, where all content is formal and every form exists because of its content. In other words 'form' is active in any structure as a specific aspect of a 'message' (Pomorska in Bakhtin, 1984a:viii).

This fascination with communication, message and signs, led him to develop the theory of dialogism. The first time dialogism appears is in the essay *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (1929), published under P.N. Voloshinov.⁴ The essay proposes a new theory of language which argues that all individual speech acts exist as a function of dialogue between participating subjects (Pearce, 1994:39).

This contrasts with other schools of languages, including that of the aforementioned Saussure. Holquist accentuates the difference in theories by indicating that while Saussure focuses more on the paradigmatic aspects of language, dialogism is more syntagmatic, "a philosophy more of the sentence than of the sign" (Holquist, 2002:42). This means that, in contrast to other theories like Saussure's, dialogism follows a specific focus on interaction in language, seeing relevance in every aspect of conversation, from the utterance to the addressee at whom it is directed (Volinshinov, 1973:86).

Volinshinov's essay further stipulates that dialogue does not have to be a verbal or spoken phenomenon. He explains that in the absence of a named addressee,

⁴ This is one of many essays believed to have been written by Bakhtin, but published under alternative names for political reasons (Holquist, 2002:7).

utterances are directed towards a culturally specific “social preview” (Pearce, 1994:41). For this reason, dialogue does not have to take place face to face, but can be verbal communication of any type. This is illustrated by using a book:

A book, i.e. a verbal performance in print, is also an element of verbal communication. It is something discussable in actual, real-life dialogue, but aside from that, it is calculated for actual perception, involving attentive reading and inner responsiveness, and for organized printed reaction (Volinshinov, 1973:95).

This is significant as it separates the notion of dialogism from a purely linguistic field, so that it can enter various others, including literature, and the novel.

In the essays that follow those published under Volinshinov, dialogism takes shape and other aspects, such as the double-voiced discourse, polyphony and heteroglossia become visible. It is important to note here that Bakhtin did not consider dialogism as a branch of linguistics, although it is deeply involved with linguistics. Rather, it is considered an aesthetic on social and ethical values in language (Holquist, 2002:33). In Bakhtin’s own words, he describes the difference in approach as seeing language “not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather...language as a world view” (Bakhtin, 1981:271).

This view also includes an interesting perspective on the creation of meaning. When describing the process of discourse, oriented towards an addressee, Bakhtin notes that “the word encounters an alien word and cannot help encountering it in a living, tension-filled interaction” which creates some meaning, absorbs new meaning and changes that which already exists (Bakhtin, 1981:279). This takes the concept of communication and discourse to a broader level. He goes as far as saying it as one of the defining aspects of life (Bakhtin, 1984a:293).

For the purposes of this study, focus here will fall on defining and explaining the concepts of polyphony and heteroglossia. Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque

will also be explored, a concept developed in *Rabelais and His World* which centres less on discourse, but more on the behaviour expressed within a text.

2.2 Polyphony

Bakhtin was particularly interested in Fyodor Dostoevsky's character creations. In contrast to other authors of the time, Dostoevsky created characters with the power and freedom to stand alongside their creator. This is especially visible in the discourse of these characters. As Bakhtin explains, "Dostoevsky, like Goethe's Prometheus, creates not voiceless slaves...but free people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him" (Bakhtin, 1984a:6).

Bakhtin was drawn to the freedom of voice found in Dostoevsky's characters. He claims Dostoevsky as the "creator" of the polyphonic novel and credits him with advancing the development of the novel as a genre (Bakhtin, 1984a:7). He goes on to explain the concept of freedom in characters, stating that they are independent both in consciousness and in expression:

A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels...with equal rights and each its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. Dostoevsky's major heroes are, by the very nature of his creative design, not only objects of authorial discourse, but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse. In no way then, can a character's discourse be exhausted by the usual functions of characterisation and plot development, nor does it serve as a vehicle for the author's own ideological position [Bakhtin's italics] (Bakhtin, 1984a: 6-7).

It is clear from this that the voices Dostoevsky's characters are fully independent and capable of expressing their own thoughts and ideas, in agreement or in contrast to the author or the authoritative voice of the text. Although Dostoevsky's works did receive much praise for its exploration of religion, existentialism and even elements of psychoanalysis, he also received a lot of negative criticism on

style and structure. Terras claims the reason for this being that his novels “are not primarily novels of manners...They are novels about ideas as much about people” (Terras, 2005:106).

Bakhtin prefers to focus precisely on the ideas and people reflected in Dostoevsky’s works. Although Bakhtin was the first to bring the concept of the polyphonic novel to theoretical attention in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, this does not mean that the polyphonic novel is exclusive to Dostoevsky. Bakhtin states that Dostoevsky is not an isolated incident of polyphony or that this kind of novel was created without predecessors (Bakhtin, 1984a:44). Dostoevsky is, however, seen as a prime example to give the concept of polyphony an entrance into the literary world.

To better understand how polyphony appears in the novel it is necessary to see how it stands in comparison to other types of discourse in prose. Bakhtin divides novelistic prose into three broad categories, simplified by Lodge as:

1. Direct speech of the author
2. Represented speech of characters
3. The double-voiced discourse (Lodge, 1990:69).

Monologue, or monologic discourse is seen as the reverse side of polyphony and makes up in the first category. Where polyphonic voices have the ability to express independence and diversity of thought, monologic voices serve to express singular or unified thought and often remain under control of the author, reflecting a “world corresponding to a single and unified authorial consciousness” (Bakhtin, 1984a:8-9). This includes literature that does not necessarily have a narrator that imposes his ideas on characters, but the narrator and the characters speak the same type of language and events are related objectively.

The second category displays more freedom in terms of character consciousness. Here the character gains expression in his own language and a free indirect style allows for more than one character’s thoughts to be presented. While this may seem polyphonic, Pearce points out that this category also

includes characters that have free speech while also acting within “nonauthorial” discourses, such as political or religious ways of thinking. Such voices, in Bakhtin’s classification are “not truly dialogic unless they can be seen to be completely free of narratorial control” (Pearce, 1994:51).

Much of Bakhtin’s focus fell on category three. Here, more attention is given to ideology and different discourses, while stylisation occurs when the author uses a discourse different from his or her own for his or her own purpose. This includes parody as a subcategory and characterises the usage of another’s discourse in a manner directly opposite from its original form, often for the purposes of ridicule (Pearce, 1994:52). This incorporation of ideologies, languages and discourses, mixed with the freedom of speech given by the second category, gives us a good impression of polyphony.

Bakhtin states that “the polyphonic novel is dialogic through and through” (Bakhtin, 1984a:40) which leads to many critics, including Holquist, to believe that the terms “polyphony” and “dialogic” are interchangeable. To avoid confusion, I prefer to side with Pearce’s perspective, which sees polyphony and dialogic as two terms referring to different aspects of the text (Pearce, 1994:46). This presents polyphony as a branch of dialogism, but not a synonym.

Certainly the most important aspect concerning polyphony in the novel is narrative authority. Dentith brings attention to twentieth-century criticism in which discussions of “showing” instead of “telling” in narrative become significant (Dentith, 1995:43). Such discussions are manifested in the concept of polyphony, for Bakhtin calls upon characters not to act out the author or narrator’s ideological views, but to present their own. Dentith articulates this well with Dostoevsky as example, claiming that Dostoevsky is “not interested in ‘explaining’ his characters in social-historical terms, but rather in provoking them to ultimate revelations of themselves in extreme situations” (Dentith, 1995:43).

For characters to find themselves in such situations requires a certain distance between the authoritative narrator and the character. This distance has to be carefully constructed as the character should be able to express him or herself

without authority, but still in a realistic manner. A good way of explaining this distance is to refer to an example Poole (2001) explores, using German novelist and critic, Otto Ludwig's examination of a dramatic soliloquy. Ludwig observes that, while there may be a single figure on stage, it seems to be affected by the presence of the audience offstage, which turns what seems to be a monologue into a dialogue with an invisible presence. Poole (2001) explains that this phenomenon transcends illusion as it "shows consciousness anticipating, provoking, remonstrating – acting as if in dialogue with others" (Poole, 2001:120 refers to Ludwig). In the same way a character would engage in a soliloquy, a character in a novel may be provoked into revealing himself or herself in their own speech, affected not by the author, but expressing him or herself to an invisible audience in a dialogic fashion.

From this it can be said that polyphony consists of three main elements: speech free and separate from the author, a consciousness that allows for own realisations to be made and a certain distance to accentuate individuality. When these elements are examined in the discourse of Dickens' and Pratchett's novels, the subsequent criticism it presents is enhanced.

Patterns of contrasting monologic and polyphonic discourse can be traced in the works of Dickens and Pratchett. In some cases monologic discourse appears as a parody of a specific speech type for thematic purpose. In other cases a collection of voices with polyphonic attributes stands in contrast with the monologic discourse. This becomes an example of what Bakhtin calls "a comic parodic re-processing of almost all levels of literary language" that he finds in the English comic novel (Bakhtin, 1981:301).

The distance that arises between the narrative authority and the character, and the act of characters making discoveries for themselves create an experience that a reader can relate to. The character and the reader have the chance of making discoveries together, and these discoveries may be enlightening or demystifying. In the context of this study, the characters help the reader become aware of the themes the novel explore without telling the reader what he or she should focus on. When examining the relationship between the monologic

aspects of the novels in this study, compared to some of the polyphonic aspects, the reading experience becomes educational as a way of introducing its commentary, but does not affect the entertaining reading experience it provides.

2.3 Heteroglossia

In a discussion of Bakhtin's view on language, Dentith notes that Bakhtin creates a dual view of language that is at once centripetal and centrifugal. At the one end a notion of a "national language" can be seen as Bakhtin insisting that a multiplicity of social languages creates a unity, being interlocutory to the point of being ideological. At the other end, he views the variety of languages as creating an apparent but false sense of unity as a national language (Dentith, 1995:34-35). It is this variety of languages to which he gives the term "heteroglossia".

Dentith claims that the novel always consists of a variety of languages, or speech types, stating that "the novel reproduces within itself the heteroglossia on which it draws and in which it lives" (Dentith, 1995:197). This shows the interactions between these languages and how it contributes to the notion of a "national language". In *Discourse in the Novel* (1981) Bakhtin goes into discussion about this variety of languages:

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even a diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific socio-political purposes of the day... this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre. The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions (Bakhtin, 1981:263).

From this it is evident that the manner in which diverse speech types and individual voices are expressed is crucial to a novel's structure as it affects the style and the themes of the novel. For this reason it is worth noting how language is dealt with in the novel. Here I focus on what Bakhtin calls the comic novel, as both Pratchett and Dickens wrote with a satirical and comical edge. In the comic novel, Bakhtin explains that the primary source of language usage is a "highly specific treatment of 'common language'" (Bakhtin, 1981:301). This common language refers to an average norm of spoken or written language for a given social group, seen by the author as the common view of what is normal in a specific sphere of society (Bakhtin, 1981:301).

Here a certain degree of distance is called for in order to truly examine this "common language". The author steps back from this common view in order to objectify it, isolating to a certain degree, his or her own opinion without truly imposing an idea on the reader. The suggestion is that, in the comic style, there should be a constantly shifting movement between the author and the novel's language. The reason for this is to bring the heteroglossic diversity into focus and to bring attention to the examination of the common view without pointing it out plainly (Bakhtin, 1981:302).

Pearce simplifies the means by which heteroglossia can be incorporated, examined and organised in the novel into four categories, namely:

1. Parodic stylization
2. Direct speech of characters
3. Third-person representation of the character's inner speech
4. The incorporation into the text of other literary genres, such as songs, poetry or fairy tales (Pearce, 1994:64).

Bakhtin illustrates these with examples from Dickens's *Little Dorrit*. It is significant that Bakhtin himself draws attention to Dickens's ability to use heteroglossia in the novel. He praises Dickens's writing by saying that his texts are "everywhere dotted with quotation marks that serve to separate out little islands of scattered direct speech and purely authorial speech, washed by heteroglot waves from all

sides” (Bakhtin, 1981:307-308). The way Dickens manages to blur the boundaries between different speech styles expand the social spheres represented in his novels. Their complex arrangement allows for a play on different languages and belief systems.

The first way heteroglossia can enter the novel is through parodic stylisation. This occurs when a certain style, such as that of ceremonial speeches, epic poetry or the like, are incorporated into a narrative, but with the objective to parody this style. In Bakhtin’s examples from *Little Dorrit*, the praise for the character Mr Merdle is unmasked by parodying the epic style used in poetry to reveal that the only reason for his praise to be his wealth. “O, what a wonderful man this Merdle, what a great man, what a master man, how blessedly and enviably endowed – in one word, what a rich man!” (Dickens quoted in Bakhtin, 1981:304). Bakhtin also draws attention to the use of two voices or social dialects, “double-accented” or “double-styled” speech found together. He calls this a “hybrid construction” in which it may seem as if two voices are at work to reveal a message. In the example above, the words that describe Mr Merdle are the voices of his admirers praising him, while the second voice reveals the first voice’s hypocrisy by bringing all the descriptions together in one term, rich.

An ironic vision of a common view can also be presented in the direct speech of characters, where the irony is directly realised by the reader. In Terry Pratchett’s *Snuff* this can be seen when Commander Vimes asks his manservant if he would like a drink, which he declines with the following explanation: “Just occasionally we have to follow some rules. So on this occasion I won’t drink with you, it not being Hogswatch or the birth of an heir, which are accounted for under the rules, but instead I’ll follow the acceptable alternative, which is to wait until you’ve gone to bed and drink half the bottle” (Pratchett, 2011b:28). Here a measure of self-irony is observed as the manservant openly admits to his secretive actions. While the irony only seems to be noticed by the reader, the distance from the common view in both the context of the novel and the time period it imitates is noticeable as well.

An example of a third-person representation of the character's inner speech can be found in many of Dickens's novels, specifically as a means to introduce caricatured figures. A prominent example can be found in *A Tale of Two Cities* (2000) in the way the author introduces Monseigneur the Marquis while highlighting the man's extreme pride:

Monseigneur had one truly noble idea of general public business, which was, to let everything go on its own way; of particular public business, Monseigneur had the truly noble idea that it must all go his way – tend to his own power and pocket. Of his pleasures, general and particular, Monseigneur had the other truly noble idea, that the world was made for them. The text of his order (altered from the original by only a pronoun, which is not much) ran: "The earth and the fullness thereof are mine, saith Monseigneur" (Dickens, 2000:109).

The satiric effect of the passage is accentuated not only by the sarcastic adjectives making the ideas seem "noble", but also by the twisting of Psalm 24:1, giving the impression that that which should be God's, belongs to him (Bible, 2004).

The incorporation of other literary genres, such as songs, poetry or fairy tales is another way of presenting heteroglossia in the novel as mentioned earlier. An example of this can be found in *Bleak House* when John Jarndyce decides to express to Ester Summerson how well she cares for them with a line from a poem, "Little old woman, and whither so high? To sweep the cobwebs out of the sky" (Dickens, 1999:100). This becomes significant as Ester takes on the nickname of "little old woman" or "Dame Durden" for the rest of the novel. The use of the poem broadens the language usage of the novel and utilises these genres precisely because of its capacity as well-worked-out forms, to assimilate reality in words. In the case of Jarndyce, the reality of Esther's ability to unravel his worries is expressed more vividly by the poem's imagery.

From this it is evident that heteroglossia can have a variety of functions and usages in the way it is incorporated into the novel. The most important aspect of heteroglossia is the fact that the author chooses to use language or speech

manners as an element in his or her style. The use of different languages is not necessarily the author's, and is used to express another's beliefs with his or her own in the background. A particular belief system belonging to someone else, a particular point of view on the world belonging to someone else, is used by the author because it is highly productive. On one hand it is able to show the object of representation in a new light and on the other hand to illuminate in a new way the "expected" literary horizon, that horizon against which the particularities of the teller's tale are perceivable (Bakhtin, 1981:312). The idea is that by exposing languages to one another, it is as if one's own language is perceived as it would be perceived by someone else, "coming to know one's own belief system in someone else's belief system" (Bakhtin, 1981:365). This presents a struggle between discourses or languages for characters in the novel, in which case liberation from the authority of another's discourse is a possible result (Bakhtin, 1981:348).

This means that the languages remain an element of style to the author, used by him or her for a variety of effects, but in the end the characters act in the name of his or her language, or parody another's language. While the presentation of dialect might not constitute heteroglossia *per se*, the abandon with which the characters use their dialects in Dickens allows his intentions to reach the reader through a partly heteroglossic filter. As Bakhtin states: "It is as if the author has no language of his own, but does possess his own style, his own organic and unitary law of governing the way he plays with languages and the way his own real semantic and expressive intentions are refracted within them" (Bakhtin, 1981:311).

The function of heteroglossia in this study will be to reveal the isolation of ideas characters have, from those of other characters and of the implied author in both Dickens and Pratchett. As similar themes are being investigated in two different contexts, the way in which they are presented is crucial here, rather than merely comparing Dickens's thoughts to Pratchett's. When the different voices are used satirically, they gain the potential to separate satirised characters from characters for which sympathy is shown. The various languages that are satirised also

presents another layer of social commentary and in some cases contributes to the polyphonic elements of the novel.

2.4 The Carnival

Bakhtin's concept of the carnival has been described as one of his most controversial subjects. Beginning as an idea in his early essays and manifesting itself in his doctoral thesis, the theory of the carnival was considered extremely controversial in the face of the rigid regimes of the time. Originally completed in 1940, the thesis would only be published as *Rabelais and His World* in 1965. (Dentith 1995:65). Caryl Emerson, another expert on Bakhtin's work, distinguishes it as the "most dangerous category in Bakhtin's arsenal" (Emerson 1988:520).

The theory of the carnival, or more accurately carnivalisation, is first found in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* where Bakhtin describes the transition of the medieval carnival spirit into literature (Bakhtin, 1984b:122). Here Bakhtin first defines the notion of the carnival, describing it as "a pageant without footlights and without a division into performers and spectators" (Bakhtin, 1984b:122). The notion behind the carnival is that it is not a show presented to spectators, but that everyone takes part in the carnival and "lives" the carnival. Furthermore this carnival life presents a different aspect of life. Bakhtin describes carnival life as a "life turned inside out" and sees it as "the re-verse side of the world" where laws, prohibitions, and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary life are suspended (Bakhtin, 1984b:122-123).

2.4.1 Carnival culture and laughter

An aspect of festivities held in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance which fascinated Bakhtin particularly was its ability to mock or parody elements of a society's culture. To Bakhtin the carnival is "a boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations [that] opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" (Bakhtin, 1984b:4). Traditionally carnivals and festivals were held for numerous reasons, correlating with harvests, feasts of the

church and other significant days on the calendar, but was always characterised by folk humour. This serves to emphasise that which is not generally emphasised, and generally aims to induce laughter. These alternative emphases include the absence of formality and hierarchy:

Carnival effectively broke down the formalities of hierarchy and the inherited differences between different social classes, ages and castes, replacing established traditions and canons with a "free and familiar" mode of social interaction based on the principles of mutual cooperation, solidarity and Bakhtin's Carnival equality. During such popular feasts and festivals 'life came out of its usual, legalised and consecrated furrows and entered the sphere of Utopian freedom' (Gardiner, 1992:52).

The carnival thus encapsulates all parts of a society and culture, incorporating folk humour with other aspects of society, mocking, breaking down or reinforcing elements of a society's culture. The most crucial aspect of the carnival is its inclusivity and equality. As Bakhtin explains:

Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants (Bakhtin, 1984b:7).

The carnival can in this sense be seen as a playing ground where social cultures come together to set their differences aside or to mock them.

The most important characteristic of this carnival life according to Bakhtin is based on what he considers the main event of any carnival: the crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king (Bakhtin, 1984b:124). This act of decrowning, which Bakhtin describes to be a central theme to most European carnivals, brings about a change and renewal as it expresses a joyful relativity of structure and order (Bakhtin, 1984b:124). As the crowned individual is usually an

unconventional character such as jester or a slave, the action of crowning opens and sanctifies the inside-out world of the carnival and the very act of crowning already contains the immanent idea of decrowning. With every carnival a new “king” is crowned and decrowned, creating a continuation of authority shifts, deaths and renewals (Bakhtin, 1984b:124). It is precisely this shift that the carnival focuses on and the dualistic nature in which contrasts and combinations are formed with the focus on change.

Contrasting images of birth and death, blessings and curses, stupidity and wisdom, praise and abuse are played against each other as much as the opposite worlds of a king and a slave are played against each other. This allows for great eccentricity. Bakhtin describes that this aspect of the carnival, ‘brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid, it permits—in concretely sensuous form—the latent sides of human nature to reveal and express themselves’ (Bakhtin, 1984b: 123).

The transformation of this eccentric behaviour into literature, which Bakhtin examines, is termed as the “carnivalisation of literature” (Bakhtin, 1984b:122). After identifying some aspects of the carnival in the works of Dostoevsky, Bakhtin examined the Renaissance writings of François Rabelais (1494-1553) as a perfected form of carnivalisation. He was especially intrigued by Rabelais’s representation of Renaissance feasts and carnivals and the escape it seemingly brought from authority. In the prologue to *Rabelais and his World*, Holquist states that Bakhtin’s vision of carnival falls not only on this freedom, but also on the courage to establish it (Holquist in Bakhtin, 1984b:xxi).

In the works of Rabelais, the carnival is a time in which authoritative figures, such as kings and priests, would defer their power temporarily while appearing to be licensing the carnival (Holquist in Bakhtin, 1984b:xviii). While these carnivals would appear to be held to express a certain value system, to Bakhtin, the carnival opens up an entire new world. To him, the carnival celebrates “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal” (Bakhtin, 1984b:10). When this statement is examined closely, this

outlines the new value which the concept of the carnival takes on when it enters Rabelais's novels.

Primarily it states that the carnival celebrates a temporary liberation from all that constitutes official behaviour. Feasts of the Church and other Renaissance festivities were by their nature annual or seasonal. Chris Humphrey (2001) argues that many medieval festivities were an act of misrule in which the festival is seen as a "safety-valve". This argument follows that if people were allowed to break the rules for one day, that they would release any frustration and blow off steam, and behave the rest of the year (Humphrey 2001:11). In this view, the carnival was constructed to be a temporary liberation from rules and regulations.

However Bakhtin further states that it is also liberation from prevailing truth. In this respect, if festivals and carnivals were constructed to allow people to break the rules set by a superior power, this also approves liberation from the superior ideology. This may render the idea of carnival as a "safety-valve" inadequate, as liberation from superior ideologies or rules may encourage a rebellion rather than prevent it. The point Bakhtin makes is that carnival is not just a physical relief from officialdom, but a psychological and spiritual one as well. He states that the carnival spirit offers "the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realise the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things" (Bakhtin, 1984b:34). This is why the freedom the carnival presents its participants becomes what Bakhtin describes as a "second life" outside the real world, organised "on the basis of laughter" (Bakhtin, 1984b:8).

In addition to its dualistic nature and eye on renewal, two essential categories rooted in the concept of the carnival are carnival laughter and the notion of grotesque realism. Bakhtin describes carnival laughter as a festive laughter shared by everyone. Instead of laughing at an isolated comic event, carnival laughter "is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives" (Bakhtin, 1984b:11-12). He separates carnival laughter from laughter achieved by modern satire as the satirist who educes negative laughter thereby places him or herself above the object of

mockery. Carnival laughter, however, expresses the point of view of the whole world; “he [or she] who is laughing also belongs to it” (Bakhtin, 1984b:12).

This does not mean that carnival laughter cannot present a form of satire. Bakhtin asserts that parody is inseparable from the carnival (Bakhtin, 1984b:127). In the same manner, he argues that it is laughter and humour that can reveal and mock social antagonisms. However carnival laughter is primarily defined as a universal philosophical principle with the quality to heal and regenerate (Bakhtin, 1984b:70).

From this it can be said that carnival laughter serves both a comic role and a serious one. Bakhtin explains this further when discussing the next crucial aspect of the carnival, the notion of grotesque realism. Here he theorises that it is laughter that enables us to see things in a realistic light. He argues that “laughter is the vital factor in laying down that prerequisite for fearlessness without which it would be impossible to approach the world realistically” (Bakhtin, 1981:23).

2.4.2. Grotesque realism and the grotesque body

The notion of the grotesque and grotesque realism originates, for Bakhtin, from the German scholar Heinrich Schlegel and his essay, *The History of Grotesque Satire* (1894). This essay separates the comic into three strict categories, namely the clownish, the burlesque and the grotesque. Bakhtin notes that while the first two categories only focus on comedy that includes irony or direct laughter, the grotesque adds an aspect of indirect satire as social phenomena are portrayed (Bakhtin, 1984b:305). The satirical portrayal of these phenomena is usually done with grotesque images which causes the viewer displeasure. However once the viewer realises that the image is a satirical reflection of reality, this in turn causes the viewer moral satisfaction as the vices portrayed in the image are in fact being criticised and mocked (Bakhtin, 1984b:305-306). In the Rabeliasian example Bakhtin uses, a woman is said to be more fertile in the shadow of a monastery belfry. While this very idea may seem absurd to some Renaissance audiences, it reveals the monastic depravity and subsequent corruption truly present at the time (Bakhtin, 1984b:310). The

term Bakhtin refers to, to reflect the realistic nature these satirically grotesque images portray then becomes grotesque realism.

Grotesque realism uses degradation as its primary principle. Bakhtin describes it as the “lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract” to a material, mortal level (Bakhtin, 1984b:19). This lowering to earth, in turn results in freedom, as “to degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something better. Grotesque realism knows no lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving” (Bakhtin, 1984b:21).

Grotesque imagery is therefore always in a state of becoming. According to Bakhtin, it reflects “a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming” (Bakhtin, 1984b:24). The grotesque image is never completed as it moves to constantly transform into something new. It is also by its very nature grotesque. It focuses on all that is seen as monstrous, ugly and hideous in the eyes of “classic” aesthetics (Bakhtin, 1984b:25). Furthermore the grotesque body focuses on its primary needs (eating, drinking, urinating, defecating, copulation, growth and death) as part of its degradation and its journey towards renewal (Bakhtin, 1984b:317).

One example Bakhtin uses to illustrate grotesque realism comes in the figure of Sancho Panza in Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (1605). He explains Sancho as follows:

Sancho’s materialism, his potbelly, appetite, his abundant defecation, are on the absolute lower level of grotesque realism of the gay bodily grave (belly, bowels, earth) which has been dug for Don Quixote’s abstract and deadened idealism. One could say the knight of the sad countenance must die in order to be reborn a better and a greater man (Bakhtin, 1984b:22).

Bakhtin asserts that Sancho is the mortal and bodily corrective to Don Quixote’s idealism. Sancho does not have any of the characteristics that would be associated with Don Quixote’s idealistic pretences. Sancho’s comic appearance and manner brings a laughing aspect in contrast to Don Quixote’s blind

seriousness. Bakhtin compares Sancho to a clown parodying serious ceremonies (Bakhtin, 1984b:22). The defining characteristics of grotesque realism thus are grotesque imagery, degradation and satiric or parodic representation.

As the carnival entered literature, the nature of its representation also changed. In the nineteenth century, Bakhtin felt it distorted the principle of laughter. As it began to take on a more serious aspect, he explains that the nineteenth-century bourgeois respected only “satirical laughter”, which does not possess as much of laughter’s regenerative quality which, to Bakhtin, was “not laughter, but rhetoric” (Bakhtin, 1984b:51). When the carnival entered literature, it merged the serious and regenerative aspect of carnival laughter, expanding the perception of the carnivalesque in literature. He explains, “over the long course of centuries carnival, its forms and symbols, and above all a carnival sense of the world, seeped into many literary genres. Carnival was, as it were, reincarnated in literature, and became a powerful means for comprehending life in art” (Bakhtin, 1984b:157).

Following this line of thought it is not impossible to believe that abundant feasts and parties (as found in the works of Rabelias) are not the only way for the carnivalesque to enter literature. By its very nature, it evolves, adapts and renews itself throughout the ages. When discussing the carnivalisation of Dostoevsky’s works, Bakhtin notes that Dostoevsky may have been inspired by Dickens to include social themes in his carnivalised novels. He goes as far as to say that “a combination of carnivalisation with a sentimental perception of life was found by Dostoevsky in Dickens” (Bakhtin, 1984b:159).

CHAPTER 3: CORRUPTED LEADERS AND THEIR VICTIMS

‘If they would rather die,’ said Scrooge, ‘they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.’

- Charles Dickens⁵

George Orwell claims that the strongest impression one carries from Dickens’s books is a “hatred of tyranny” (Orwell, 1940). Diniejko narrows this down by explaining that Dickens satirises the self-interest principle associated with capitalism (Diniejko, 2012), as notably illustrated in *A Christmas Carol* (1843). Through Dickens’s satire and accompanying criticism, a difference in character treatment and character discourse can be noted. This parodies selfishness and separates the selfish characters from the characters created to evoke sympathy from the reader. In this difference of treatment, contrasting elements of both monologic and polyphonic tones become visible.

In his discussion of dialogism, Robinson describes monologism as the opposing side of polyphony and even equates it with capitalism. He points out that both concepts focus on uniformity of thought with little regard for opinions or influences that do not adhere to this ideology (Robinson, 2011). Bakhtin tended to perceive entire texts as either monologic or polyphonic, regarding monologism as a “corruption” of possible polyphony (Robinson, 2011). However the view that a monologic or polyphonic tone can be used to illustrate a theme is also plausible, and will be the object of this chapter’s investigation. Instead of regarding an entire text as monologic or polyphonic, aspects that make up both these concepts will be investigated as they are found in the narrative presentation and speech manners of specific character groups in *Bleak House* and *Going Postal*. Here these concepts will aid in revealing attitudes of self-centredness associated with corrupted governing institutions. Elements of a monologic, closed-off tone can be found in the discourse of members related to corrupted institutions. This furthers a parodic view of the self-interest principle accompanying these institutions. In turn, character groups created to rebel against this corruption display elements

⁵ Dickens, 2006:64.

of a stratified, polyphonic tone that contrasts the monologic elements. Here a distance can also be perceived between the author and the characters. The reader is able to experience and be informed of the effects corrupted institutions have on individuals while the entertaining aspect of the narrative remains uncompromised.

In the case of *Bleak House*, the corrupted institution being presented is the court of Chancery, represented in the novel by its various lawyers and clerks. Their speech manners and discourse display aspects of a monologic tone. The sections governing their presentation are overseen by an omniscient narrator which does not offer much distance or diversity. It serves to emphasise the parodic and satiric portrayal of this institution and the self-centred nature of lawyers that sustain govern it. In contrast to this we find various characters who appear as victims of the court's subsequent corruption. Their discourse appears more varied and contains elements of a polyphonic collection of tones. This is overseen by the first-person narrator, Esther Summerson, who leads the reader to the understanding behind the effects of the Court of Chancery's immorality.

Going Postal places more emphasis on capitalism by highlighting a large company and its board members as the corrupted institution of choice. A selfishness similar to that of the Chancery lawyers is noticeable in the board members. Their discourse also lacks diverse thinking and consequently showcase some monologic elements. Here we also find a collection of characters rebelling against the corruption of the company. The discourse of these characters are more diverse than those of the board members. While the same omniscient narrator leads both parties, the characters standing up to the board members display much more diversity in presentation and speech manners, which showcase elements of a polyphonic tone. The reader here is aided in understanding the situation by experiencing realisations with the characters who actively stand up to the corruption and triumphs, a feat not collectively achieved in *Bleak House*.

3.1 Dickens and “The System”

Among the variety of issues Dickens critiques, bureaucratic institutions or power structures abusing their positions often surface. This can be seen in his attack on the poor laws in *Oliver Twist* (originally published 1838) to his portrayal of the conditions in Yorkshire schools in *Nicholas Nickleby* (originally published 1839), and his criticism of utilitarianism and capitalism in *Hard Times* (1854). Many critics credit him as a social reformer for his relentless manner of dealing with injustice. Although his novels did not directly reform society, his works draw attention to these matters. This managed to create a “climate of opinion that facilitated in the creation of a less strife-ridden society” (Cunningham, 2008:159). Additionally he actively supported various reform movements.⁶

Schramm notes that *Bleak House* is “perhaps Dickens’s most sustained engagement with the social inequities generated by systematic bad governance and legal mismanagement” (Schramm, 2011:316). A central theme here is the law, a theme found in many of his novels and one he investigated thoroughly during his time as political journalist.⁷

Dickens voiced his disgust with the state of England in an angry letter to John Forster, saying that:

It is the system to know nothing of anything; and to believe that England, while doing nothing, is doing everything. There are Thousands of Asses now – and Asses in power: which is the worst of it – who will hold this faith – if one can dignify such idiocy by the name – until they have done for all of us (Dickens, 2012b:328).

The system mentioned here is one that expects citizens to overlook problems or choices made by figures in powerful positions, even if it has disastrous

⁶ However many – like the equalisation of the poor rates that would reform the new poor law – would only be achieved in 1894, after his death (Cunningham, 2008:165).

⁷ As reporter for the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Mirror of Parliament*, Dickens dealt with everything from criminal law to some of the first reform bill debates, as well as civil law, where he gained most of his knowledge on contracts and wills (Schramm, 2008:279).

consequences for those in positions below them. Although it is unclear who the “asses in power” mentioned above refers to, figures in powerful positions are often those who govern others and the assumption can be made that Dickens refers to - among others - the governors of the contemporary legal system. The concept of such a “system” can however be attributed to more than just government decisions and is used continuously in his novels to define the social problems he addresses.

In *Bleak House*, the fictionalised version of the Court of Chancery becomes an example of a governing institution which reflects the state of English law at the time, but with a focus on its ineffectiveness. The “asses in power” Dickens describes can be considered a description of the various *Bleak House* Chancery lawyers. It also describes their behaviour as they believe they are contributing to justice, while in fact they are doing nothing to help their clients (Dickens, 2012b:328).

Dickens has been mentioned to say that he had “little or no faith in the people governing, but faith limitless in the people governed” (Gissing, 2007:144-145). What happens to these governed people when those who rule become corrupt is the concern he foregrounds in *Bleak House*; the former are almost always adversely affected when this happens. *Bleak House* tells the story of the Jarndyce vs Jarndyce family dispute which centres on multiple family wills. These surface at various instances throughout the novel and subsequently drive the plot. As these multiple wills engage different characters and the legitimacy of each needs to be determined, it becomes a legal affair that ends in court, at which point the reader encounters the Court of Chancery. Dickens evokes the English legal system of the time and portrays a fictionalised version of the real Court of Chancery, a court famous in the nineteenth century for being “ruinously expensive and slow” (Lobban, 2004:389). Chancery became the focus of many law reformers throughout the nineteenth century. Thomas Pemberton even attacked the Clerk’s Offices in a speech in 1840 after exposing the high sums the court received for “effectively sinecure work” (Lobban, 2004:569-570).

In *Bleak House* the Court of Chancery is an institution that enforces governance, created to oversee justice for the people of London. However, since greed has slowly crept in, it has been rendered ineffective, making it an example of a corrupt institution. It no longer effectively serves the people it was created for, and seems to rather serve itself through financial gain. The novel makes several repetitive references to a “system”, relating to the equity system used by lawyers which allows them to make money without effectively aiding their clients. This controlled style of repetition of the same words and tones contributes to the monologic tone of the novel. A demonstration of this is found in Chapter 15 when the reader is temporarily introduced to a Mr Gridley, who tells the story of a lawsuit he was involved in. He explains that the suit continued for years without reaching a conclusion, ending in all parties losing their inheritance and their estate to the legal costs without the suit being settled. When trying to find some logic or someone to blame for the injustice, he only finds “The system! I am told, on all hands, it’s the system. I mustn’t look to individuals. It’s the system” (Dickens, 1999:215). The injustice that this “system” causes becomes a central theme in *Bleak House*⁸.

Dickens reveals the reason behind instances such as this when discussing law practitioners. In *Bleak House* he reflects that “The one great principle of English law is, to make business for itself...Let [lawyers] but once clearly perceive that its grand principle is to make business for itself at their expense, and surely they will cease to grumble” (Dickens, 1999:542). Although English law should be there to protect the innocent and prosecute criminals, lawyers use it to create tedious cases, which generate money for them, even if the customers do not get satisfied and the cases never fully solved. The lawyer Mr Kenge in *Bleak House* admits to this principle. When asked if any good would come from the Jarndyce vs Jarndyce case, he answers simply, “My dear sir, this is a great country, a very great country. Its system of equity is a very great system, a very great system” (Dickens, 1999:838). This system of equity is in fact the same “system” that robs people like Mr Gridley, and in the Jarndyce vs Jarndyce case, Richard Carstone.

⁸ The suit mentioned by Gridley is in fact a modified version of a real suit that Dickens heard of, which strengthens the author’s motivation to showcase the apparent injustice (Dickens, 1999:4).

Welsh also points out that it is this system that affects numerous characters in the novel and contribute to their downfall, “because of the false hopes held out, it is partly responsible for Carstone’s failure of earnestness and vocation; it has brought grief and despair to Gridley, madness to Miss Flite; it is the legal foundation, apparently, of the material condition of Tom-all-Alone’s” (Welsh, 2000:108).

Although the political establishment and the role of the equity system are targets of satire in *Bleak House*, Dickens is also concerned with the victims of this system, which is why we find that the lawyers are often presented as flat characters while the victims of Chancery are given more attention in terms of depth. This adds to the “view on social reform” mentioned by Markey (2002). By exposing the injustice, and evoking sympathy for its victims, awareness and action would be sure to follow. The problem pertaining to a system that makes money without efficient work is one that has trickled down through the ages, and appears in the works of various other authors, of which Pratchett is only one.

3.2 Discworld: a comic distance from reality

Pratchett approaches the self-interest principle as theme in his Discworld novels by focussing on the corruption of modern corporations. In *Going Postal* he inspects old technology being replaced by new technology which promises to be more efficient, but ends up as another money-making scheme. Pratchett admits that a great deal of this fictional and societal space is based on human culture, human history and accordingly human cultural mythology at large (Pratchett, 2000a:160).

In his study on Pratchett’s Discworld novels, Andreas Kristiansen argues that Pratchett subverts the fantasy genre – more specifically heroic fantasy – by adding aspects of realism in his novels (Kristiansen, 2003:3.1.1). By definition most fantasy worlds represent an imagined reality radically different in nature and functionality from our ordinary experience (Abrams & Harpham, 2009:323). Yet Pratchett’s world, as strange and comical as it may seem, functions on logic and Pratchett asserts that it is solidly logical. In an interview with *Writers Write*, he

explains that “a lot of the humour, and possibly a lot of the power in the Discworld series, come from thinking logically about those things which we don't normally think logically about, that we just accept” (Pratchett quoted in White, 2000). As an example he explains how horror movies accept foreign concepts such as werewolves and vampires without much consideration. For his novels he took to thinking about what a werewolf in modern society would be like and what the politics of werewolves would be (Pratchett quoted in White, 2000). This led to the creation of the werewolf character, Angua, which features in several Discworld novels. This same attention to detail applies when aspects of reality enter Pratchett's fantasy setting.

In contrast to various fantasy worlds which move completely away from ordinary experience, the Discworld is seen as a comic counterpart for the world we live in. It gives Pratchett a “comic distance from reality” (Butler, 2004:69) in order to criticise everyday occurrences. Elements of reality are found everywhere in the Discworld, with its leading city, Ankh-Morpork being considered a fictional version of London which continuously changes while remaining in a quasi-medieval state.

Pratchett describes Ankh-Morpork as a “renaissance city with elements of early Victorian England” (Hills, 2004:218) and in an interview with Natasha Mitchell he agrees that the city is a “hip, upbeat Dickensian London... with additional things...” (Pratchett, 2011a). Like London, Ankh-Morpork has suffered several fires, and it had to be rebuilt numerous times – to the point that it is mainly built on itself (Pratchett, 1993:221). Through the city flows the river Ankh, which is akin to the Thames, although the Ankh is so polluted it is rumoured that one could walk on it (Pratchett, 1987a:74). Like Victorian London, the city contains dame schools and governesses (as found in *Reaper Man*, 1991a) and by the time *Going Postal* appears, Ankh-Morpork has developed an elaborate postal service which closely resembles the rapid mail system of the nineteenth century. Pratchett admits in an interview with Sky1 that the old Victorian mail system was seen as new and bright technology, and that this had been the inspiration for *Going Postal* (Pratchett, 2010b).

Ankh-Morpork even has slums that come close to the descriptions found in Dickensian London. While Dickens's London is described with metaphors of fog, mud, dirt and pestilence, Ankh-Morpork's slum, known as "The Shades" is described as a "relief map of sinfulness, wickedness and all-round immorality" (Pratchett, 1991a:47). The one main aspect that sets the city apart from Dickens' London is its inhabitants. Ankh-Morpork houses creatures from all corners of the fantasy genre, including dwarves, trolls, wizards and even golems. Dickens describes the lawyers of Chancery with vampire metaphors; in the Discworld reside an actual vampire lawyer by the name of Mr Morecombe and a zombie lawyer named Mr Slant.

Ankh-Morpork's unique inhabitants deal with the same issues that ordinary civilians experience and deal with in the real world. However, this also means that Ankh-Morpork has its own brand of corrupt institutions. In *Going Postal*, businessmen looking to modernise the city are exposed as one such an institution. Like the Court of Chancery, these businessmen offer to help their clients and govern the popular form of communication in the city, but without actually aiding anyone but themselves. Consequently another element of reality is introduced into the fantasy world.

Kristiansen focuses on these elements of reality and argues that their incorporation into the novels allows the novels to transcend the genre of fantasy.

Pratchett's work can be perceived as transcending the traditional division between literary fiction and fantasy, as the novels can be placed in both categories; he slips back and forth between engaging story and meta-fiction, placing the readers inside a fantasy narrative before suddenly moving them outside through satire and parody, making them laugh at the conventions they a minute earlier were immersed in (Kristiansen, 2003).

This allows Pratchett to stretch his commentary beyond the realm of fantasy and makes him capable of criticising aspects of the fantasy genre (Kristiansen, 2003).

In *Going Postal* Pratchett takes this concept further by using the fantasy setting to criticise aspects of the modern world. The clacks company marks a stage of

Ankh-Morpork evolution in which it faces a transition between old technology, represented by the post office and the new technology of the clacks towers, which is depicted as a medieval form of internet. The clacks consist of several semaphore towers through which coded messages are sent from one tower to another across the city and beyond. Although the new technology is very beneficial to the people of Ankh-Morpork, it is run by a panel of corrupt directors who abuse the system to generate as much capital for themselves as possible.

These directors seek to create a consumer culture – not unlike that recognisable in our own contemporary society – in Ankh-Morpork by eliminating all competition, making the citizens of Ankh-Morpork dependent on the clacks. Featherstone explains how companies and intellectuals of this contemporary society are able to establish a monopoly by defining legitimate taste within a cultural realm to create a consumer lifestyle (Featherstone, 2007:87). When addressing the directors of the clacks company, the city's notorious patrician, Lord Vetinari, exposes the company's scheme. He notes that when it comes to the service they offer "the only choice [their] customers have is between [them] or nothing" (Pratchett, 2004b:98). Not only do the directors offer the citizens very little choice, but they exploit them to receive as much profit as they can. In this sense these directors are very much like the lawyers of Chancery Court in the way they operate: they offer a service that should better the lives of the Ankh-Morpork citizens, but the fees to use the service are grossly inflated, while the machinery is worn out due to lack of maintenance, resulting in various breakdowns and delays in service.

Adora Dearheart, daughter of the original clacks inventor, confirms their scheme for profit, saying that "all they want to do is make money. They don't care about the Trunk. They'll run it into the ground and make more money by selling it" (Pratchett, 2004b:296-297). When the clacks are invented, it is referred to as a "remarkable system of communication" (Pratchett, 2004b:96), but as soon as the new management steps in, it deteriorates rapidly. Later they realise that the directors will "keep the system going just this side of disaster, then let it collapse" (Pratchett, 2004b:375).

Pratchett also focuses on the victims of this system. In this case the victims are the workers of the clacks towers, known as linesmen. They are overworked, underpaid and some are even killed in the directors' attempt to keep the clacks system running for profit while ignoring urgent and necessary maintenance. Just like the lawyers of Chancery, the businessmen of Ankh-Morpork squeeze all the money they can from the clacks. Pratchett chooses to explore the victims of such a monopoly by focussing on how the workers of the Post Office do not focus on profit, and how the new postmaster helps to liberate the clacks workers.

3.3. *Bleak House*: The monologic discourse of law and its voiceless victims

As mentioned in the previous chapter, polyphony indicates presences separate from the narrator or author, creating, in Bakhtin's terms, a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses" (Bakhtin, 1984a:6). Although monologism and polyphony are very complex concepts, this study will focus on three elements that help identify the presence of polyphony in the novel. The elements are: speech free and separate from the author, a certain distance to make its individuality real and a consciousness that allows for realisations to be made. This is considered a starting point for investigating monologism and polyphony in the novel. Unfortunately Bakhtin does not provide narrative examples of these characteristics together to help realise the effect of a polyphonic novel. In the absence of one explanatory example, individual references to the mentioned characteristics will be referred to. This will aid the argument for the presence of a polyphonic and monologic tone in the mentioned novels.

In *Bleak House* the narrative treatment of the Chancery lawyers, representative of "The System" and the contrasted victims of Chancery differ greatly. Dickens's treatment of the Chancery lawyers reflect his vision of how the law can be abused. In his attempt to portray the maltreatment displayed by law practitioners, the result is a presentation dominated by an almost comic and controlled unity of thought, which brings monologism to mind. Here characters primarily act as a mouth-piece for authorial intent (Bakhtin, 1984a:51).

Most of the passages in *Bleak House* that concern the Chancery lawyers are narrated by the omniscient narrator who maintains control over their representation. The authorial control over discourse endorses the presence of a monologic tone. As an object of satirical stereotype, the Chancery lawyers adhere to the presentation the omniscient narrator dictates and appear alike in their behaviour. When the members of Chancery court are introduced, the High Lord Chancellor is barely distinguishable from the throng of court members and clerks, who are all considered part of a great, dreary, obscuring fog.

A monologic tone does not always imply dullness, but focuses on unity. Ironically in an environment that should invite debate, the members of Chancery court seem to be united in their dullness, and mimic each other's movements and thoughts. Members of the bar commenting on the Jarndyce vs Jarndyce case are introduced as figures that "bob up like eighteen hammers in a pianoforte, make eighteen bows, and drop into their eighteen places of obscurity" (Dickens, 1999:10). No description is given to distinguish these figures. Similarly another councillor, introduced only as a "very little counsel" is heard to agree with the case in question, and promptly drops back into the fog, where no one can see him (Dickens, 1999:11). The Chancery lawyers represent organised unity in their behaviour, but this adds to the presentation of a collectively ineffective system.

This emphasis on unity is recognisable in the speech manner and narrative representation of the individual lawyers the reader is acquainted with. Bakhtin states that in the monologic novel, characters is "closed and his semantic boundaries strictly defined: he acts, experiences, thinks, and is conscious within the limits of what he is, that is, within the limits of his image defined as reality" (Bakhtin, 1984a:52). As the lawyers in *Bleak House* function as caricatures of corrupted nineteenth-century law practitioners, they are created to not have a lot of depth and do not have the capacity to step outside this framework. Some of the characters, like the Dedlocks' solicitor, Mr Tulkinghorn, has more depth than others, yet he remains shallow in his ambitions. His habit of collecting information from his clients serves him no other purpose than to aid his career, fulfil his selfish goals and emphasises his greedy nature.

Markey (2002) notes that Tulkinghorn's behaviour is constantly debated about among literary critics and lawyers (Markey, 2002:690). While literary critics see Tulkinghorn in an utter negative light, lawyers writing about literature attempt to justify his behaviour. In Markey's opinion as a lawyer, trying to justify Tulkinghorn's behaviour "does a disservice both to the profession and to the character Dickens has created" (Markey, 2002:758). Markey indicates that Tulkinghorn is, from a legal perspective, a successful professional lawyer in that he makes money, but is a failure from an ethical and moral perspective for the way he bribes and blackmails his clients and abuses his legal power and privileges (Markey, 2002:691). The reason for this is purely that Tulkinghorn is created to be a villain. He has no redeeming or soft features, confirming him as a mere object of authorial control, acting out the role of villain that has been given to him.

Descriptions of Tulkinghorn present him as rigid. The narrator describes him to be dressed (like most other lawyers) predominantly in black. Peculiarly, he appears "mute, close, irresponsive to any glancing light, his dress is like himself" (Dickens, 1999:15). He has no personality or depth beyond this. As a lawyer, he is described as "mechanically faithful without attachment" and stakes more pride in his reputation of being "master of the mysteries of great houses" (Dickens, 1999:505). When he travels, even this is described rigidly, "as the crow came—not quite so straight, but nearly—to Cook's Court" (Dickens, 1999:134). When engaging in conversation, Tulkinghorn rarely says more than he needs to, and at some points the narrator controls his responses. On one meeting between Tulkinghorn and Sir Leicester Dedlock, the conversation is narrated as follows: "How do you do, Mr Tulkinghorn?" says Sir Leicester, giving him his hand. Mr Tulkinghorn is quite well" (Dickens, 1999:164). This exchange can be considered an illustration of the lack of distance between Tulkinghorn and the narrator as the narrator is able to control how Tulkinghorn feels and relates this in indirect discourse, taking the character's chance to express himself away.

Tulkinghorn's speech manner furthers his unyielding nature. After discovering the death of Nemo, Lady Dedlock asks Tulkinghorn how he died. Tulkinghorn responds with the following:

‘...whether he had died by his own hand or not, it was beyond my power to tell you. I should amend that phrase, however, by saying that he had unquestionably died of his own act, though whether by his own deliberate intention or by mischance can never certainly be known. The coroner’s jury found that he took the poison accidentally’ (Dickens, 1999:166)

Despite having been there on the night of Nemo’s death, Tulkinghorn does not disclose any personal opinions he may have of the event. By asserting that it is beyond his power to tell whether the death was a suicide, he refuses to get himself more involved than he needs to. In the manner of the lawyer he is, he prefers to cite official sources of information (here the coroner’s jury) as if to rule it as the last say on the matter. By not raising an opinion, he both agrees with the jury’s findings and maintains his rigidly emotionless status.

This same rigid nature can be found, perhaps more prominently, surrounding the lawyer, Mr Vholes. One of the more literal examples of lawyer caricatures, Mr Vholes illustrates Dickens’ dislike for lawyers in a vivid manner. A caricature in this sense is a character of which specific features (moral or physical) have been selectively amplified, resulting in a personality dominated by these features and simplifying the character’s identity and personality, subsequently flattening the character (Andrews, 2008:99). In the case of Mr Vholes, the dominating feature being amplified is his greedy nature, akin to the self-interest principle Dickens likes to satirise. The flatness of Vholes’s character endorses a monologic tone that surrounds him. Not only does the omniscient narrator govern the reader’s interpretation of him, but Vholes also displays a monologic discourse of law. This can be found in Chapter 39, when Mr Vholes addresses his client, Richard Carstone.

Like the other lawyers of the novel, descriptions of Vholes and his surroundings are dull and monotonous. The chapter begins with a dark and dreary description of Vholes’s office location in Symond’s Inn. The materials of the inn “take kindly to the dry rot and to dirt and all things decaying and dismal” and the jet black door to Vholes’s office is so dark it even shadows the brightest midsummer morning

(Dickens, 1999:541). This already gives a grim impression of Mr Vholes's surroundings, and unifies him with the other depictions of the Chancery lawyers.

The narrator proceeds to discuss how people like Vholes have a great degree of respectability, and that this respectability cannot be disregarded. Kenge speaks of Vholes' relation to the social system, stating that the system cannot afford to lose men like Vholes (Dickens, 1999:543). He describes Vholes as "diligent, persevering, acute in business" (Dickens, 1999:543) and argues that a reform in the legal system would be the death of such figures – the reason for this not only that they would run out of business, but that they would not be able to continue doing business in their particularly self-interested manner. Kenge admits to this corruption by saying the current practice causes delay and great expense, but does not admit to the level of vexation it causes (Dickens, 1999:543).

The narrator concludes Vholes's introduction with the dramatic suggestion that law practitioners would sooner defend cannibalism for the welfare of man-eaters than consider reform of their ways (Dickens, 1999:543). In this image Vholes is symbolised as a minor cannibal chief, characterised as a primal figure of the legal system, feeding upon its corrupt ways for their own interests. This gives a dramatically satiric edge to Vholes's character, and is confirmed in his description and discourse.

Vholes is constantly described as "buttoned-up", and linked to images of death and haunting animal comparisons. Likened to a predator, Vholes stares at his client as if "making a lingering meal of him with his eyes as well as with his professional appetite", "looking at his prey and charming it" and later drafts his bill book, as a "fox, or bear, make up his account of chickens or stray travellers" (Dickens, 1999:545, 530, 549). The references are given alongside actions pertaining to his profession, bringing the focus on the self-interest principle that governs Vholes's business. Like Tulkinghorn, the descriptions surrounding Vholes establish him as another villainous character, and like Tulkinghorn, Vholes does not attempt to deny this status or break from this framework. His discourse is filled with ironic statements that affirms the greedy, selfish image Dickens seeks to portray.

In the conversation that follows, Vholes succeeds in convincing Carstone that he has his interests at heart, and that he is Vholes's first priority. This conversation is, however, rife with ironic statements that serve to reveal that Vholes does not have Carstone's interests at heart, but rather his own. In a detached manner he prefers to refer to Carstone as "Mr C", depersonalising the client he claims to be devoted to. Among the statements he makes he claims that he is "not a self-seeker", that he "does not give hopes" and that, should Carstone win his case, he would owe him "nothing beyond whatever little balance may be then outstanding of the costs as between solicitor and client" (Dickens, 1999:545-546, 548).

Although these three statements should affirm that Vholes is not like the sinister character the narrator presents him to be, his subsequent actions affirm the irony of his words, and his true nature. While he claims himself not to be a self-seeker, he continually takes pride in his reputation. While he claims to never give hopes, it is precisely with words of hope that he succeeds in keeping Carstone a client. Most notably, he claims that Carstone will not owe him anything but the "little balance" of outstanding costs of his consultations. These costs turn out to be anything but little. Between this statement, and a second statement in which Vholes proclaims that he does not "profess to be a man of capital", he makes a request for twenty pounds for his current consultations.

After this occurrence, every time the reader encounters Vholes, he gives a reminder that Carstone's bills need to be paid. When the suit ends as unresolved as it was at the beginning of the novel, Carstone is left deep in debt. In the closing image of the court case, Vholes leaves the courthouse and gives "one gasp as if he had swallowed the last morsel of his client" (Dickens, 1999:860). Vholes is therefore not content by the fact that he has ruined Carstone, but his appetite is only satisfied when he hears that the entire estate has been consumed (Ballinger, 2008:42). Carstone dies shortly after this realisation and it becomes apparent that Vholes had indeed swallowed all of him.

The deliberate irony in Vholes's discourse and his single-minded depiction evokes the monologic tone of Chancery, emphasising that a self-interest principle primarily rules Chancery law. The reader may be amused by Dickens's comic description of the court members floundering in the technicalities surrounding the lawsuits, but it is the monologic tone presiding over the depiction of the Chancery lawyers that emphasises their selfishness. The author's intention to satirise the Chancery lawyers is directly visible in their behaviour and discourse. The fact that the Chancery lawyers do not attempt to break from their reference as villainous caricatures, but are presented as unanimously greedy masterminds that give the novel its satiric edge. The narrator's lack of distance from these characters also affirms Dickens's intentions to explicitly criticise the corrupt English legal system through these characters and he ultimately makes his point clear by proclaiming the Court of Chancery the "most pestilent of hoary sinners" (Dickens, 1999:6).

In contrast to the monologic aspects found in the portrayal of the lawyers stands Esther Summerson. Where the parts of the novel with overlapping monologic aspects focus on criticising selfishness and corruption, Esther recognises the voiceless characters of the novel and articulates the need for social intervention. Her character can be regarded as a literal portrayal of Dickens, as Dickens also called for social intervention in his life as much as he does in his novels. However, Esther's actions and thoughts, and consequently her discourse, differ from the narrator's in subtle ways. Despite her character being slightly under-developed, an analysis of her character reveals that her narrative contains elements of polyphony.

There have been great disputes about Esther Summerson as secondary narrator of *Bleak House*. The novel's contemporary critics viewed Esther as a "creature" rather than a character; Charlotte Brontë describing her narrative as "weak and twaddling" and Margaret Oliphant goes as far as saying that Esther's character is a "failure" (Bronte and Oliphant quoted in Collins, 1971:334). There are also those who defend Esther and her narrative, but Frazee agrees that they are in the minority (Frazee, 1985:227). Zwerdling makes a compelling case from a psychological view, explaining that Esther's lack of confidence and self-effacement stems from her godmother's maltreatment of her (Zwerdling, 1973).

It can also be argued that while Esther's character seems simple, it is deceptively so in relation to the novel. Although she is not as elaborate as some of Dickens's other characters, this does not make her a flat character, like Dickens's caricatures. Neither does this mean that her character is insignificant. While she appears to be only filled with humility, she plays an intricate role in the construction of the novel's plot and the presentation of key characters and events. In this capacity, she contributes to the parts of the novel that contain a polyphonic tone.

Esther is responsible for narrating almost half of the novel, being narrator of 33 of the 67 chapters while the omniscient narrator takes charge of 34 chapters. Esther also recognises that she is not alone in her narration. She begins her narrative saying "I have a great deal of difficulty in beginning to write my portion of these pages..." (Dickens, 1999:19). Here she acknowledges the other narrator as much as the omniscient narrator recognises her. The omniscient narrator proves his knowledge of her in the beginning of Chapter 7 by starting the chapter with the phrase: "While Esther sleeps, and while Esther wakes..." (Dickens, 1999:84). The two narrators are aware of each other, but give each other space to narrate their respective parts. Esther thus has the freedom to use her own voice, even if her expressions are at times limited, especially concerning herself. The fact that her narrative takes place in chapters completely separate from that of the omniscient narrator provides a degree of distance between the narrators. This distance, and the existence of a second narrator with separate thought processes already suggests the potential for a polyphonic tone. The question that arises then is why is there a need for a division in narration?

In searching for the ontological status of Esther's narrative Harvey asks the same question. His explanation surrounding the separated narrators not only gives a reason for the use of two narrators, but also why Esther seems such a flat character:

Esther has generally been dismissed as insipid, one of Dickens's flat, noncomic good characters, innocent of imaginative life, more of a moral

signpost than a person. Even if we accept this general judgment, we may still find good reasons why Dickens had necessarily to sacrifice vitality or complexity here in order to elaborate or intensify other parts of his novel. If Dickens, far from failing to create a lively Esther, is deliberately suppressing his natural exuberance in order to create a flat Esther, then we may properly consider one of Esther's functions to be that of a brake, controlling the runaway tendency of Dickens's imagination - controlling, in other words, the tendency to episodic intensification (Harvey, 1969:226).

If Esther's narrative is seen as a way of limiting the author's runaway imagination, this indicates Esther to be an individual standing in contrast with the author. This brings to mind a characteristic Bakhtin assigned to polyphonic voices, as commonly polyphonic voices are "capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him" (Bakhtin, 1984a:6).

Indeed Esther makes a point of giving the facts of her experiences, and even apologises when she forgets to do so. While the omniscient narrator occupies himself with images and descriptions, Esther is the narrator that brings their meaning together. She allows herself and the reader to make realisations about herself and the other characters. Dever argues that Esther's search for her mother reveals her narrative to be an effort to uncover her "origins, beginnings, and processes of differentiation" (Dever, 1995:56). Esther is introduced with an obscure background, giving her the intention that she strives to discover the truth about her past. She is created unconscious of her past with the aim to make realisations and discover. This makes her individual in her goals, and already adds a deeper layer than most flat characters have. She also allows for the reader to share her realisations through her narrative, another aspect that diversifies her character, making it more independent than the other characters of the novel. This also foreshadows the displacement of the monologic aspects of the novel.

Bakhtin explains that Dostoevsky's characters are granted the same authority as the narrator, to make their own judgements, even if they are in contrast to the author. As narrator, Esther "exercises control over much of the novel, and once she has captured our attention she becomes, for most readers, the more

memorable of the two narrators” (Tracy, 2008:384). In some ways her judgement surpasses that of the other characters and of the other narrator.

Her ability to look at other characters allows her to see their inner nature. Her own critical uneasiness helps her unmask the nature of characters such as Harold Skimpole, Mrs Jellyby and Mr Turveydrop (Zwerdling, 1973:433). Initially she wonders how Skimpole can escape the responsibilities of life and even though John Jarndyce tolerates him, she grows to dislike and distrust him. At the end she reveals him to be truly “artless” and has no sympathy in confronting him about his “disregard of several moral obligations” (Dickens, 1999:822).

She also pins down Vholes’s character and his influence on Richard Carstone. The omniscient narrator constantly depicts Vholes as “buttoned up” and surrounded by shadows; relating how he glances at the cat watching the mouse’s hole (Dickens, 1999:545). However, it is Esther who gives him the most accurate description: “so slow, so eager, so bloodless and gaunt, I felt as if Richard were wasting away beneath the eyes of his adviser, and there was something of the Vampire in him” (Dickens, 1999:813).

Frazer points out that Esther differs considerably from Dickens’ other first-person narrators (such as David Copperfield and Pip) in more ways than just her gender. He argues that the other two novels focused intensely on the first-person narrator. As David ponders about his own future, Esther ponders about the fates of the other characters, Richard, Ada, Charley, Jenny, Caddy and Jo (Frazer, 1985:233). His conclusion is that Esther’s “twaddling” nature is an attempt to reduce interest and focus on Esther and to shift this interest to the other characters in the novel (Frazer, 1985:234). Unlike the primarily selfish Chancery lawyers, Esther becomes an opposing force against the self-interest principle.

Some, as George Orwell does, claim Dickens’s central message to be this: “If men [or women] would behave decently the world would be decent” (Orwell, 1940). To an extent this can be found in Dickens’s treatment of moral characters, as they are usually the ones who achieve success and happy endings. In this sense it could be argued that Dickens’s intention was to create Esther as such

an opposing force and through it make her a spokesperson for the his intentions. Esther's decent and accommodating nature certainly gives this interpretation some merit. However if this were entirely the case, Esther fails to entirely present Dickens's ideas as her discourse and actions do not fulfil the principles Dickens seeks to endorse.

In one sense, Esther is the embodiment of such a message as she is modest and decent to the point of annoyance. However her actions do not contribute to the world being more decent and she becomes rather helpless in this respect. She stands alongside characters that do make contributions (like John Jarndyce and Allan Woodcourt) but her own contributions consist of being there for other characters to speak to. Her support of the other characters makes her a living presence with personal perspectives on their situations, but these perspectives do more to inform the reader about the realities at hand than to endorse the author's idea of what the world should be like. Esther also achieves Dickens's idea of a happy ending (a doting family of her own). The paradox lies in the fact that she does not altogether contribute to a more decent or better world through her morality. This may point to Dickens contradicting himself and his message, but also creates some distance between authorial intent and character. This in turn allows an individual voice to emerge.

Esther's narrative abilities give perspectives that are more vivid than would be believable if presented by the omniscient narrator. This gives her a sense of her own freedom in description. In a sense, her discourse with and about the "voiceless" characters of the novel contributes to the polyphonic aspects of the novel as she becomes the voice that these characters do not have. I use the term "voiceless" because these characters are not able to speak for themselves. Characters like Gridley revolt angrily against what "the system" has done to him, but his fury is not heard or heeded by Tulkinghorn or the members of Chancery. Yet in Esther's narrative he is able to explain himself. In the chapters governed by the omniscient narrator, Gridley is reduced to being "the man from Shropshire" that cries "My lord!" at every Chancery meeting, and is dismissed (Dickens, 1999:10-11). When Esther meets him in Chapter 15, under her own narrative, he is revealed as a stern, but kind man.

Esther explains how “he bent over the group in a caressing way and clearly was regarded as a friend by the children, though his face retained its stern character” (Dickens, 1999:213). In this small act of kindness, the figure that until now has been defined by his ill temper becomes human as he looks after Charley and the children in his building. While the nature of his character does not change, the reader’s perception of him does. He is also finally given space to explain the reason behind his fury for the Court of Chancery, and afterwards Ester remarks that “his countenance had, perhaps for years, become so set in its contentious expression that it did not soften, even now when he was quiet” (Dickens, 1999:216). The realisation that the Court of Chancery is to blame for both the change in his manner and his ruined state comes through in this expression. When it is contrasted with his kindness towards Charley and the children, the suggestion is there that this has not always been his manner.

Apart from this chance meeting, the reader would never have learned the significance of the angry “man of Shropshire” and his explanation of “The System”. Gridley later dies in despair, his attempts at shaming the court for their wrongs remain, on the whole, unfulfilled, but for the image he leaves with Esther. His dying moments are shared with Esther and Miss Flite, another victim of Chancery, claimed by Gridley to be “the only tie I ever had on earth that Chancery has not broken” (Dickens, 1999:351).

While Gridley chooses to rage against the Court of Chancery, Miss Flite prefers her futile waiting. Like Gridley, she is constantly in court, stating that she “awaits a judgement”. In court, however, she is dismissed by most as a “little mad old woman” and no one cares to know whether she has ever been part of any lawsuit (Dickens, 1999:8). Again it is only through her conversation with Esther that the reader finds out that her whole family was drawn to Chancery and fell to ruin and death, and now she is also drawn to stay there (Dickens, 1999:493). She looks to Esther for hope, and insists that Esther come to her house as it will be a “good omen” to her (Dickens, 1999:36).

It is also to Esther that Miss Flite expresses her concern for Richard to fall prey to Chancery. She confides in Esther as if she is telling a big secret and a warning, "Let some one hold him back. Or he'll be drawn to ruin" (Dickens, 1999:494). Richard also finds it quite hard to be dishonest with Esther, even in the midst of keeping all his debt from his wife, Ada. Richard Carstone is repeatedly advised to stay away from the Jarndyce suit, but once it got hold of him he is unable to escape. Even when he begins to doubt Mr Vholes he is not able to admit it. It is Esther who explains that, "on [Richard's] return he told us, more than once, that Vholes was a good fellow, a safe fellow...a very good fellow indeed! He was so defiant about it, that it struck me he had begun to doubt Mr Vholes" (Dickens, 1999:816).

This collection of voices, each reacting differently to Chancery's injustice is stratified through Esther's perspective. Gridley's furious pursuit of revenge, Miss Flite's hopeless waiting and Carstone's continuous (even if futile) sense of hope does not achieve success, but through Esther their perspectives reach the reader as a collection of voices more alive and diverse than the monotonous collection of Chancery lawyers. This displaces the monologic tone found in some parts of the novel and gives way to a polyphonic tone emphasised by Esther at Gridley's deathbed. After Gridley's death, Esther reflects on the scene:

The sun was down, the light had gradually stolen from the roof, and the shadow had crept upward. But to me the shadow of that pair, one living and one dead, fell heavier on Richard's departure than the darkness of the darkest night. And through Richard's farewell words I heard it echoed: 'Of all my old associations, of all my old pursuits and hopes, of all the living and the dead world, this one poor soul alone comes natural to me, and I am fit for. There is a tie of many suffering years between us two, and it is the only tie I ever had on earth that Chancery has not broken!' (Dickens, 1999:315).

The scene describes the three main victims of Chancery, one dead, one living, and one still being swallowed by the court. Esther echoes Gridley's words again, and they gain new significance. While they are originally aimed to describe the relationship between Gridley and Miss Flite, here it expands to include Esther's relationship with Carstone, and foreshadows the same fate for Carstone as

Gridley and Miss Flite has received. The realisation that the passage provides is that, no matter how diverse the approach to Chancery, the result seems to be the same. In the end all of them become victims of the court, and they die with their voices unheard, except through Esther.

In essence, Esther becomes the framing character who not only connects all the other characters, but helps the reader stay focused on the important aspects of the story. As Frazee points out:

[T]he fact remains that in essence *Bleak House* is this one story.... By bifurcating the narrative, by breaking apart what is essentially a single story, Dickens avoids what would be a fatal centrality of focus and, in addition, provides himself with a framework that allows him to extend the significance of this one story to society as a whole (Frazee, 1985:233).

In the end, even though Esther could not help the victims of the “system”, she does help reveal the injustice that has been done. Through her discourse, the collection of dying voices gain as much significance as the rigid and satiric presentation of the Chancery lawyers. This indicates that the novel contains elements of both monologic and polyphonic tones and it through the polyphonic aspects that the silent call for reform against injustice is emphasised.

3.4 *Going Postal*: Capitalists and rebellious voices

Unlike *Bleak House*, *Going Postal* is narrated throughout by an omniscient narrator with changing focalisers. The main focaliser is the unfortunately named Moist von Lipwig, who appears as the protagonist of the novel. The antagonist in this instance is the board of directors associated with the clacks company. Like the Chancery lawyers, the directors have little dimension beyond their profit margins. Through their presentation and dialogue, aspects of a monologic tone are discernible. In addition to presenting unity and lack of distance from the narrator, Bakhtin makes it clear that monologic novels have a flat nature. Where ideas are not developed, progress is not made; where “genuine interaction of

consciousnesses is impossible, genuine dialogue is impossible as well” (Bakhtin, 1984a:82).

Going Postal cannot be considered entirely monologic or polyphonic by these standards as aspects of the monologic tone are recognisable in the presentation of the directors, but some polyphonic aspects surface in other parts of the novel. The passages concerning the directors appear to favour aspects associated with a monologic tone as it reveals their unanimously selfish nature. In this regard the directors represent modern business discourse, but their characters are one-dimensional to the point that their actual dialogue fails them. When this fails, the monologic aspects that surround their presentation are destabilised by the other characters in the novel. These characters are surrounded by aspects of the polyphonic tone. Unlike the directors, they speak with several overlapping speech manners which stratifies their discourse and their behaviour. This creates individual personalities, independent from each other and arguably, from the author.

Unlike Dickens, whose satire comes from descriptions and metaphors, Pratchett often utilises the viewpoints and discourses of characters to expose or ridicule others. Potentially, his favourite character for this is the Patrician, Lord Vetinari. In the reader’s first encounter with the financiers of the clacks company in Chapter 3, Lord Vetinari holds a meeting with the directors, seemingly to discuss the recent poor performance of the clacks. However this meeting holds two functions. The first is to introduce the reader to the self-interested nature of the directors. The second is to hypothetically reveal their crimes, leaving the directors to be ridiculed for the rest of the novel. Arguably, the presence of Vetinari and his conflicting dialogue with the directors already displaces the monologic aspects featured in the business discourse and tone that surrounds the directors.

Most of the directors are presented as caricatured cowardly schemers, some comically ridiculous in appearance. Mr Crispin Horsefry, who handles the company’s credit, can be considered the embodiment of the company’s greed. His appearance is dramatised as “not simply running to fat but vaulting, leaping and diving towards obesity” (Pratchett, 2004b:93-94). Mr Slant, the company

lawyer, is as dismal as the lawyers of Chancery, with the added benefit of the fantasy setting, in which he appears as a real zombie. The narrator introduces him as the “most renowned, expensive and certainly the oldest lawyer in the city. He had been a zombie for many years, although apparently the change in habits between life and death had not been marked” (Pratchett, 2004b:90-91). The suggestion is even given that if he was not already a zombie, it would be necessary to have him turned into one, as his personality already fits the nature of zombies, emotionless and without care (Pratchett, 2004b:102). While some of the other directors are given names, they are not given much description, and serve in this narrative as one mass of agreeing figures. Their unity of thought exemplifies the monologic tone that surrounds their presentation.

This unity of thought is noticed when Vetinari pretends to be oblivious of their business model. The narrator notes that “most of the financiers settled a little more easily in their chairs. The man was clearly a fool about business matters. What did he know about compound interest, eh? He’d been classically educated” (Pratchett, 2004b:92). This is given as a collective thought, unifying the directors in agreement. The term “compound interest” is here used to express the jargon of business discourse, and is later followed by the term “Agatean Wall”, which is a comic play on the term, “the glass ceiling” (Pratchett, 2004b:93). Horsefry also defends their business model by referring to their “code of conduct”, but does not move to explain how this aids them. His defence does not constitute an argument, and consequently does not aid in dialogue, furthering the presence of a monologic tone.

Vetinari moves to expose their self-interested scheme in a hypothetical situation, revealing their dishonest method of acquiring the clacks company from its original owners through a shady series of buying shares. He concludes that “it turns out that everything is legal, it really is... And yet actual illegality, it would appear, has not taken place. Business is business” (Pratchett, 2004b:97). This serves to inform the reader of the company’s selfish actions, and Vetinari employs the phrase “business is business” to emphasise the offhand manner associated with the actions.

The character to respond to this is one of the more notable figures in the clacks company, its chairman, Reacher Gilt. Like *Bleak House's* Tulkinghorn, Gilt is given more depth of description. He is sly, and is constantly said to be smiling like a tiger. Unlike the other directors, he is a conman without a conscience who manipulates and understands both law and business, and serves to embody the self-interest principle. While he does not professionally break the law, he commits a host of other transgressions, among which includes lying, stealing and having his business rivals killed.

His response to Vetinari's questions and accusations is to cut the conversation short by asserting that "It is not your business. It is our business, and we will run it according to the market" (Pratchett, 2004b:98). This further emphasises his self-interest principle as he remains rigid to suggestions of change, for the sake of the consumer culture they are creating. This reveals him to have the nature of a capitalist. In general Gilt also has no concern for the workers of the company or its clients. In response to Vetinari's enquiries about the amount of maintenance being done he simply replies: "Oh customers complain about the service and the cost, but customers always complain about such things" (Pratchett, 2004b:98). He even looks down on his fellow directors. Like Mr Tulkinghorn, Gilt sees other people only for their monetary worth and they cease to matter once their worth has run out. To him, the other directors are "silly small people with the arrogance of kings, running their little swindles, smiling at the people they stole from, and not understanding money at all" (Pratchett, 2004b:142).

Gilt's focus on wealth does not allow him to see past the severity of his actions. Terms in the business discourse he prefers not to focus on include "embezzlement, theft, breach of trust, misappropriation of funds" and he dismisses them by casually mentioning that "people can be so harsh" (Pratchett, 2004b:363). As the novel progresses, the directors become nervous about their deeds. Horsefry even admits that Vetinari was correct by saying that they "bought the Grand Trunk wi' its own money!" (Pratchett, 2004b:141).

As caricatures of greedy businessmen, none of the directors attempt to step outside the framework of their character, nor do they have the power to become

independent of their author. Even when they become nervous about the condition of the company, they are not willing to spend the necessary money to mend their problems and none want to accept responsibility for their situation (Pratchett, 2004b:362-363). The monologic discourse they represent eventually lets them down. When their schemes are revealed, their similarity of thought leaves them incapable of help, and their dialogue falls apart. The final images of the directors are of a group of floundering people, some asserting Gilt's role in the matter, some pleading for private counsel and others losing touch with reality, suddenly disjointedly mumbling "what is happening? Who am I? Where is this place?" (Pratchett, 2004b:452).

While Pratchett succeeds in satirising corrupted modern businessmen through the directors, he focuses more on a comic presentation, whereas anger prominently powers the narrative of *Bleak House*. The unanimous and monologic tone distinguishable in the actions and discourse of the directors emphasises how the self-interest principle that powers their greed also leaves no room for proper communication, and ultimately this leads to their downfall. As characters they adhere to the author's intentions, to appear greedy, comical and ultimately ridiculous.

The treatment of the novel's protagonist presents a different case. Like Esther, von Lipwig is presented with characteristics that help him to enhance the presence of a diversifying, polyphonic tone that aids in unravelling the social injustice central to the novel. As with many of the characters the narrator focuses on, most of von Lipwig's experiences are narrated with varying degrees of distance. However the distance between character and narrator is never close. Consider the first passage of Chapter 1 in which the protagonist is introduced:

They say that the prospect of being hanged in the morning concentrates a man's mind wonderfully; unfortunately, what the mind inevitably concentrates on is that it is in a body that, in the morning, is going to be hanged.

The man going to be hanged had been named Moist von Lipwig by doting if unwise parents, but he was not going to embarrass the name, in so far as that was still possible, by being hung under it. To the world in general, and

particularly on that bit of it known as the death warrant, he was Albert Spangler (Pratchett, 2004b:13).

The chapter starts with a broad, omniscient perspective, reflecting on a general person's mind, and then shifts towards who this man is, his real name, and the persona he uses. Here, and generally, Moist and the other characters are treated with free indirect speech, with the exception of conversations which are presented in indirect quoted speech. Fludernik accurately describes the relationship between the narrator and free indirect discourse, saying that "the overlap between characters' and narrator's language is free indirect discourse, where the standard narratological accounts posit the site of a dual voice effect..." (Fludernik, 1993:3). When Bakhtin separates dialogic activity in prose, he places free indirect discourse under "objectified discourse" or as simplified in the previous chapter, "represented speech of the characters".

This brings us to a grey area of polyphony, as polyphonic writing, according to Bakhtin, presents characters with freedom separate from the narrator, while free indirect discourse overlaps the character's and the narrator's languages. This does not necessarily mean that there is not enough distance between the narrator and the character for the character to make his own realisations and choices without the narrator's influence. Gunn points out that free indirect speech is often used as a technique to create an objective narration in which the narrator supposedly withdraws for impersonal figural representation (Gunn, 2004:35).

Pratchett uses free indirect speech to give an objective view of what the focalisers experience, but do not manipulate their views, choices or nature. In *Equal Rites* Pratchett uses a similar narrative style to admit that the characters are not in his control (Pratchett, 1987b:7). This proves that there is a degree of distance between the narrator and the character that allows for the character to act individually, despite the omniscient narrator.

The narrator's constant change in focus aids in this. Since the narrator's focus constantly changes, the reader is often given a hint of von Lipwig's actions, thoughts or plans, but these are not revealed by the narrator. When they are

revealed, it is usually from von Lipwig himself. The time that the narrator's focus leaves von Lipwig gives him time to make his own realisations without the narrator glimpsing into his mind. The narrator often focuses on other characters or none at all, when von Lipwig's plans are revealed.

Consider Chapter 4 as example. Here von Lipwig accepts that he is stuck in the post office and realises he needs to give the postal workers a sign that he is serious about his new responsibilities. The section of the chapter ends with him reflecting: "I'm stuck here. I might as well take it seriously. I will show them a sign" (Pratchett, 2004b:113). What this sign is, is not revealed until the next section. On the surface this gap in the narrative creates suspense and invites the reader to speculate what will happen next. However when the time comes for this to be revealed, it is not revealed directly by the narrator, but by von Lipwig himself in direct speech, to indicate that his consciousness is at work and that realisations have made progress. Von Lipwig explains this sign to one of the postal workers:

'Voila,' he said and, remembering his audience, he added: 'That is to say, there we have it.'

'It's a barber's shop,' said Groat uncertainly. 'For ladies.'

'Ah, you're a man of the world, Tolliver, there's no fooling you,' said Moist. And the name over the window, in those large, blue-green letters, is . . . ?'

'Hugos,' said Groat. 'And?'

'Yes, Hugo's,' said Moist. 'No apostrophe present in fact, and the reason for this is . . . you could work with me a little here, perhaps . . . ?'

'Er . . .' Groat stared frantically at the letters, defying them to reveal their meaning.

'Close enough,' said Moist. 'There is no apostrophe there because there was and is no apostrophe in the uplifting slogan that adorns our beloved Post Office, Mr Groat.' He waited for light to dawn. 'Those big metal letters were stolen from our facade, Mr Groat. I mean, the front of the building. They're the reason for Glom of Nit, Mr Groat.'

It took a little time for Mr Groat's mental sunrise to take place, but Moist was ready when it did (Pratchett, 2004b:114).

Note that the narrator's focus here is on Groat and not on von Lipwig, as he is revealing his plan. While the exchange is primarily comical, the character manages to add mystery to the story, and distance is achieved between the narrator and the character to hide the realisations made and create suspense. Some of the same characteristics that define a polyphonic tone (as Bakhtin describes them) are thus also applicable to von Lipwig as they were to Esther, and could suggest that von Lipwig promotes a polyphonic tone in the novel. There is a degree of distance between the narrator and the character, and this distance allows the character to make his own realisations individually and reveal them in his own words. This is again used later when von Lipwig helps to uncover the crimes of the clacks company and the function of the polyphonic aspects are to emphasise the theme of injustice in this respect.

First impressions present von Lipwig as a careless, possibly selfish con artist. However, as the novel progresses he reveals himself to be very considerate and caring towards others, notably towards the victims of the grief that the clacks company causes. Where Esther helps to focus the reader's attention on the voiceless characters, von Lipwig both recognises and helps them.

In some cases, the pleas of the voiceless in *Going Postal* are especially vivid. At first von Lipwig is not all that concerned with his duties or what he is supposed to do with the rundown post office. However his purpose finds him quite literally. He becomes haunted by the discarded undelivered mail. They speak to him in a magical way, scribbling sentences in mid-air, "Voices in their dozens, their hundreds, their thousands, filled his ears and squiggled across his inner vision... 'Moist von Lipwig? You are the Postmaster... Deliver us!'" (Pratchett, 2004b:156, 178-179). This literalisation of metaphor, which is often utilised in fantasy and science fiction, enhances the effect of voices trying to be heard here. It is not long hereafter that he starts to deliver the discarded mail, proving him a man of action. Once he realises he can take such action, he decides to act against the clacks company as well.

Von Lipwig makes it his business to understand and read people. As a con artist, it is essential for him to know what characteristics to focus on when dealing with

people. He needs to appeal to them in order to get away with what he needs or wants. As he reflects, “Everyone had their leavers...Often it was greed...Sometimes it was pride...Find the leaver, and then it was plain sailing” (Pratchett, 2004b:73-74). It is this talent for reading people that helps him recognise the bad characters, and get on the good side of the good characters for, “ultimately, everything was all about people” (Pratchett, 2004b:71).

Like Esther, he is able to accurately pin down the true identity of the chairman and antagonist, Reacher Gilt:

If Moist was any judge, any judge at all, the man in front of him was the biggest fraud he'd ever met...He told them what he was, and they laughed and loved him for it. It was breathtaking. If Moist von Lipwig had been a career killer, it would have been like meeting a man who'd devised a way to destroy civilizations (Pratchett, 2004b:306).

While Esther notes the eerie atmosphere that surrounds the lawyers of Chancery, von Lipwig is able to recognise Gilt because he knows they are essentially the same type of person, a conman. This gives him an advantage. Because he is able to recognise Gilt for what he really is, he knows how his mind works.

He gains the trust of many of the characters by appealing to their needs. He buys a precious pin for Stanley, a pin fanatic; he gives a promotion to Mr Groat who wants to be a proud man and even employs golems to appeal to Adora Belle Dearheart. His greatest achievement is standing up to the immoral directors of the clacks company.

The other clacks employees are helpless against the schemes of the directors. Two members of the secret group called the Smoking Gnu were once clacks employees who were fired for speaking their mind about the new management. This led them to start the rebellious group against the company (Pratchett, 2004b:402). Mr Pony, the chief engineer of the Grand Trunk, does what he can with what he is given as he cannot afford to lose his job, but struggles to keep calm under the strain of the work. Many of the clacks linesmen, including John

Dearheart (who was on the verge of creating a rival company) die under suspicious circumstances to prevent any rivalry. An attempt is also made on von Lipwig's life as soon as he steps in as a rival.

Von Lipwig uses the power of the clacks employees, or former employees, to unmask the directors. In the beginning of the novel we learn that it is tradition to send a dead linesman's name through the clacks message towers, for "A man's not dead while his name is still spoken" (Pratchett, 2004b:133). Von Lipwig uses this tradition to give voice to the victims of the clacks company. After challenging Gilt's company to a race to get a message to Genua, he succeeds, with the help of the Smoking Gnu, to crack the code of a clacks tower, sending a different message than the one that was originally dispatched. Again the reader is aware that he plans to send a strange message, but the message is not revealed until it is received in Genua, and the content is structured to appear as a message from the dead linesmen:

'Who will listen to the dead? We who died so that words could fly demand justice now. These are the crimes of the Board of the Grand Trunk: theft, embezzlement, breach of trust, corporate murder...There was no safety. There was no pride. All there was, was money. Everything became money, and money became everything. Money treated us as if we were things, and we died...Blood oils the machinery of the Grand Trunk as willing, loyal people pay with their lives for the Board's culpable stupidity...unaware of the toll that is being taken. What can we say of the men who caused this, who sat in comfort round their table and killed us by numbers?...The men obtained control of the Trunk via a ruse known as the Double Lever, in the main using money entrusted to them by clients who did not suspect that...' [his italics] (Pratchett, 2004b:446, 448-450).

A dramatic tone dominates the message, reminiscent of Dickens's moral declarations, and gives a decisive impact. While *Going Postal* is filled with a plurality of valid voices, silently defying the injustice done to them in different ways, this passage confirms their existence and speaks the words they individually could not. It could also be argued that several phrases in this passage belong to different voices. While the phrases "There was no safety. There was

no pride” could be attributed to voices of the overworked Mr Pony, the declaration “Everything became money, and money became everything” echoes Adora Dearheart’s statement that the directors will only make more money by selling the ruined company. Similarly the phrase “What can we say of the men who... killed us by numbers” is a dramatic tribute to the linesmen killed in their duty.

The first step of Dickens’ and Pratchett’s social commentary becomes clear in their treatment of victimised characters and their critical representation of the corrupted structures that exploit them. Both Dickens and Pratchett are found to employ aspects of a monologic tone to present characters associated with corrupted governing structures as one-dimensional and unfeeling. These characters become satiric caricatures who focus on their own self-interests and capitalist tendencies. In contrast to this, aspects of a polyphonic tone can be found in the sections of *Bleak House* and *Going Postal* that discuss victims of the corrupted institutions. This is mainly achieved by giving characters space to develop his or her own thoughts. While Esther is able to liberate the voiceless victims to the reader, she succeeds only in prompting the call for reform for the sake of their situation. Liberation from the damage Chancery has done is not achieved. This also suggests a very serious approach to Dickens’s method of dealing with social commentary.

The polyphonic aspects found in *Going Postal* allow for more freedom. Although one narrator is used, the distance between narrator and character shifts and von Lipwig is given the space to develop thoughts into action. Through this he is able to give a concrete voice to those exploited by the capitalist directors. The triumph here may also serve to inspire social reform, but contains more substance as justice is unconventionally achieved in the novel. The success of *Going Postal* is reflected on in later Discworld novels as well, as the clacks company flourishes under the proper management of Adora Dearheart, and is given concrete references in *Making Money* and *Raising Steam*. While serious issues dominate *Going Postal*, the collective thoughts at the end are light-hearted. While Dickens treats his subject matter with satirical seriousness, Pratchett prefers a comically satirical approach to his social commentary, allowing the reader to be entertained as well as educated on the theme of social injustice.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL CLASS AND RACE IN *BLEAK HOUSE* AND *SNUFF*

It was so much easier to blame it on Them. It was
bleakly depressing to think that They were Us. If it
was Them, then nothing was anyone's fault.

-Terry Pratchett⁹

The previous section explored the potential strength of individual voices to further a novel's social commentary. Continuing the aim of investigating social commentary in the novels of Dickens and Pratchett, this chapter will examine the creative use of different speech manners, tone and its relation to character, narrator and theme. Principally analysis will focus on *Bleak House* by Dickens and *Snuff* by Pratchett. Keeping Bakhtin's view of the relation between diverse speech types and theme into account, the focus here will fall on the tensions created by the heteroglossia of languages used by narrator and characters and its relation to social class as theme in *Bleak House* and race as theme in *Snuff*.

The methods Bakhtin identifies for recognising heteroglossia in the novel, which includes double-voiced discourse, parodic stylisation, hybrid constructions and the incorporation of different genres will aid in giving structure to this investigation. Bakhtin views the internal stratification of language as an "indispensable prerequisite" for the novel, claiming that the novel orchestrates all its themes through this social diversity of speech types and differing individual voices under specific conditions (Bakhtin, 1981:263). A combination of the numerous methods by which stratified language can enter the novel and the function for this stratification enhances the reading and interpreting experience of language and language analysis in the novel.

In the case of Dickens, we find an omniscient narrator's parodic representation of the novel's aristocracy, which serves to reveal how ineffectively this class governs and display them as inefficient and stagnant. This presentation is

⁹ Pratchett, 2009a:206.

focused on the Dedlock family and their associates. When it comes to the representation of the lower class and working class characters, a paradox can be found in the speech manner used by the character and the narrator's presentation of the character. Here the narrator favours a sympathetic tone, with the purpose of evoking sympathy from the reader. The author's intention of creating sympathy interferes with the supposed neutrality usually associated with an omniscient narrator.

In Pratchett's *Snuff* a similar and arguably familiar parodic representation is given of the Ankh-Morpork countryside magistrates, who act as representatives of Discworld's aristocracy. In stark contrast to this group stand progressive characters such as policeman Samuel Vimes and Miss Beetle. The discourse of these characters contain several speech manners which display differing opinions on goblins. The narrator furthers this stratification of opinions by incorporating writing styles from other genres such as journalism. Through this, sympathy for the abused goblin race of the countryside is given emphasis. I will argue that Pratchett indirectly builds on the arguments Dickens displays, criticising a way of thinking similar to that of nineteenth-century aristocracy, demonstrating sympathy for the marginalised society and inspiring social change with persuasive examples.

4.1 *Bleak House*: An ineffective aristocracy

Flint (1986) notes that Dickens often manipulates language when writing about Victorian society. He explains that in writing about his society, "Dickens was forced to select, to stress, to organise, to manipulate the medium of language" (Flint, 1986:28). Dickens had a passionate love for the creative use of language that is reflected in his creative name-making choices, his diverse methods of narration and the attention he pays to the use of English dialects in his novels. This creative use of language can in many cases be linked to the novel's themes and author intention.

The heteroglossia of languages found in *Bleak House* penetrate various levels. On the surface the presence of two narrators (on the one hand the narrator and on the other, Esther's first person narrator) forms the first level in which style and perspective is stratified in the novel. Esther's narrative is dominated by a vain, yet modest self-conscious discourse and tends to approach subjects more delicately than the omniscient narrator. The omniscient narrator, appearing superficially neutral can serve several functions. Here the primary functions are to clarify the contemporary popular opinion, or "common view" on certain subjects. It also aids in voicing the inner opinions of characters in an indirect manner. There are also some physical differences in word choice that distinguishes the discourses of Esther and the omniscient narrator. While Esther's narratives use terms such as "my pet" or "my darling" to refer to Ada Clare, the omniscient narrator refers to other characters by the various names they are given by others, or in some metaphorical cases, by the narrator itself. This includes referring to Mr Tulkinghorn as "Allegory" in Chapter 10, referring to Jo as "Toughy" in Chapter 22 and alternating between referring to one character as "Jobling" or "Mr Weevle" in Chapter 20, depending on the perspective being discussed.

The function of the two narrators is debatable. In the Bakhtinian context, one might suppose that the function is to deliver both a broad and a personal perspective of the narrated events separately so as to present another level on which the two perspectives (and languages) can stand in contrast. The utterances and discourse of the two narrators have as much in common as the aspects on which they differ.

As an example, see their respective presentations of the mad Miss Flite. The omniscient narrator first mentions Miss Flite during a description of Chancery proceedings, and describes her as:

[A] little mad old woman in a *squeezed bonnet* who is always in court, from its sitting to its rising...some say she really is, or was, a party to a suit, but no one knows for certain *because no one cares*. She carries some small *litter*

in a reticule which she calls her documents, principally consisting of paper matches and dry lavender [own italics] (Dickens,1999:8).

This passage presents what Bakhtin refers to as a “hybrid construction”, which belongs grammatically to one speaker (here, the narrator), but also presents two speech manners (Bakhtin, 1981:306). The first speech manner which is present is that of general opinion. It is general opinion that indicates the woman as “mad”, and general opinion that suggests that she might be associated with a suit. The second speech manner is that of the author which is refracted through the omniscient narrator. Here the phrase “because no one cares” cuts through the general opinion to reveal the general indifference to Miss Flite’s presence. Although the general opinion would not admit to this so bluntly, it is a truth about the general opinion hidden in the omniscient narrative. Also note the phrases “a squeezed bonnet” and the “litter in a reticule”.

When Esther encounters Miss Flite, she describes her as “a curious little old woman in *a squeezed bonnet* and carrying *a reticule*...curtsyng and smiling up to us with an air of great ceremony” [own italics] (Dickens, 1999:36). In contrast to the omniscient narrator, Esther is an outsider to the current opinion and does not immediately perceive Miss Flite as mad. She does note her friendliness and her attention to ceremonious curtsyng. The repeated phrases “a squeezed bonnet” and her carrying a reticule help the reader associate this character to the mad little woman of the introductory chapter. This also reveals the author’s hidden narrative inside Esther’s, which becomes more important later. Where the omniscient narrator serves to reflect general opinion, Esther’s narrative serves to provide a (sometimes sentimental) version of events as outsider to the general opinion, leaving her narrative to freshly encounter and interact with new speech manners, as the reader would.

Within these narrator’s worlds, there is a wealth of “language” styles and speech manners which in turn conflict with and complement each other in various ways. The many lawyers in the novel (including Tulkinghorn, Guppy, Kenge and Vholes) all incorporate the language of the law into their discourse. Some of them also belong (on various levels) to the speech manner of the London middle-class.

Characters like Jo, Jenny and the brickmakers incorporate a speech manner different in structure and substance to that of the middle class and the aristocracy.

The structure of the English class system saw significant change in the nineteenth century. The Reform Bill debates, which include the 1832 Reform Act saw an end to an aristocratic monopoly of Parliament by including the middle-class industries. While this was aimed at reconciling the different classes, including the working class which helped the middle-class secure the reform act, this ultimately added more conflict as a result (Sanders, 2011:235). The reason for this was that the middle class were now allowed political agency; yet the aristocratic class continued to be seen as the leading agency in political action and therefore continued to exclude other people from such events (van den Bossche, 2004:9). Dickens enjoys satirising the arrogant position of aristocrats in Parliament in *Bleak House*, focussing on the ineffective way in which they treat their positions of power.

The primary representatives of English aristocracy in *Bleak House* are the Dedlock family and those they associate with. Being described as a very old and prestigious family, rich and engaged in parliament, the Dedlocks are presented as well-regarded members of the English elite. The omniscient narrator, with its focus on the common view, refers to the “fashionable intelligence” which is filled with the speech manner of a gossiping style, and tracks the moves and gossip that follow Lady Dedlock. The term “fashionable intelligence” takes on a parodic epic tone as it appears to enhance the importance regarding fashion to the point of being politically valuable. Throughout the novel the “fashionable intelligence” serves to reveal the common opinions surrounding Lady Dedlock. The presentation often becomes circular in its use of information when the information at hand is limited.

This same dramatic, epic tone surrounds the descriptions of Sir Leicester Dedlock and his ancestry which results in a parodic stylisation of his representation, and of aristocracy in general. Upon his introduction in Chapter 2 we find a description by the omniscient narrator, veined with elements and opinions of Sir Leicester himself.

Sir Leicester Dedlock is only a baronet, *but there is no mightier baronet than he*. His family is as old as the hills, and *infinitely more respectable*. *He has a general opinion that the world might get on without hills but would be done up without Dedlocks. He would on the whole admit nature to be a good idea (a little low, perhaps, when not enclosed with a park- fence), but an idea dependent for its execution on your great county families*. He is a gentleman of strict conscience, disdainful of all littleness and meanness and ready on the shortest notice to die any death you may please to mention rather than give occasion for the least impeachment of his integrity. He is an honourable, obstinate, truthful, high- spirited, intensely prejudiced, perfectly unreasonable man [Own italics] (Dickens, 1999:13)

Grammatically this passage belongs to one speaker, the omniscient narrator. But within this passage, there are actually three voices: the narrator, Sir Leicester and the author. In the first sentence we find that the main clause belongs to the narrator as it informs the reader about Sir Leicester's status. The first subordinate clause (italicised) is the opinion of Sir Leicester in his own speech manner. He regards himself with great esteem and pride, as is revealed by the narrator at the end of the passage. Dramatic terms such as "mightier" and "infinitely respectable" set himself apart from others. An instance of what Bakhtin refers to as "quasi direct discourse" is noticeable in the third sentence. While the sentence grammatically belongs to the third person narrator (not having indications of direct speech), it conveys the voice of Sir Leicester and his opinion on the importance of old aristocratic county families. The subsequent effect is that the narrator distances itself from this view and Sir Leicester's opinion becomes objectified. As an orchestrator of the general opinion, the narrator does not have to reveal Sir Leicester's elitist tendencies, as the two different speech manners or "languages" allow Sir Leicester to reveal this himself. The dramatic selection of terms seen here is also not exclusive to Sir Leicester. He becomes a representative of the aristocratic discourse in the novel.

The contrast between the words used to finally round off Sir Leicester's character further indicates a presence of various speech manners. While different language styles cannot be singled out only by words, the double meaning the sentence

takes on results in it becoming double-voiced. The terms “honourable”, “truthful” and “high-spirited” might be the common opinion of Sir Leicester voiced by the narrator, but could also signify his opinion of himself. The contrasting terms “obstinate”, “intensely prejudiced” and finally “perfectly unreasonable” reveal authorial intention, parodically unmasking the character’s true snobbish nature. Throughout the novel, descriptions of Sir Leicester and the Dedlock family are filled with this contrasting, parodic discourse with emphasis on the absurdity of the importance that both the common opinion and Sir Leicester attribute to the aristocratic family, and particularly a comic presentation of their idleness.

Bakhtin emphasises the particular role heteroglossia plays in the comic novel, going as far as to say that the play on boundaries of speech types and belief systems are “one of the most fundamental aspects of comic style” (Bakhtin, 1981:308). In *Bleak House*, the conflicting belief systems of characters and the voices representing the common view at times serve to highlight authorial intent. When Mr Guppy visits Chesney Wold and tours the Dedlock mansion, one such a conflict is comically presented. The narrator notes, when regarding the many Dedlock ancestors, that ‘there is no end to the Dedlocks, whose family greatness seems to consist *in their never having done anything to distinguish themselves for seven hundred years*’ (Dickens C, 1999:90). This can be considered as a double-voiced statement. On the one hand the statement comments on the greatness of the Dedlock family, while another voice of authorial intent reveals the reason for their greatness to be nothing other than being a very old, well-known and well-regarded family.

This is given more emphasis in Chapter 28. In describing the many distant relations of the Dedlocks, who suppose themselves part of the elite based on association, the narrator remarks that their purpose in life seems to be only to overcome their status as distant relations of important people. “...as it is, they are almost all a little worsted by it, and *lounge in purposeless and listless paths*, and seem to be quite as much at a loss how to dispose of themselves as anybody else can be how to dispose of them” [own italics] (Dickens, 1999:388). Most of this passage concerns the general opinion of the party in question. However in the italicised phrase, authorial intent shines through the general opinion, blatantly

unmasking the idle existence of these people as useless, even though the general opinion might not phrase it in this manner. This makes this passage double-voiced in content as the narrator's voice becomes refracted by authorial intent.

This is also reflected in Sir Leicester's voice. Upon meeting the productive businessman, Mr Rouncewell, two contrasting belief systems are posed against each other. Unlike the aristocracy, Rouncewell has worked his way up in life and regards time as valuable. He remarks that his various undertakings place his workmen "in so many places that we are always on the flight" (Dickens, 1999:391). Sir Leicester's thoughts are then narrated as being "content enough that the ironmaster should feel that there is no hurry there; in that ancient house...where the sun-dial on the terrace has dumbly recorded for centuries that time which was as much the property of every Dedlock—while he lasted—as the house and lands" (Dickens, 1999:391). The contrast in the conceptualisation of time here places the Dedlocks (and the aristocracy they represent) in a comically lazy light. This is also true for other idle upper class characters, such as Harold Skimpole, who Crompton regards as a satiric portrayal of the writer Leigh Hunt (Crompton, 1958:297).

It must be noted that the satiric portrayal of Sir Leicester is aimed at his class and not his character. Manning argues that Sir Leicester Dedlock himself escapes satire by becoming a moral character (Manning, 1971:119). While he is perceived as snobbish and prejudiced, he has redeeming qualities (most notably his love and devotion to Lady Dedlock) that aids the reader in feeling sympathy for him, but not for the class he belongs to.

The author's dislike for the powerful but idle and ineffective elite in authoritative positions is a theme throughout the novel and satirised as much as the idle lawyers in Chancery. Dickens's creative use of language combines with his comic representation of parliamentary officials in the names given to them. Believed to be inspired by John Bunyan's choice of character names in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Ingham (2008) states that many of Dickens's character names indicate the character's nature. This can be seen in the emotionally cut off qualities found

in the Dedlocks, the sleaziness of the Smallweed family and the disreputable reputation of Mr Krook (Ingham, 2008:126-127). It can furthermore indicate something about the character's background. The gentleman that handles the Jarndyce and Jarndyce lawsuit is aptly named Mr Tangle, as he is tangled up in the mess that is the historic suit. Likewise, Mrs Rouncewell's grandson is named Watt, a reference to the unit of power, likely given to him by his impassioned engineering father. Ingham suggests that the name Jo All-alone is made as short as possible to indicate the character as "not quite human" (Ingham, 2008:127).

When it comes to parliamentary affairs, the names of its officials are as void of meaning as their representatives. The names like "Boodle" and "Noodle", which Ingham find synonymous with "idiot" illustrate the generic quality such figures have to the author, and the string of cloned names that follow to include all from "Koodle" to "Poodle" emphasises the interchangeability of these figures (Ingham, 2008:127). The over-exaggeration of how crucial it is to have all the aristocrats in office is satirised by the interchangeability of their names, indicating that none of these people are actually considered important. Sir Leicester dramatises this satiric presentation further with the dramatic tone. On several instances he considers that the country is "shipwrecked, lost, and gone to pieces" if one of the aristocratic representatives cannot be given a place in office (Dickens, 1999:162).

Commentary on the effects of the 1832 Reform Act also feature in Sir Leicester's discourse. His reaction to the idea of Watt (the grandson of a housekeeper) being invited into parliament sets off another dramatic discourse featuring how the world has gone to pieces. The idea of a non-aristocrat in parliament is, to Sir Leicester, an "anomaly, fraught with startling considerations" and an example of "the confusion into which the present age has fallen; of the obliteration of landmarks, the opening of floodgates, and the uprooting of distinctions" (Dickens, 1999:390). These utterances become double-voiced. On the surface it showcases the belief of Sir Leicester that this is a terrible event, but the dramatic terms used, synonymous with disaster, indicate the overly dramatic nature of this belief, and ultimately its insignificance. This is emphasised by the word order, referring to large scale events (obliterating landmarks and opening floodgates) and ending with the anticlimactic effect on distinctions, which seems

comparatively small in relation. The reader notices the dramatic tone as an indication that the view can to be considered a storm in a teacup.

4.2 *Bleak House*: Authoritative sympathy for the poor

On the other side of the spectrum we find a dramatically different presentation of the poor and working classes, shot through with the characteristic sympathy associated with Dickens. The passion Dickens had for language, although elaborate, was not always altogether that refined. Ingham notes that the linguistic content of Dickens's work is often flawed and agrees with other critics that consider him an "untaught genius" of linguistics (Ingham, 2008:126,129). While the dialects that can be found in Dickens are entertaining, she finds that the author's intention sometimes interferes with a realistic representation of some dialects. This is particularly notable in the presentation of the working class and poor class characters in *Bleak House*.

As the aristocratic speech manner is distinguished, the lower classes belong to a variety of different speech manners and languages. The mad inhabitants at Crook's establishment incorporate their own stylised use of law jargon, the brick makers demonstrate a rather speechless manner in talking little, and Jo and the Tom-all-alones use a stylised Cockney dialect¹⁰. The name Tom-all-alones also holds some significance. At the introduction of Tom-all-alones, the narrator reflects for a moment on the name. It suggests that Tom might have been a person left in solitude by a Chancery suit, but the origins are unclear. Nevertheless it is an apt name for the low class dwelling, as many of its inhabitants are seemingly indistinguishable, general "Toms", which have been isolated by society. Indeed names become insignificant, and characters are referred to by one distinguishable term that does not imply depth. When Mr Bucket goes in search of Jo, he cannot find anyone named Jo, but find people referred to by singular terms such as "Carrots", "Gallows", "Lanky" or "Brick". Jo

¹⁰ According to Ingham, the Cockney dialects found in Dickens are not realistic or representative of the time, but used as they were historically perceived as a "deviant" form of Standard English (Ingham, 2008:129).

turns out to be named “Toughy” here (Dickens, 1999:309). While this is another method for generalising the names of characters, it significantly differs from the narrator’s treatment of the –oodleites. Instead of focusing on a name that is interchangeable, the Tom-all-alones still have a thread of character significance as even their names signifies something about their character. In Jo’s case, that he is a tough survivor (for now).

Authorial intent is strongly present in the passages dealing with the poorer classes, especially the likes of Jo. The narrator’s description of the Tom-all-alones is dominated by images of pestilence and decay. This may be how the common view perceived these sections of England. The narrative here is aimed at showing how these sections operate, or in this case fails to operate (Tracy, 2008:386). The blame for this is taken back to the ineffective inhabitants of parliament:

As on the ruined human wretch vermin parasites appear, so these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence...fetching and carrying fever and sowing more evil in its every footprint than Lord Coodle, and Sir Thomas Doodle, and the Duke of Foodle, and all the fine gentlemen in office, down to Zoodle, shall set right in five hundred years—though born expressly to do it (Dickens, 1999:220)

The grotesque description of the Tom-all-alones as vermin and parasites stand in stark contrast to the –oodleites with their pretentious titles. The distance between these lowly beings and those in charge of caring for them is emphasised by the use of these titles, and the author’s intention appears through the ironic statement that they were born to be in charge of these entities. The message emerges, while all the aristocrats bicker about what position they hold in parliament, the city and its people go to waste.

Ingham notes a strange discrepancy in the discourse of the lower class characters. She explains that, while many of Dickens’s low class characters are given the “vulgarity” of Cockney speech, he often tries to dissociate the characters from this vulgarity when he tries to present the characters as morally admirable (Ingham, 2008:130). She notes that he often does this by replacing

substandard pronunciation with colloquial but short sentences. In *Bleak House*, the difference in speech type used by the lower classes can be considered symbolic in the way the author wish to present them. Mad old Miss Flite and Mr Krook at times disturb the characters of other social classes with their appearance, but their speech remains colloquial. Despite Mr Krook's illiteracy, he only showcases some of the syntactical non-standard forms, including "t'other" and "warn't", (Dickens, 1999: 54,56) which Ingham associates with the dialect Dickens chooses for the intellectually inferior (Ingham, 2008: 129).

Jo is a different, almost paradoxical character in this regard. He acts as representative of the poor classes as much as Sir Leicester represents the aristocracy, and as satirical as Sir Leicester is presented, so Jo is surrounded by sympathy. He is not created to be admired on a moral level, but meant to evoke only sympathy. He speaks with all the syntactic indicators to present him, as Ingham states, "socially and intellectually inferior" (Ingham, 2008:129). He uses double negatives that do not cancel each other out, repeatedly asserting that "he knows nothink". He does not understand complicated words, such as "inquest" which becomes "inkwhich" and "consecrated" which becomes "consequential" and uses some sentences which other characters, and readers, cannot immediately understand, such as the utterance: "But fen larks, you know. Stow hooking it!" (Dickens, 1999: 223-225). Through the sympathy Jo evokes, the reader is led to see Jo as an individual example of what the aristocratic ignorance has created.

The omniscient narrator objectively reflects on how someone like Jo perceives the world to evoke sympathy from the reader. In Chapter 16 this is done using quasi-direct discourse, being the possible thoughts of Jo, presented and organised by the omniscient narrator.

It must be very puzzling to see the good company going to the churches on Sundays, with their books in their hands, and to think (for perhaps Jo does think at odd times) what does it all mean, and if it means anything to anybody, how comes it that it means nothing to me? To be hustled, and jostled, and moved on; and really to feel that it would appear to be perfectly true that I have no business here, or there, or anywhere; and yet to be perplexed by

the consideration that I am here somehow, too, and everybody overlooked me until I became the creature that I am! (Dickens, 1999:221)

Here the possible inner discourse of Jo is presented in an organised manner by the narrator to make it understandable to the reader and to express the confusion with which illiterate persons must see the world. The phrase “for perhaps Jo does think at odd times” reflects the voice of the author. This phrase is strategically placed in the narrator’s description to affirm the humanity of Jo. Whereas the common view considers the Tom-all-alones as vermin and perhaps not as human, this phrase emphasises that Jo does think, even if it is true that he “knows nothink”. Through the miserable thoughts presented here, the author’s intention still shines through, as the sympathy it evokes towards Jo is the ultimate aim.

This expression, and arguably a call to action, reaches a climax in the description of Jo’s death in Chapter 47. When Jo dies, the narrator announces in a style as dramatic as a public declaration, meant to be heard by all:

The light is come upon the dark benighted way. Dead! Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, right reverends and wrong reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day (Dickens, 1999:643-644).

Indeed it is announced to be heard by all, and to remind the reader of the reality at hand. Welsh sees Jo as the figure for the minimal humanity that attaches to all people and which should inspire reform (Welsh, 2000:105).

This passage can be considered a parodic stylisation of a public declaration aimed at a figure who in real life would never receive such a declaration. In the final sentences, the author’s intention shines through. By emphasising that many like Jo die every day, the silence that follow serves to let the loss of life sink in with the hope that what is left behind is an idea of Jo as a person, and not the “creature” as he perceived himself to be. While Dickens openly criticises and satirises the elite as inefficient, selfish and lazy, his criticism is further emphasised by the authoritative sympathy detectable in the narratives on the poor classes. The combination of the slow, ignorant Dedlock family, his selfish,

interchangeable associates bickering about their status and the “fashionable intelligence” which focuses on the actions of one person creates a closed-off view from the aspects of society that need attention according to Dickens. A great contrast is presented when these selfish entities are placed against the dying people from the poor classes, who have been reduced to just one characterising aspect and are potentially not recognised as human. This contrast emphasises Dickens’s anger and the use of epic, satirising tones serve to emphasise his call for change in this regard.

As mentioned previously, while Dickens’s works seek to create awareness of situations and inspire action, Pratchett’s novels reveal not only problems, but also potential solutions for these problems. Flint suggests that the reason Dickens does not resolve many of the social problems he portrays in his novels is because he wants to inspire change. “Despite his belief that words could stimulate actions, or produce the change of heart from which such actions might spring, they must, for him, never function as a substitute for deeds” (Flint, 1986:26).

4.3 *Snuff*: Contrasting voices in the countryside

Pratchett displays a similar passion for the creative use of language and his novels contain a greater variety of and play on both speech manners and belief systems. Arguably his novels focus more on the comic use of language, but also highlight several important themes. Because of Discworld’s fantasy setting, the diversity of speech manners and views is almost endless as it includes dialects from different regions of the fantasy world, different professions, classes, races and even species. This makes the Discworld novels a vast site for a possible heteroglossia of languages and views in a constant state of interaction, conflict, creation and change.

The presence of heteroglossia is discernible in many of the Discworld novels predating *Snuff*, and makes an especially prominent appearance in *Men at Arms* when the city watch is forced to incorporate a diversity of races into its ranks. The result is a small space packed with different views and speech manners that at

times contrast or complement each other. Ankh-Morpork is arguably just a bigger space with the same diversity of languages and races, which Pratchett describes as a “melting pot of the world, which occasionally runs foul of lumps that don't melt” (Pratchett, 2013:182). In *Snuff*, the reader is transported to the rural countryside outside Ankh-Morpork, an area of Discworld not previously explored. This countryside very much resembles the English countryside, and could arguably be seen as Pratchett’s Discworld version of the Lincolnshire one encounters in *Bleak House*, with less rain and fog. Much like Dickens’s Lincolnshire, it also contains a great deal of old aristocratic families and humble townspeople. The difference is that it also contains goblins, which become one of the central objects of the novel for the discussion of race as a theme.

Over the novel presides an omniscient narrator, primarily following the central character, Samuel Vimes, Commander of the city watch. The narrator also serves a multifunctional role, presenting at times the common view and at times an objective and organised view of specific characters. The narrative also includes other literary genres to present information in a creative manner. The narrator’s choice of perspective influences how the reader perceives the information presented.

An interesting pattern that appears is that the main objects of focus in *Snuff* are never given direct representation. While the omniscient narrator takes on the focus of many characters (including Vimes, Vetinari, Angua and many secondary characters) the main characters related to the theme of class and race (the aristocrats, the goblins and their promoter, Miss Beedle) do not feature among these. Instead several opinions on these characters reach the reader through a filter of heteroglossia, refracting the true nature of these characters, and the possible authorial intention that stands behind the theme.

In the main storyline of the novel, Samuel Vimes is sent to the countryside for a holiday outside his jurisdiction, but soon discovers that a murder has been committed and sets out on solving the mystery. In the strange surroundings, Vimes’s language and views conflict with all those around him. Vimes’s discourse belong to many of Discworld’s speech types. Principally it is defined by Vimes’s

status as a policeman. His speech manner includes many references to the justice of the law, some forensic and analytic terms and a reference to himself as a “copper” instead of a policeman. He also speaks with an air that defines him as a citizen of the city Ankh-Morpork, which contrasts with the countryside residents. By marriage he is now a duke, a member of the elite in the country, but as we shall see, this only enhances the conflict of perspectives he is entangled in. His inner discourse remains humble and prefers to view the elite only in the colloquial sense, as a “bunch of nobs”. His status as a stranger presents an interesting filter through which the reader receives and judges information. All this presents him as a character more progressive than those around him. His speech manner and views are comparatively modern, and often clash with that of closed-minded characters in the countryside.

Upon his arrival in the unfamiliar setting, a conflict in perspectives immediately result in comic relief. The countryside is defined by traditional and rather rigid customs, which Vimes find uncomfortable and demeaning. He addresses the butler as “Mister Silver” instead of the customary “Silver” to the annoyance of the butler, almost gets a maid fired for forcing her to speak to him and is utterly bewildered by the explanation of a local game called Crockett, which in itself is a play on the word and game of Croquet.

His status as an outsider is emphasised when he tries to blend in with the villagers. When visiting the country pub, his views as a policeman is comically emphasised.

He saw the local men as they arrived in their working clothes and carrying *what most people would call agricultural implements, but which Vimes mentally noted as offensive weapons...* And then the men trooped in, and Vimes’s mind *clocked them for ready reference. Exhibit one* was an elderly man with a long white beard and, *good heavens*, a smock. *Did they really still wear those?* He had been carrying a big hook, not a nice weapon. Exhibit two carried a shovel, *which could be an axe or a club* if a man knew what he was doing [own italics] (Pratchett, 2011b:57-58).

This passage, starting out with only the omniscient narrator's voice, becomes double-voiced as it moves to include the police-like speech manner of Vimes. The function of the passage is to illustrate Vimes's thought process and how it differs from those around him. The narrator uses the term "most people" to establish the common view of the scene as local workmen coming to the pub. Vimes is immediately separated from this view as the narrator points out the difference between the common view (men carrying agricultural implements) and Vimes's view that these implements may be potential weapons. Vimes's speech manner enters the narrator's speech as the workmen are perceived as "exhibits" to be "clocked" according to "reference". These terms are objectifying and official, reminiscent of the terms that would be given to objects in a police investigation. Vimes's speech manner also goes on to describe to what degree the object each 'exhibit' is carrying could become a weapon. While this reveals Vimes's way of thinking, it also contains a comic element as it becomes a peculiar sketch of a policeman who cannot regard any situation without suspicion.

Finally, what could be considered as an instance of quasi-direct discourse is noted as Vimes reacts to one "exhibit" wearing a smock with the surprised "good heavens". This, and the question that follows, "did they really still wear those?" is Vimes's voice and illustrates his opinion. Through this Vimes's character is defined as an investigative, suspicious and somewhat modern thinker, being capable of careful inspection of a situation and commenting on things that is outdated in his mind. Ultimately this serves to show not only how Vimes's view stands out, but also how the narrator's speech is interjected with the thoughts and words of other characters. Unlike many of Dickens's characters, Vimes is also aware of his speech manner. This comes to light when he tries to hide his status as a policeman. When asking a man what he is doing, he reflects: "Realizing that he had spoken in copper, rather than in ordinary citizen, he added quickly, 'If you don't mind me asking?'" (Pratchett, 2011b:60). This illustrates that Vimes, like some of the other characters, is aware of some of the different speech types available to him, and even tries to utilise them at times. He later actively changes his direct speech manner again in order to appear sophisticated, reflecting on this as a "time to let the duke out" (Pratchett, 2011b:122).

Bakhtin states that the use of someone else's view of the world in a text can be utilised by the author to show the object of representation in a new light (Bakhtin, 1981:312). Vimes's view can be considered an example of this, as his views purposefully clash with the common view, setting it in a new light and leading the reader to reflect on the difference between the two presentations. This can be perceived in Vimes's encounter with the aristocrats of the countryside. Much like the aristocrats in *Bleak House*, the upper class citizens of the countryside are presented as prejudiced, idle and snobbish. However, instead of being given specific representatives, these aristocrats are presented only as caricatures. Vimes's first encounter with the elite of the countryside is with a former military commander named Lord Rust, who in description and discourse is presented with a superficial and rigid air.

Vimes had regarded the old man as now no more than a *titled idiot*, rendered helpless by age...Lord Rust was not a problem anymore. There were surely only a few more years to go before he would *rust in peace*. And somewhere in his *knobbly* heart Vimes still retained a slight admiration for the *cantankerous old butcher*, with his evergreen self-esteem and absolute readiness not to change his mind about anything at all. The old boy had reacted to the fact that Vimes, the hated policeman, was now a duke, and therefore a lot more *nobby* than he was, by simply assuming that this could not possibly be true, and therefore totally ignoring it [own italics] (Pratchett, 2011b:62)

It is important to note that Rust's introduction is given in the distanced perspective of Vimes and that the narrative is charged with Vimes's thoughts and speech manner. By giving the reader Vimes's perspective, the reader's view of the former commander is not neutral, but purposefully so. Because the two men are technically in the same class and are both commanders, a look at the "common view" might suggest them being equals. However Vimes disregards Rust's achievements and status and perceives him as a "titled idiot" and a "cantankerous old butcher". These are Vimes's direct thoughts and reveal that he does not see him and Rust to be remotely similar. He uses the informal British term "nobby" to refer to the class Rust belongs to, but distances himself from this class. He constantly perceives himself in light of the lower class he comes from,

as indicated by the use of the term “knobbly heart”, which points much more to imperfection and selflessness than the selfish presence that surrounds the other aristocrats. The comical play on “rest in peace” also furthers Lord Rust’s caricature and removes any seriousness the reader might try to find in this part of the passage.

When Rust speaks, he incorporates a stereotypically British and comic use of the word “what” in every sentence, to the likes of “Well done her, what! It’ll do the boy good and make a man of him, what!” (Pratchett, 2011b:63). This tendency is objectified by Vimes, who ponders on the function of this. The play on words is made all the more comical by the actual function of some of the mentioned “what” instances, and any sense of seriousness is destroyed when Vimes ends his sentence with “when”, only to have Rust respond with “What?”. A possible explanation for Rust’s use of the term is that he uses it as a politeness strategy. By placing this term and thus qualifying the sentence as a question, it encourages the other speaker to respond, moving the conversation forward. It thus becomes significant that Rust has the ability to switch off this politeness, and does so to good effect. Rust’s closing statement casually states that Vimes would not find anything to meddle in in the countryside. The narrator notes the absence of the punctuated ‘what’ and that the lack thereof is an emphasis, opening the path for seriousness to return. The fact that the term is missing here indicates that Rust is no longer inviting the other speaker to respond, and this makes the otherwise casual sentence forceful. The encounter enriches Vimes’s perspective, and makes him immediately suspicious. The punctuated ‘what’ later features again, this time incorporated into Vimes’s inner speech manner. Vimes reflects: “Lord Rust tells me there is nothing here for me. Oh dear, I’d better find out what it is, what?” (Pratchett, 2011b:65). Similar encounters and conflicting opinions can be found throughout the novel.

4.4 *Snuff*: The countryside magistrates

Another notable conflict in the novel serves to further the status of the aristocrats as caricatures and to satirise their superficial views. After the disappearance of

the local blacksmith, the local magistrates (which, in a style similar to nineteenth-century England, include only upper class citizens) gather to discuss the recent events and Vimes's appearance in the countryside. The passage is primarily narrated by the omniscient narrator and perhaps deliberately does not choose one of the magistrates as focaliser. Instead the passage utilises the views and speech manner of Colonel Charles Augustus Makepeace, a retired soldier and spouse of one of the magistrates. Like many of Pratchett's character names, Makepeace is significant and defines this character, as he goes to great lengths to make and keep the peace in his household. True to this characteristic, his view strongly disagrees with that of the magistrates, as their actions result in a disturbance of peace.

In the opening explanation of the scene by the omniscient narrator it is established that Makepeace is sitting in the same room as the meeting magistrates, but that he is not partaking in the meeting. It is stated that "he wasn't exactly listening...but nevertheless he couldn't help overhearing....However, among the words he *didn't* hear were...." (Pratchett, 2011b:123). The statement that he could not help overhearing soon becomes ironic, as the pages that follow contain his opinions on almost all the exchanges at the meeting. The italicised "didn't" implies the pseudo-objective opinion that while the narrator states that he did not hear, it is simply what Makepeace would like the other characters to perceive, as his inner thoughts reveal how well he heard what is being said. What follows is a series of direct statements by the magistrates, and Makepeace's views on this, which diversifies the passage, and in some cases make way for subtle interjections of authorial intent.

Makepeace identifies the magistrates as superficial, reflecting that "the gossip around the table was trite, artificial, like the conversations of raw recruits on the eve of their first battle" (Pratchett, 2011b:124-125). Akin to the police terms found in Vimes's speech manner, Makepeace's speech manner is dominated by the military terms that define his profession before retirement. The quasi-direct comparison of the magistrates to recruits who have not seen battle give the impression that the magistrates are unprepared and thus their conversation is void of real value. Makepeace also constantly tries to remember who the

magistrates are, reflecting that some “never seemed to do any work” while others hide out in the country for some scandalous reason. This is reminiscent of Dickens’s description of the nineteenth-century idle aristocrats.

Some individual magistrates receive a deeply ironic presentation. When one of the magistrates, seeking to incriminate Vimes, states that “it would seem that [Vimes] is prepared to ambush a decent working man”, Makepeace’s quasi-direct thoughts respond with “funny, first time I ever heard her call the smith anything other than a blasted nuisance” (Pratchett, 2011b:124). His commentary directly accentuates the hypocritical nature of the speaker’s statement.

A deeper conflict becomes noticeable when the magistrates continually deny that they might be in trouble for their actions:

...Miss Pickings said, ‘But we haven’t done anything wrong ... Have we?’
The colonel turned a page and smoothed it down with military exactitude. He thought, Well, you all condone smuggling when the right people are doing it because they’re chums, and when they aren’t they’re heavily fined. You apply one law for the poor and none for the rich, my dear, because *the poor are such a nuisance* [own italics] (Pratchett, 2011b:126).

This passage presents conflict on more than one level. Firstly the view of the magistrates is revealed in direct discourse. This is a narrow view that only considers actions problematic if it is against the law. The magistrates repeatedly affirm that “legally nothing wrong has happened here” and that what they are doing “was not illegal”. The colonel’s wife goes as far as to appeal to a common perspective, that “It doesn’t do any harm, everybody does it” (Pratchett, 2011b:126-127). Makepeace’s quasi-indirect discourse contrasts with this view as he reveals the inherent favouritism practised by the magistrates. He does not answer the question, but his answer can be deduced by his negative inward reaction and explanation.

The phrase “the poor are such a nuisance” also becomes double-voiced. Like the previous statement of the blacksmith as a “bloody nuisance”, this sentence can be considered the speech manner of the magistrates as the

conversation suggests this as the general view the magistrates take on. However when this is indirectly said by Makepeace, it becomes charged with Makepeace's view, which disapproves of the notion, making the phrase ironic. A fraction of authorial intent is also visible here, as the ironic phrase draws attention to its meaning, and the condemnation of the view in question is subtly realised.

Interestingly and significantly, Makepeace's view does not stay internal and indirect. The conversation of the magistrates anger Makepeace to the point where he reacts in direct speech, strengthening his view in contrast to that of the other magistrates. When they again affirm that what they did was not illegal, he responds directly:

'A bit of smuggling might be considered a peccadillo, but not when you're supposed to be upholding the law...I think things got a bit tangled: you see, you thought about things as being legal or illegal. Well, I'm just a soldier and never was a very good one, but it's my opinion you were so worried about legal and illegal that you never stopped to think about whether it was right or wrong.' (Pratchett, 2011b:127-128).

Arguably the move from indirect to direct discourse give more force to Makepeace's statements. The fact that he sees himself as "just a soldier" distances him from the magistrates, and from aristocracy. While most of the aristocrats are portrayed as shallow and pompous, he perceives himself in a humble view, the direct opposite of the prevailing view of aristocracy. This dissociation gives him credibility as an individual voice. Here his is also a voice of reason. He reveals that the magistrates were too preoccupied with what the law entails, that they (in Makepeace's opinion) were not upholding the law, much like the elite in *Bleak House* bicker about trivial issues that result in nothing being done. In the case of the magistrates, it is more serious as they agree to suspicious deals and actions that influence (and eliminate) lives.

The final statement here, that the magistrates disregard "what is right or wrong", affirms the suspicions that the magistrates are in trouble, and makes way for authorial intent to be revealed. In the conflict between the magistrates and

Makepeace, and between legal and illegal, the simplified terms “right” and “wrong” reveal both Makepeace’s side of the argument, but also potentially the author’s view that moral choices should exceed other contributing factors when people’s lives are involved. The lives in the case of the novel, are those of the goblin race, which can be considered a metaphor for many minority human races that have, and still do suffer from misrepresentation and oppression. Like Dickens’s epic declaration at Jo’s death, this can be considered Pratchett’s declaration against both the nineteenth-century mindset, and against people who hold powerful positions and abuse these positions.

4.5 *Snuff*: The goblin and the Opera House

To Pratchett, class is not a factor that determines power or obedience. James argues that, in Pratchett’s opinion, “all human beings are bad or weak, there is no need to demonise one particular group of people, or one class” (James, 2004:207). Indeed as we have seen, Pratchett occasionally expresses some sympathy towards the aristocrats, and not all are stereotypes and caricatures. Vimes, who grew up in the slums himself, points out that common people are no different from the high classes, stating that “they’re no different from the rich and powerful except they’ve got no money or power” (Pratchett, 1997:386-367).

Pratchett’s full sympathy does however, lie with the helpless and those who have no means or ability to help themselves (James, 2004:207). The goblins fall in this category. While the poor classes of *Bleak House* are described with symbols such as vermin parasites, the goblins in *Snuff* are seen as actual vermin, or as pests. They thieve and steal and stink, are repeatedly referred to as a “nuisance”, but are generally not hostile towards humans. They are a simple race, living off the land and in caves and abiding to their religion of Unggue.

The presentation of goblins in *Snuff* is done strategically. The reader learns about the nature of goblins neutrally at first, and this common view is then coloured by the perspectives of various characters. The narrator never directly enters the minds of the goblins, and the reader experiences them from an outside

perspective, as would happen in reality. Unlike the noticeable sympathetic view of the poor class in *Bleak House*, the goblins are not primarily created to prompt sympathy from readers, but rather to provoke thought about their situation, as they provoke thought in the characters who encounter them. The elements of heteroglossia found here serve to organise a variety of views on the goblins, with the social commentary on the treatment of race that shine through these views.

The novel begins with the common view of goblins. Incorporating other genres of writing, this view is presented in a textbook-like style of writing, being an extract from a book on goblins. It gives a formal overview of the goblin religion of Unggue, some of the goblin customs and explains the tensions between goblins and people as being caused by humans plundering their caves. The reader of the extract here is Lord Vetinari, who then summarises the social status of the goblin as “Vermin....an entire race reduced to vermin!” (Pratchett, 2011b:10). This introduction serves only to educate the reader, as does Vimes’s later reflection that his school education described goblins as “badly made mortals” (Pratchett, 2011b:147).

Three primary perspectives on goblins are significant after this introduction. Bakhtin describes true seriousness as the destruction of false seriousness, and this is an aspect found in almost all the encounters the reader has with goblins (Bakhtin, 1984b:312). First is the perspective of Vimes’s encounters with them. His first meeting with a goblin displays a mixture of comedy and seriousness. The first thing Vimes notes about the goblin is his bad odour, described not so much as a stink, but a sensation (Pratchett, 2011b:119). This comical statement serves to show that there is not much seriousness in this encounter and removes the false seriousness regarding the appearance of the goblin. This is furthered by the goblin’s comical cries in broken English for “Just ice” instead of justice, and calling Vimes “Mister po-leess-maan”. This comic play on language further serves to remove the “false” seriousness. Compared to the description of the Tom-all-alones in *Bleak House*, which aims to elicit pity from the readers, the first encounter the reader of *Snuff* has with the goblin race is not meant to be immediately serious.

The true seriousness emerges not from the goblin's presence, but rather from the reason behind its presence. This becomes apparent when Vimes takes a good look at the goblin and realises it is injured and does not resist when trying to be thrown out. Conflicting with the local policeman's statements that "it's a stinking goblin!" and "they can give you horrible diseases!" Vimes reacts with "surely a policeman wonders what has happened for a wretched thing like this to walk right up to the law and risk being maimed...*again*" (Pratchett, 2011b:120). The function of this sentence is to bring clarity and rationality to the situation. While the other policeman discriminates against the goblin based on the common view he speaks from, Vimes looks past the surface to reveal the desperation of the goblin. While the term "wretched thing" can be considered an acknowledgement of the common view of goblins, in the context of this sentence, it changes its meaning to refer to the pitiful state the goblin is in, rather than the view of the goblin as worthless.

True seriousness continues to emerge as Vimes agrees to help the goblin, and discover the murder of a goblin girl. The manners of the goblins seem feeble to Vimes, and he comes to describe one goblin as "a sigh on legs" (Pratchett, 2011b:151). This statement is more powerful than the statement of the goblins as "vermin" or "wretched" as the sensory use of the term "sigh" evokes sympathy without implying a derogatory tone. The function of Vimes's view is to introduce the reader, in an indirect manner, to the fact that goblins agree to the common view that they are worthless. Here is where authorial intent starts to shine through.

Vimes told himself that they could not help it, that some incompetent god had found a lot of bits left over, and decided that the world needed a creature that looked like a cross between a wolf and an ape...They looked like the bad guys and...they sounded like them, too. And it appeared that, not content with all this, the laughing god had apparently given them that worst of gifts, self-knowledge, leaving them so certain that they were irrevocably walking rubbish (Pratchett, 2011b:158).

This passage not only illustrates the predicament behind the goblins' apparent view of themselves, but prompts the reader to think about their situation. By

focusing only on what Jo thinks about, Dickens' presentation evokes sympathy by presenting his simplicity of thought, while also pointing a finger at the aristocracy responsible for people like Jo. Vimes broadens this to a metaphysical level. The phrase "they could not help it" suggests that their fate seems decided by their appearance and manner, and Vimes points the finger of blame to a celestial source for this. However unlike the narrator in *Bleak House*, who contemplates Jo's self-awareness, Vimes states outright that the goblins have self-knowledge, and that this is their curse. Pratchett's anger at this situation comes through in the tone of the passage, which seems to centre on the metaphysical reason behind the goblins situation that led to how they perceive themselves and the world.

An extension of this can also be found in the second important view of goblins, presented by Sergeant Angua in Ankh-Morpork. In this passage, Sergeant Angua, a werewolf and member of the city watch, encounters a goblin in the city who is trying to distance himself from the common view of goblins through work. As Angua is not completely human, she identifies with the distance the goblin experiences from other people. The goblin in question has completely rejected the ways of other goblins. He wears overalls, he does not observe the religion of Unggue and uses the name Billy Slick instead of a traditional goblin name. His speech manner is also not the broken English the countryside goblins use, but instead shows signs of the Cockney accent noted in the lower classes of *Bleak House*. This can be seen in his use of double negatives, for example: "I ain't done nothing wrong" as well as double affirmatives in 'I'm working my way up, I am' (Pratchett, 2011b:229).

Through the direct speech of Billy it is evident that he does not like his race. He dismisses Unggue as "fairy stories" and says he does not use his goblin name, because "Who's going to take you seriously with a name like that? This is modern times, right?" The acknowledgement that traditional names are undervalued in modern times point towards the progress he thinks he is making by working his way up. Angua, who has found pride in her race, asks him if he is not proud of his goblin name, to which he replies, "Why the fruckle should *anyone* be *proud* of being a *goblin*?" (Pratchett, 2011b:231). A clash of views is notable here and the

statement seems to speak from the common view of goblins. The emphasis on the generalised term “anyone” and “goblin” here add to the irony of the statement as it is coming from a goblin. Angua reflects: “...and so one at a time we all become human – human werewolves, human dwarfs, human trolls...the melting pot melts in one direction only, and so we make progress” (Pratchett, 2011b:230-231). This reflection again becomes double-voiced, as it displays the serious inner thoughts of the character Angua, fused with the voice of the author.

The first part of the passage uses the terms “human werewolves, human dwarfs, human trolls” and reflects Angua’s views. She is also a werewolf adapting in a city of humans and as such she appears more human. The second part of the passage recalls Pratchett’s reference to Ankh-Morpork as a melting pot, signifying the voice of the author through the text. This statement is furthered here by adding that progress dictates the pot melting in one direction. When this statement is fused with Angua’s view, this statement is seen in a negative light, and reveals the criticism of associating progress with the loss of one’s heritage or culture. This presents a deeper level of expression of social criticism than is evident in the character thoughts of the *Bleak House* characters, possibly because the characters here seem to be more self-aware. While the presentation of characters like Miss Flite, Mr Krook and Jo are not flat, the criticism they portray does not touch their inner thoughts. By this absence, the social criticism voiced by Dickens seems more authoritative as the voice of the narrator is clear to distinguish. Pratchett’s criticism, on the other hand, becomes internally persuasive as the thoughts and experiences of the characters prompt the reader to also reflect in the same manner and possibly on similar subjects.

This is the point at which Pratchett’s method of incorporating social commentary differs from that of Dickens. While Dickens seeks to inspire change with the social criticism in his novels, Pratchett moves to illustrate how the issues at hand can be approached, illustrating not just inspiration to change, but a metaphorical example thereof. In *Snuff*, this is done through the view of Miss Beedle. Many of the characters whose views drive the text have something in common with the author. Like Gaiman (2014) says about Pratchett, Vimes too is driven in his work by anger at injustice, and like Pratchett, Miss Beedle in the novel is also an author.

Although she is considered upper class, and referred to as “nobby” by Vimes, she is infinitely more practical, and displays none of the characteristics the other aristocrats in the novel do. Her speech manner and views both clash with and complement other voices in the text.

On a comedic level her attempts at associating with Vimes by using police terms create an entertaining conflict. When she asks if he has the criminals “bang to rights” or whether the criminals have a “*modus operandi*”, Vimes reflects that “it always embarrassed [him] when civilians tried to speak to him in what they thought was ‘policeman’” (Pratchett, 2011b:200). This serves not only to emphasise the presence of various speech manners and opinions in the novel, but that the characters are at times aware of their different speech manners and languages. In a sense it is also a parodic stylisation of the type of language one might find in detective novels, and the narrator accentuates this by mentioning that Miss Beedle seems ready to “turn out a magnifying glass and a bloodhound” (Pratchett, 2011b:200).

Apart from being a children’s book author, Miss Beedle teaches young goblins to read and write and play music. Her views stand in direct contrast to the common view as she perceives goblins to be complex, and value their language and their culture. Because of this, her speech is a parodic stylisation of the common view on goblins. This is evident when she explains to Vimes why she teaches to goblins. “They’re being slaughtered. It’s *not called that*, of course, but slaughter is how it ends, because they’re *just dumb nuisances*, you see” [own italics] (Pratchett, 2011b:163). The phrase ‘just dumb nuisances’ is one that would sit comfortably in the common view of goblins, and sounds like a phrase that could be uttered by one of the aristocratic magistrates. However here it is used in a parodic sense as this is not Miss Beedle’s views. She is also aware of the language that groups like the magistrates would use, as she admits that they would not call the death of goblins “slaughter”.

Her speech manner also complements the statements made by Angua. When Vimes asks if she is teaching the goblins to be better citizens, he is met with a slap in the face and the statement: “No, I’m not teaching them to be *fake humans*,

I'm teaching them how to be goblins, clever goblins....so that they may be able to speak to people like you, who think goblins are dumb" [own italics] (Pratchett, 2011b:162). This directly correlates to Angua's statement about everyone becoming a human version of what they really are. Miss Beedle chooses the blunter term than "human goblin", and admits that "fake humans" are not the objective. Again, authorial intent shines through the character's words, as the solution of cultivating communication to combat ignorance has the potential to let the reader take it beyond the metaphor of goblins and into the real world. The message that comes from this is not only to sympathise with those who are not able to help themselves, but to take action and help, without prejudice or too much cultural interference.

This is also not just mentioned, but demonstrated in the unexpected talent of one of the goblin girls called Tears of the mushroom. Where Billy Slick has taken the view that his goblin name is embarrassing, Tears of the mushroom has been taught to cherish and be proud of her goblin name, even if it sounds strange in English. The goblin girl's speech manner itself is akin to second or possibly third language English speakers, using short words and terms. This also has some comedic value, as she misinterprets words in her effort to learn them. When Miss Beedle remarks that Tears of the mushroom is a wonderful student, she responds saying "Wonderful is good...Gentle is good, the mushroom is good. Tears are soft. I am Tears of the Mushroom, this much is now said" (Pratchett, 2011b:161). It is evident here that her name is associated with good things, and that she does not disregard it at Billy Slick does.

The goblin girl has a talent for playing the harp, and when her playing interrupts Vimes and Miss Beetle's conversation, the effect is impressive.

Then, falling across his world like a rainbow of sound, came music, drifting out of the open cottage window. *His Grace the Duke of Ankh, Commander Sir Samuel Vimes*, was not a man who made a point of frequenting performances of classical music... But some of it seeped through and it was enough for him to know that what he was hearing was the real, *highbrow stuff*. you couldn't hum it, and *at no point did anybody shout 'Whoops! Have a banana!'* It was the pure quill of music, a sound that came close to making

you want to fall on your knees and promise to be a better person [own italics]
(Pratchett, 2011b:201).

Here, again there are three voices at work. On the first level there is the narrator, relating Vimes's thoughts. The use of Vimes's title becomes significant here as it purposefully presents him as the supposed aristocrat he is, that is being influenced by the music he hears. Vimes's voice dictates the nature of the music with the colloquial terming of it as "highbrow stuff". The phrase "at no point did anybody shout 'Whoops! Have a banana'", possibly indicates the type of music Vimes is used to, and serves to keep the light-hearted tone of the text. However the final sentence, presented in Vimes's view, is infused with authorial intent. The image of a policeman driven to the point of wanting to promise to be a better person is a powerful one, and persuasively invites the reader not to feel sympathy for the goblin playing the music, but to appreciate the talent at work. Indeed most passages including Tears of the mushroom is not aimed at creating sympathy, but rather admiration for what she is capable of.

The next significant time the reader encounters Tears of the mushroom involves another strategic use of incorporated genres, in this case, a newspaper article, or rather a review. Vimes and his wife plan to make a case for goblins to obtain human rights, and decide the best way to do this is to show the world what they can do. They invite elite members from all over Discworld to an exclusive secret event at the Ankh-Morpork Opera House. The narrator's description of the event is reminiscent of the "fashionable intelligence" that surrounds Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House*. There is speculation about what would happen at the event, and it is said that "Unless you had a gold-edged invitation to the Opera House that evening it was no occasion to be fashionably late, in case you were left fashionably standing fashionable at the back, craning unfashionably to see over the heads of other people" (Pratchett, 2011b:352-354). The repetition of the word "fashionably" and "fashionable" becomes parodic here as the contextual meaning changes from a well-known expression to adopt a mocking tone. To an extent it can be said that the narrator here mockingly betrays those who see themselves as fashionable, much like those Dickens categorises under the "fashionable intelligence" busy themselves with trivial issues. It is eventually revealed that the

event that takes place is in fact Tears of the Mushroom playing a song of her own composition. The actual effect of her music is not presented by the narrator, but found later in a review in the local newspaper:

Whence came it, that ethereal music, from what hidden grot or secret cell? From what dark cave? From what window into paradise? We watched the tiny figure under the spotlight and the music poured over us, sometimes soothing, sometimes blessing, sometimes *accusing*. Every one of us confronting ghosts, demons and old memories. The recital by Tears of the Mushroom, a young lady *of the goblin persuasion*, took but half an hour or, perhaps, it took a lifetime, and then it was over, to a silence which spread and grew and expanded until at last it exploded. Every single patron standing and clapping their hands raw, tears running down our faces. We had been taken somewhere and brought back and we were different people, longing for another journey into paradise, *no matter what hell we had to atone for on the way* [own italics] (Pratchett, 2011b:367).

The use of the incorporated genre of the review is a heteroglossic strategy that allows the reader to experience not only the author's intention through a filter of another's language, but also to understand what the audience of the concert experienced without the direct interference of the narrator. The review's language also clashes with the common view as it describes Tears of the Mushroom as a "lady of a goblin persuasion", a far cry from the descriptions of "stinking goblins" and "nuisances" that have dominated the narrative up to this point. The review is filled with passionate words, and ends with a phrase that complements the earlier thought of Vimes, that the music seems to inspire people to atone and be a better person. Here again we do not see language that aims to evoke sympathy, but rather persuasive language to convince the reader of the goblin girl's abilities. The use of the incorporated textbook style and the article here frames the narrative on goblins, beginning with the flawed common view, and ending with the realisation that at least an aspect of this common view has been changed.

Even before this review appears this change can be noticed in both the goblins and other characters. After the goblins are rescued from their fate as slaves, Vimes discovers their knack for working with clacks towers and gives them the

opportunity to work in the towers for real wages. Where the broken speech manner of the goblins previously confirmed the view that they are inferior, and where the likes of Billy Slick would be embarrassed to be a goblin, the goblin Stinky here proceeds to refer to himself as “useful”, “trustworthy” and “helpful”, indicating that a sense of confidence is slowly making its way into the mindset of the goblins. Vimes also notices the other members of the city watch starting to refer to the goblins as “people”, remarking with surprise that one watchman introduces a goblin girl as a young lady without placing inverted commas around the term “lady”. The change in perception is given concrete form with the sending of the Opera House invitations, when the narrator remarks that “silently, driven by messages sleeting across the land...the world began to change its mind” (Pratchett, 2011b:350). Here authorial intent comes through, as the actions of Vimes and his wife translate into results and an illustration of helping a race in need is realised.

4.6 Authoritative Dickens and internally persuasive Pratchett

In discussing Bakhtin’s work, Robinson distinguishes between the “authoritative” and “internally persuasive” ways in which utterances are presented. He explains that, while the first seeks to project itself in a compelling, reified manner, the second is coextensive with self-actualisation through dialogue (Robinson, 2011). This can be considered a decent description of the difference between the social commentary on social class and race that we find in Dickens and Pratchett. Dickens prefers to be forceful in his commentary and criticism. Through the layers of heteroglotic elements in *Bleak House*, the author’s intention of criticising aristocracy and seeking to bring sympathetic attention to the poorer classes may be refracted, but is still very prominent. This is evident in the paradoxical, sympathetic tone that interferes with the omniscient narrator when discussing the Tom-all-alones, and even more so with the epic declaration at Jo’s death.

In Pratchett’s case, authorial intentions are refracted through a broader set of perspectives and character speech manners. Through the thoughts and views of characters, the focus on aiding the helpless while criticising those in power is

realised, but the authorial voice is harder to recognise. There is no epic declaration, but rather a display much like a persuasive argument with examples, whereas Dickens prefer exhibits. In the Discworld novel *Raising Steam* that directly follows *Snuff*, the upliftment of goblins is noted as they are found in greater numbers in the city working for the clacks company, and the suggestion is even made that they develop their own underground railway system.

Through the creative methods of stratifying language, Dickens and Pratchett manage to create a double-voiced presentation of issues concerning class and race. The novels achieve a social diversity of speech types akin to Bakhtin's definition of heteroglossia and the various characters present "differing individual voices" (Bakhtin, 1981:263). It must be noted that the characters are individual in their speech manners, but not independent to the full extent of polyphonic characters. The different speech manners here still enforce and reveal the intentions of the respective authors, but do so through the filter of personalised discourse. This in itself is an aspect of heteroglossia even if it is not a comprehensive example.

The impact of the social commentary Dickens and Pratchett investigate in *Bleak House* and *Snuff* is given additional effect through the different perspectives and opinions the novels present. The parodic representation of an idle aristocracy in *Bleak House* takes on a taste of realism as Dickens uses the discourse of the aristocracy against them. In turn Dickens utilises the discourse of the lower classes to further the moral sympathy he seeks to instil in the reader. The narrative is dominated by "authoritative" intentions that interfere with the omniscient narrator to emphasise the commentary taking place. This is arguably Dickens's aim as it contributes to the overall message of morality that he preaches through his novels.

Aspects of heteroglossia are more prominent in Pratchett's *Snuff* as the different perspectives and opinions do not all point toward a moral obligation but rather investigates race as a concept from several angles. The author's intentions to promote inclusivity still shines through these opinions, but appear more subtle and persuasive as they come to the reader through the perspectives of the

different characters. Pratchett arguably also indirectly responds to Dickens's criticism of aristocracy as the magistrates in *Snuff* bear both a physical and a mental resemblance to the aristocrats in Dickens. While not directly referencing Dickens's criticism, Pratchett indirectly builds on this as it follows a similar line of expanding arguments and expands on this. Pratchett brings the argument against ineffective elites to a new time frame. This gives it new significance as the argument not only favours the poor, but favours all races that suffer abuse in this regard. This extension can be considered a subtle indication that aspects of the interactive, ever-changing dialogue Bakhtin refers to on class and race takes place.

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

The world changes materially. Science makes advances in technology and understanding. But the world of humanity doesn't change. Morally, the world is both better and worse than it was.

- Pierre Schaeffer¹¹

While discussing the written word as ideological sign, Bakhtin places great power in the spoken and written word, going as far as to say that it “has the capacity to register all the transitory, delicate, momentary phases of social change” (Volinshinov, 1973:19). His argument claims that language has the ability to construct various “selves” in separate social groups and that the linguistic commerce between these groups is formative of social reality, producing the potential for social change (Bernard-Donals, 1994:87). Akin to Michel Foucault's perception of discourse, but without the governing structure as focus, Bakhtin's argument continues by building on a critical view of Marxism, even though his exploration remains incomplete. The notion of social change being evident in the written word is a valid point worthy of exploration on its own.

One of the more common areas of research discussing social change focuses on a time of revolution and often around technological revolutions. The research done on the social consequences and changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution alone are impressive. Its studies range from Henry Mayhew's investigation into the poor class of London (Mayhew, 1861) to the economic factors and wage considerations which sent ripples into the economic future more than 200 years later (Clark, 2007). Dickens' commentary on the Industrial Revolution is also a regular topic of investigation as he inspected and criticised the social consequences of technological advance, found (among other places) in *Oliver Twist* (originally published 1838), *Hard Times* and to an extent in *Dombey and Son* (originally published 1848).

¹¹ Schaeffer quoted in Hodgkinson, 1986.

If Bakhtin's statement is linked to the representation of the societal aspects surrounding a technological revolution in novels, it can be suggested that the discourse of novels has the potential to catch one of these "momentary phases" in which social change is examined. This chapter will follow the hypothesis suggesting that the social commentary presented by both Pratchett and Dickens, relating to the effects of technological advances can be recognised in the conflicting discourse of voices and tones found in their respective texts. Bakhtin's relation between diverse speech types, theme and elements of a dialogised heteroglossia will aid this analysis. This will focus on the tensions created by the speech of both characters and narrators. In *Hard Times*, this is achieved by separating the speech manners of the characters into two categories. One speech manner chooses rationality and "fact" as its foundation and is filled with mechanical, emotionless words and phrases to represent those who strive to keep ahead of technological advances. The other focuses on incorporating terms associated with a distinctly "human" factor that fosters compassion and human relationships. In a similar manner, Pratchett deliberately incorporates terms and phrases that associates some characters with capitalism, and a mechanical society. Contrasting with these are characters whose discourse includes an emotive language. The result is a variety of contrasting voices that emerge portraying the change in society's perception of human relationships during technological development. Furthermore it reveals the conflict that emerges from this and Dickens's and Pratchett's views in this regard. While commenting on the strain and restrictions a mechanical society places on human relationships, and emphasising the importance of not losing fancy and compassion toward fellow human beings, the step in social change, and its scrutiny emerges from this conflict.

It can also be argued that this conflict transcends the interactions within the texts, to appear as an interaction between the themes of the two novels. While author intention may slip away at this level, Dickens contemplates the possible futures that industrial advances can bring forth in the fates of his characters. Some of these futures reflect the conditions the reader encounters in *Going Postal*. In a similar manner, Pratchett reflects back on the technology of the Industrial

Revolution in his search for technological advances that work in favour of human relationships and proceed with honest aims.

5.1 Technological revolutions

Before we discuss commentary on different technological revolutions, the concept “technological revolution” needs to be investigated. A broad definition for the term presents it as a “dramatic change brought about relatively quickly by the introduction of new technology” (Bostrom, 2007:129). This definition is applicable to early examples of invention and technological change, such as the financial-agricultural revolution that spans from 1600 to 1740 or the Industrial Revolution spanning roughly from 1780 to 1840 (Šmihula, 2010:62). Since the introduction of micro-processing computers and the internet, this definition has expanded to include interrelated radical breakthroughs as different modes of technology start to influence each other (Perez, 2009:8). Although technology has always been in a state of change and development, two basic features separate a random collection of technology systems from a technological revolution. First, a strong sense of interconnectedness and independence should be visible in the participating technology systems and their markets. Second, the movement in technology should gain the capacity to transform the rest of the economy and eventually society (Perez, 2009:9).

During the Industrial Revolution, for example, the invention of the steam engine sparked the development of many other sectors including transportation, shipbuilding and the construction of factories (O'Brien, 2010:32). The advances made in these sectors are interconnected as they presented benefits to each other. Steam power made it possible for large factories to be built, which aided in the shaping of metals and the mass production of ships and steam trains which in turn transformed transportation. These advances also shaped the British economy and changed society in many ways.

A technological revolution also generally has a very positive effect on a country's economy, and studies such as Šmihula's (2010) argue that economies are dependent on technological revolutions to maintain growth and financial stability.

Great Britain came to be seen as the first national economy to complete its transition to an industrial economy (O'Brien, 2010:21). This did not come without its own problems, as many writers like Dickens, Mayhew and Bakhtin explore to an extent. As Dickens and Mayhew focused on the increase in the poor classes and the pollution caused by factories, Bakhtin's socio-political criticism of Marxism can be regarded as an extension of this. Among the great spectrum of new problems that arose, only a few are discussed here.

Hard Times draws particular attention to the Industrial Revolution by its famous setting. Unlike most of Dickens's novels, *Hard Times* is set in the fictional place known as Coketown. Many believe Coketown to be the fictional equivalent of Preston as Dickens spent some time there before writing this novel and the Union strike presented in *Hard Times* resembles the Preston Strike and lockout of 1853 (Welsh, 2000:148). Welsh also argues that the novel's focus is on the town, saying that "*Hard Times* is about the appearance – in both senses of the word – of the nineteenth-century industrial city" (Welsh, 2000:166-67). Raj names the novel a Dickensian Dystopia as it portrays the ugly possible causes of industrialisation (Raj, 2012:95). Coketown here becomes the personification of what technological advances have brought to rural England.

The descriptions of Coketown purposefully paint a picture of an unwholesome and dreary setting. Consisting mostly of tall chimneys and machinery, the town is described in colours of "unnatural red and black tile like the painted face of a savage" with a black canal that runs "purple with ill-smelling dye" (Dickens, 2012a:20). Even the houses meant to distinguish various religious organisations of the town are presented as pious warehouses of red brick and the very machinery that should be the triumph of such a town brings only misery to mind (Dickens, 2012a:21). The machines take on the metaphor of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness, monotonously moving up and down. Even the soot in the air leaves nothing but "masses of darkness" where Coketown should be (Dickens, 2012a:95) and brings to mind the infamous fog of *Bleak House* as it creeps along and engulfs all in a blur beyond recognition.

Coketown's inhabitants are equally dismal creatures, described by Slackbridge as "down-trodden operatives of Coketown...the slaves of an iron-handed and a grinding despotism" (Dickens, 2012a:119). Yet in the eye of Thomas Gradgrind, the town is a "triumph of fact" (Dickens, 2012a:20). It is this reduction of work and people that Dickens fears and this fear becomes one of the central themes of this novel. In a letter to Charles Knight, Dickens admits that his satire here is aimed at "those who see figures and averages and nothing else" (Camden-Hotten, 2001:68). A similar fearful reaction can be detected in Pratchett's work as he comments on the consequences of another technological revolution noted in his time.

Among other developments, Pratchett experienced the information and telecommunication revolution that took place roughly between the years 1985 and 2000. Like the Industrial Revolution, this saw an advance in the sectors of telecommunications and cybernetics and most famously the introduction of the internet (Šmihula, 2010:62). Again, this ambitious progress interconnected with many other sectors, most notably microprocessors that brought calculators, computer games and facilitated the digitalisation of military controls (Perez, 2009:8). Just as the Industrial Revolution transformed society, computers and the internet transformed the way society communicate and thus view relationships.

The internet brought about innovative new ways to communicate and share knowledge. The rise of social networks gives people the opportunity to find and communicate with others instantly without requiring any physical contact. A world of information on any subject is constantly expanding as any member of the public can share information on the internet. As beneficial as this is to society, the vastness the internet brings opens doors to reveal new problems. Nicolas Carr accurately describes one of these problems by stating that "what we're experiencing is a reversal of the early trajectory of civilisation: we are evolving from being cultivators of personal knowledge to being hunters and gatherers in the electronic data forest" (Carr, 2010:138). Along with constantly striving for knowledge, a fear of dependency on technology creeps in as well. As people no longer need physical interaction to communicate, concerns arise over the effects

artificial forms of communicating have on affection. Minds become consumed by a medium, and the real world recedes as people dig into electronic devices (Carr, 2010:118).

A greater fear that presents itself is how powerful businesses use new technology to exploit citizens. As a technological revolution leads to economic growth, it is natural that economists would want to make the most of such growth even if it affects citizens negatively. Madrick (2011) gives an accurate account of how technological advances translate into economic greed and track its progress from 1970 to the economic crisis of 2008 (Madrick, 2011).¹² Madrick points out that the advances in technology and the coming of internet businesses brought about what is referred to as a “New Economy”, thought to lead to a rise in capital and change the way business is done with a general perception of prosperity (Madrick, 2011:323). However the eagerness to take part in high-technology interests had its consequences. Businesses chased the “New Economy” by investing in new technology ideas, which saw a drastic advance in the development of new technologies. However it tended to result in bad investments and misplaced capital in what Madrick terms “absurdist dreams” for more profit, resulting in greater economic loss than gain (Madrick, 2011:398). Madrick even points out that such investments could rather have furthered greater causes such as energy preservation or improving public infrastructure, but that the greed of businessmen ultimately failed these causes (Madrick, 2011:398). A technological revolution comes at a price, and the fear of consumer exploitation is an example of this. This fear, coupled with the deterioration in communication that comes with technological advances become Pratchett’s focus in *Going Postal*.

A technological revolution focuses on a period in which new technology is suddenly introduced and radically influences a society’s way of life. In *Going Postal*, this technology is the clacks towers, the latest invention to come from Ankh-Morpork as was briefly discussed in Chapter 3. Ankh-Morpork itself is a city

¹² From this it can even be argued that technological revolutions themselves are driven by greed for economic gain.

in a constant state of change and seems to evolve as Pratchett's fiction does.¹³ In *The Colour of Magic* Ankh-Morpork experiences both a flood and a fire from which it recovers. In *Guards! Guards!* the reader experiences the establishment of a proper police system known as the City Watch, and in *The Truth* (2000) Ankh-Morpork receives its first daily newspaper. The city starts out as a medieval city slowly developing modern characteristics, even though the city itself remains in a quasi-medieval state. In the same manner in which Ankh-Morpork develops cinematography in *Moving Pictures* (1990) or discovers music in *Soul Music*, *Going Postal* focuses on the development of the clacks communication System.

Unlike many other Discworld technologies, which contain some form of magic or tends to be powered by imps, the clacks towers are purely mechanical. In his interview with Sky1 (as mentioned earlier) Pratchett admits that the system he portrays in *Going Postal* is meant to recreate "that feel where the technology was so new and bright and wonderful that people really cared about it" (Pratchett, 2010). In this interview he also describes the clacks as a "very early mechanical internet system". The struggle portrayed in *Going Postal* is that of older technology being replaced by seemingly better, improved technology, and the consequences this has on the city's inhabitants.

The clacks is first mentioned in the 24th Discworld novel, *The Fifth Elephant*. Here it is described as a semaphore tower with eight large square tiles flipping between black and white (Pratchett, 2000b:76). It is still in the early stages of development and resembles telegraphy, but as the novels progress the clacks become more sophisticated. In *Thief of Time* (2001) the term "c-mail" is used, which is a short term for "clacks mail". This is a reference to electronic mail, which is also called e-mail. By the time *Going Postal* is written, the technology is much more advanced and the towers use automatic shutters and lights. The reception of the clacks technology is generally positive in Ankh-Morpork and the new technology is seen as an asset. However the novel does not only reflect the wonder of new technology, but also the potential danger that comes with it. Even at its initial introduction in *The Fifth Elephant* Lord Vetinari reflects on the rapid growth of

¹³ It can be argued that Ankh-Morpork becomes a vehicle for Pratchett to examine and present technological developments over a long period of time.

technology and its influence on profit and power. Watching the clacks tower, he reflects that:

Semaphore had been around for centuries, and everyone knew that knowledge had a value, and everyone knew that exporting goods was a way of making money. And then, suddenly, someone realized how *much* money you could make by exporting to Genua by tomorrow things known in Ankh-Morpork today...Knowledge, information, power, words....flying through the air, invisible...And suddenly the world was tap-dancing on quicksand (Pratchett, 2000b:77).

This passage reflects the nature of new technology and how it brings about a change not just in a society's life, but also its mindset. By bringing two independent concepts, here semaphore and the act of exporting goods, the power of value and profit merge and enhance each other. While this is what makes technology valuable, it is also what makes technology dangerous as it accelerates the momentum of trade for the sake of more profit and this ultimately leads to a rat race. The description of the world tap-dancing on quicksand reflects this, as it depicts how the societies involved move at rapid speeds (arguably for profit and power) but have to keep moving at accelerated speeds for fear of sinking and losing their positions of power.

As Dickens feared the influence of industrialisation on human relationships, Pratchett portrays the danger of greed that comes with the development of new technology, and the effect of this accelerated way of life on human relationships. Furthermore, Pratchett aims to comment on what happens when society becomes dependent on this technology. In a passage from *The Fifth Elephant*, Vimes remarks on the influence the new messaging system has on people. His comment is that: "it had caught on as fast as every other craze did in the big city. You couldn't go out to dinner these days without seeing people nip out of the restaurant every five minutes to check if there weren't any messages for them on the nearest pole (Pratchett, 2000b:120-121).

The instantaneous change in society's perception is noticeable here. Information that had previously not gained much attention suddenly becomes crucial. Not

only do traders rely greatly on the clacks for profit, but average people are suddenly overcome with the urge to obtain new information, which addresses the effect on human relationships. Much like the tendency in real life to focus on a technological device for new information, the people of Ankh-Morpork cannot sit through dinner with others without wanting to check the clacks for new information.

As a need for information grows, the clacks company sees a business opportunity which fosters a need for more profit. In the novels that follow, the clacks steadily gain a reputation for being unnecessarily expensive. In *Going Postal* it is revealed that the businessmen who buy the clacks company have no interest in its technology but rather in the money it generates. As a result the people of the city become disgruntled by the high rates and the money they pay ends up in the pockets of the executives rather than the business. Soon the towers are in dire need of maintenance and run to the edge of ruin, resembling the melancholy mad elephants of *Hard Times*. The narrator of *Going Postal* describes that the towers should be “flashing overhead, the words of the world flowing” but that now, “shutters were still...up on the open wooden tower; by the look of it, a whole section had broken off” (Pratchett, 2004:258).

A growing danger of capitalism comes to the surface here, and the effect it has on both businesses and people. Some reviewers consider this the main theme of the novel (Lewis, 2012:31). Here in the novel, a stark difference in presentation between the businessmen and the people of Ankh-Morpork is noticeable on a dialogic level just as there is a difference between Thomas Gradgrind and Bounderby compared to the other characters in *Hard Times*.

5.2. *Hard Times*: Passionless economists

Watts (1981) illustrates Bakhtin’s theory of dialogised heteroglossia by describing the text as a set of weaved material, much like cloth. In this the structure of the cloth is determined by the instruments used by the weaver, or rather, the style of the writer (Watts, 1981:29). Taking this analogy further one could say that a variety of instruments or styles are used to weave the fabric that is the novel. The

social diversity of speech types and their interactions, which are the focus of Bakhtin's dialogism, become the medium for orchestrating the novel's ideas and themes (Bakhtin, 1981:263). It is this combination of speech types and interactions between different styles that weave the phase of social change into the novel's themes.

Different speech manners are used to differentiate social spheres in *Hard Times* in a manner similar to *Bleak House*. Unlike *Bleak House*, *Hard Times* has only an omniscient narrator that looks down on, and sometimes enters the minds of the novel's characters. This does not mean that the variety in speech types is diminished, but it does appear more organised and gravitates towards two overarching tones that weave technological advance as theme into the novel.

The first overarching tone to be found is the hard-hearted and passionless tone of utilitarian enthusiasts, or those involved in political economy.¹⁴ In *Hard Times* the most prominent characters that participate actively in political economy are Thomas Gradgrind, Josiah Bounderby and James Harthouse. While the speech manners of each character appear unique, they share similarities with each other, which contribute to a general tone projecting a mechanical, cold presence. When considering the social change taking place, these characters, and their passionless tone represent those leaping forward with the advances around them. This tone is characterised by the use of technical terms, such as "fact", "statistics" and "calculations" and often appear to project rigid objectivity, dismissing emotion as far as possible. This is used to reflect the satirical expression of "figures and averages and nothing else" that Dickens mentions to Charles Knight. Additionally, those whose speech manners include this tone reflect a strong sense of egoism and self-centeredness.

Some contemporary and later criticism of *Hard Times* find fault with the novel's use of "thin characters" (Humphreys, 2008:391) and indeed the characters of *Hard Times* are not as complex as some of Dickens's other creations. As a result

¹⁴ Political economists are a breed often greatly involved at the time of a technological revolution, and Cunningham explains that the Industrial Revolution saw political economists take centre stage (Cunningham, 2008:160-166).

of this, it is easy to consider many characters, and the economists specifically, as caricatures. Josiah Bounderby is an example of such a caricature, with egoism as his defining characteristic. Being a factory owner and a banker, Bounderby's speech manner is filled with the tone of his trade, leading to a calculating, objective and dull discourse. Most notably, his speech manner is very egoistic, and contains repetitive terms aimed at self-praise. The two phrases used most often include referring to himself as "Josiah Bounderby of Coketown" and emphasising that he is a "man who raised himself".

Bounderby is a good example of the modern economist Dickens fears. During Bounderby's introduction he is described as being "perfectly devoid of sentiment" and defined as the absolute "bully of humility". The language used to describe Bounderby is deliberately associated with abrasive and unyielding materials to enforce the impression not of a person, but an impassive machine. He is made out of a "coarse material" with a "metallic laugh" and a "brassy speaking-trumpet of a voice" (Dickens, 2012a:14). This specified use of adjectives is one of the first indications that the language used in the novel is impacted by the industrial theme. The absence of emotive thought here also becomes associated with the industrial economist.

Bounderby's sense of selfishness seems to go hand in hand with the industrial mindset and is passed on to the younger generations. The first thing taught to Thomas Gradgrind junior when he enters Bounderby's bank is to focus on "calculations relative to number one" (Dickens, 2012a:79). This suggests that Thomas is encouraged to always keep one in mind, namely himself, and ultimately this contributes to his selfish and sulky nature. James Harthouse also follows in the egotistic footsteps of Bounderby, admitting that "every man is selfish in everything he does, and I am exactly like the rest of my fellow creatures" (Dickens, 2012a:153).

A dramatic, epic tone similar to that which surrounds the Dedlocks of *Bleak House* is used to satirise Bounderby's self-centredness. This results in a parodic stylisation of Bounderby's manner and of the economists he represents. In the

following passage, the narrator discusses the apparent common view of Bounderby in a dramatic fashion:

It was one of the most *exasperating* attributes of Bounderby, that he not only sang his own praises but stimulated other men to sing them. There was a *moral infection of clap-trap* in him. Strangers, *modest enough elsewhere*, started up at dinners in Coketown, and boasted, in *quite a rampant way*, of Bounderby. They made him out to be the *Royal arms, the Union-Jack, Magna Charta, John Bull, Habeas Corpus, the Bill of Rights, An Englishman's house is his castle, Church and State, and God save the Queen*, all put together [own italics] (Dickens, 2012a:39).

While this passage grammatically belongs to the narrator, it includes perspectives of both the common view and is laced with the opinion of the author. The first sentence establishes that Bounderby manages to convince others of his importance to the point that he is frequently a topic of discussion. However the added adjective “exasperating” confirms that this is not seen in a positive light, and can be considered as the evidence of authorial opinion shining through here. The sentence that follows furthers this opinion, as Bounderby’s self-promoted praises are described as a “moral infection of clap-trap”. This suggests not only that Bounderby’s words are nonsense, but also that what he says is untrue, as is later revealed when the reader learns that the story of his upbringing is a lie.

The phrases describing strangers as “modest enough elsewhere” and talking of Bounderby in “quite a rampant way” can also be considered authorial additions to the main sentence. The first phrase serves as an ironic description of those who boast of Bounderby, as they are modest enough not to practise the self-praise Bounderby does, but boasts nonetheless. The fact that their rants are “rampant” also suggest that their boasts are similar to the nature of Bounderby’s own rants, which are frequent and rambling.

The descriptions that follow are written to be an objective reflection of the common view concerning Bounderby. However, the dramatic nature of the epithets used confirms that the tone is both epic and parodic. Some of the epithets refer to well-known English institutions, such as the “Royal arms”,

“Union-Jack”, “John Bull” and “God save the Queen”, suggesting that Bounderby is as complete a portrait of an Englishman as these are. However the epithets equating him to “Magna Charta”, “Habeas Corpus” and the “Bill of Rights” take the boasts into an ironic sphere as these are representatives of fairness, a quality Bounderby distinctly lacks. As a result, the ironic nature and absurdity of the common views regarding Bounderby are revealed and emphasised further when Bounderby’s dishonesty is exposed.¹⁵

Because Bounderby is created to be a greedy, self-interested caricature, it stands to reason that his discourse reveals this. His treatment and degradation of the town’s factory workers is an example of this. Bounderby does not see his workers as people, but only as instruments of labour, and refers to them as “hands”. It is also his belief that the “hands” seek only one objective, which is to obtain luxuries. This opinion is expressed on several occasions through the repeated metaphor: “There’s not a Hand in this town, sir, man, woman, or child, but has one ultimate object in life. That object is, to be fed on turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon” (Dickens, 2012a:109). These aspects of his belief system contribute to the passionless tone that surrounds him.

Next to Bounderby, Thomas Gradgrind starts out as a championing character of the passionless tone. Like Bounderby, he is described with terms befitting a practical, but emotionless character. He is described as consisting of squares, with a “square wall of a forehead”, a “square coat”, “square legs” and “square shoulders” (Dickens, 2012a:3). In personality he becomes a “cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts” and finally a “galvanizing apparatus...charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away” (Dickens, 2012a:4). This repetition emphasises Gradgrind’s uniformity of thought, and the force with which he demands “nothing but facts” gives him an unyielding quality (Dickens, 2012a:3). Added to this is a marked lack of diversity in the language that surrounds the economists. This does not imply that the language used is any less creative or diverse, as the epic tone surrounding Bounderby indicates. This simply refers to the mechanical quality in description

¹⁵ This resembles Bakhtin’s analysis of Mr Merdle in *Little Dorrit* (Bakhtin, 1981:303-306).

and tone that is used when the economists feature. The intention here is to cultivate distance and dislike between the reader and the economists' views, as Dickens's criticism is aimed at their mindset.

This especially features when the narrative takes on the views and tone of the economists, as in the following example describing the Gradgrind home, Stone Lodge:

Stone Lodge was situated on a moor within a mile or two of a great town—called Coketown *in the present faithful guide-book*. A very regular feature on the face of the country, Stone Lodge was. Not the least disguise toned down or shaded off that *uncompromising fact* in the landscape. A great *square house*, with a heavy portico darkening the principal windows, as its master's heavy brows overshadowed his eyes. A *calculated, cast up, balanced, and proved house*. *Six windows on this side of the door, six on that side; a total of twelve in this wing, a total of twelve in the other wing; four-and-twenty carried over to the back wings*. A lawn and garden and an infant avenue, all *ruled straight like a botanical account-book* [own italics] (Dickens, 2012a:10).

This description incorporates the voices of the narrator, author and a parodic presentation of Gradgrind's opinions on facts. In the first sentence, the main clause indicating the location of Stone Lodge can be attributed to the narrator, but this is followed by a resource to indicate the validity of Coketown's name. This phrase is not necessary to the reader, but serves to satirically portray Gradgrind's opinion that would require a guide-book to validate the town's name as a fact. Stone Lodge itself is a parodic presentation of Gradgrind. The terms qualifying it as an "uncompromising fact" and repeated attribute of being "square" are the words of the author enforcing the nature of Gradgrind's character through the description of Stone Lodge. The parodic personifying descriptions of the house's darkening appearance to that of its owner also enforces this.

When it comes to a physical description of the house, the language is adapted to Gradgrind's perspective and notably differs from the preceding portrayal. This depiction is purposefully not creative, and serves to give the factual and calculating aspects of the house as Gradgrind views it. This includes the number

and sum of the windows, a mention that it is sturdy and that the garden and lawn are meticulously straight. The final phrase of the passage sees the return of the author's creative language and voice as the garden is collectively equated to a "botanical account-book". The two contrasting terms together bring attention to the unnatural aspect of such a straight garden, and add a satiric edge to the tone of the passage. This furthers the criticism Dickens seeks to present of those whose belief is only in facts.

The dull quality of the economists' discourse furthers this, especially when compared to the novel's second arching tone, which focuses on compassion and fancy. This tone is mainly found in the discourses of Sissy Jupe and the members of Mr Sleary's circus, and personifies an opposing collection of voices that depicts social change in the novel. Whereas the political economists leap ahead with the times, the compassionate tone personifies those who do not feel the need to chase the industrial horizon. In contrast to the calculating terms of the passionless tone, this tone includes emotionally charged terms such as "fancy", "amuse" "wonder" and "love". These activities are forbidden in Gradgrind's belief system. Sissy is not allowed to indulge in fantasy in the Grandgrind home and Louisa not allowed to wonder. However the circus master, Sleary, emphasises the importance of people being "amused" and Sissy's life revolves around her love for her father, for the people of the circus and for the Gradgrind children.

A marked dislike for Gradgrind's philosophy continues in descriptions that place it in contrast with the compassionate tone. Watts argues that the narrator specifically urges the reader to dislike Gradgrind's philosophy by incorporating contrasting images into the descriptions of Gradgrind's system (Watts, 1981:125). This is done to recognise the author's preference for fancy, and can be found in the portrayal of the Gradgrind children's education:

Almost as soon as they could run alone, they had been made to run to the lecture-room. The first object with which they had an association, or of which they had a remembrance, was a large black board with a dry Ogre chalking ghastly white figures on it. Not that they knew, by name or nature, anything about an Ogre Fact forbid! I only use the word to express a monster in a lecturing castle, with Heaven knows how many heads manipulated into one,

taking childhood captive, and dragging it into gloomy statistical dens by the hair (Dickens, 2012a:9).

This passage expresses a dull view of this type of education while simultaneously parodying Gradgrind's philosophy. In another example of equating the regard for fact to a religion, the phrase "Fact forbid" features, which could easily have been "heaven forbid". This can be considered a dramatic interjection by the author and serves to illustrate the authority that fact has in Gradgrind's life. Contrasting fantasy images also expresses how the little Gradgrinds are robbed of a childhood filled with fantastical and fictional aspects such as ogres. In using these images, and by deliberately incorporating a writing style similar to that of children's ghost stories, the passage takes on a fantastical nature. The children's education is equated to a "monster in a *lecturing* castle...taking childhood captive and dragging it into his gloomy *statistical* den by the hair" [own italics] (Dickens, 2012a:9). The image created here is that of a classic haunting ghost story, with an ogre taking children captive to its den. Yet adjectives like "lecturing" and "statistical" change the nature of the presented image. Insertions such as these identify the voice of the author and shed a negative light on Gradgrind's system of facts, and his preferred method of education.

The conflict between the two tones is also evident in the discourse of characters associated with each tone. A significant instance of this is found in the opposing reactions to the disappearance of Sissy's father in Chapter 4 of Book 1. After travelling to Sleary's horsemanship to see Sissy's father, Gradgrind and Bounderby meet the other circus members. They are immediately confused by the entertainers' discourse as it is far more casual and far less calculating than their own. The discourse of the circus folk overlaps several speech manners. Their speech is filled with slang terms belonging to their profession as circus performers, many of them are not educated in the traditional sense and they presumably form part of England's lower or working class. Sleary's speech impediment stratifies the categories to which his discourse belongs to even further. Of relevance here is that the circus folk are also in touch with imagination and compassion and in this sense they differ greatly from the political economists. As the circus folk discuss the decline of Sissy's father's

performance, their speech manners are showcased. A baffled Bounderby snidely reacts to this: “Nine oils, Merrylegs, missing tips, garters, banners, and Ponging, eh! Queer sort of company, too” (Dickens, 2012a:28).

The circus folk appear comparatively selfless in their presentation and it becomes clear that they have little interest in technological advances. Not being actively involved in the changing face of the world the Industrial Revolution brings, they have no desire to become involved in matters concerning modern technology or ideologies. When Sissy realises her father has deserted her, Sleary notes to himself that “Ith an internal thame, upon my thoul it ith”, while the objective Bounderby mechanically replies that the girl should understand the fact. He confronts Sissy and matter-of-factly says, “Here, what’s your name! Your father has absconded—deserted you—and you mustn’t expect to see him again as long as you live.” (Dickens, 2012a:33-34).

His statement is passionless, presenting only the facts of the matter. Like his treatment of the town workers, he does not care to know or remember the girl’s name. The circus crowd reacts with emotional disdain towards Bounderby’s formal words. The narrator takes on a familiar sympathetic tone when describing their reaction: “They cared so little for plain Fact, these people, and were in that advanced state of degeneracy on the subject, that instead of being impressed by the speaker’s strong common sense, they took it in extraordinary dudgeon. The men muttered ‘Shame!’ and the women ‘Brute!’” (Dickens, 2012a:34).

This passage seems to be written from the perspective of the economists, but can also be considered a hybrid construction in which authorial intent shines through the narrator’s statements. Here, as in many other cases in the novel, the term “Fact” is written with a capital letter to infer a religious level of importance. However its significance is immediately diminished by the phrases that surround it, including that the circus folk “cared so little” for it and that they were in an “advanced state of degeneracy” on knowing or caring about facts. The narrator’s perspective seems inclined towards the economists as it suggests that the crowd should have been impressed by Bounderby’s use of common sense. Yet the crowd’s reaction is not criticised or subjected to further comment, suggesting that

their reaction and naming of Bounderby is the author's preference. The circus folk make much more room for sympathy and cannot agree with Bounderby's reaction. Their choice of words to respond with – “shame” and “brute” – reveals the tension at play between the two tones and ultimately, the difference in mindset.

Just as Bounderby would not soon use the word “soul” or the phrase “internal shame”, the circus folk would not simply settle into stating or accepting facts. The narrator's preference for the passionate tone reveals Dickens' tendency towards authorial intrusion, which often emerges in his portrayal of certain societal aspects, deliberately choosing a side in his presentation of opposing mindsets.

Ultimately, all the characters associated with the passionless tone experience failure. These failures are presented with a hint of another voice interfering with the passionless perspective. When Bounderby is disgraced, the reader finds that his usual declaration of being “Josiah Bounderby of Coketown”, which he repeats *ad nauseum* to emphasise his importance, has changed. Speaking to Mrs Sparsit, he states that he “really ought to apologise...being *only* Josiah Bounderby of Coketown” [own italics] (Dickens, 2012a:253). The single addition of an adverb gives the character's speech a sense of humility which is uncharacteristic for Bounderby. This uncharacteristic change can be regarded as an instance where the narrator's voice reveals Bounderby's irrelevance. It changes the statement to make it appear as if Bounderby is parodying himself and the phrase also naturally loses the little impact it supposedly carried.

The same adverb is used to reveal the failure of James Harthouse. It is quite fitting that Harthouse is sent away by a character strongly associated with the compassionate perspective, Sissy Jupe. When Sissy arrives to send Harthouse away in Chapter 2 of Book 3, he assures her, “it's the fact” that he should be devoted to the business he was sent for. The narrator reveals that “it had no effect on Sissy, fact or no fact” (Dickens, 2012a:200). By adding the phrase “fact or no fact” the narrator gives reference to the tension between the two tones, but also notes that Sissy, associated with the compassionate tone, is not intimidated by the passionless tone. Upon agreeing to leave, Harthouse remarks to himself

that he is now “*only* James Harthouse a Great Pyramid of failure” [own italics] (Dickens, 2012a:201). Arguably the addition of “only” is evidence of the narrator’s voice emphasising Harthouse’s insignificance, while the character admits to his failure.

The result of Gradgrind’s system is also a failure. While Mr. Gradgrind taught himself and his children nothing but facts, they have cultivated much knowledge, but little wisdom. The chapters featuring Louisa Gradgrind in particular illustrate the tension between the passionless and compassionate tones and the author’s commentary on social change.

5.3 *Hard Times*: Louisa as a site for conflict

Seen by Gradgrind as the best example of his system, Louisa’s education results in her becoming a site for conflict between the passionless and compassionate perspectives. While almost all the characters in the novel categorically incorporate either the passionless or compassionate tones, Louisa grapples with both. As she hovers in one discipline with a yearning for the other, the conflict she experiences appears in her discourse. This can be considered a showcase of the possible effects industrial change can have on personal relationships.

Louisa is not openly perceived to be compassionate by the other characters and displays very little of what can be considered compassionate discourse. Gradgrind observes that she views everything from the “strong dispassionate ground of reason and calculation” (Dickens, 2012a:75,84). If not for a specific narrative treatment of her character, a reader would categorise her with the other practitioners of the passionless tone. Harthouse, however, notices a strange contradiction in her manner, describing her as “constrained, and yet so careless; so reserved, and yet so watchful; so cold and proud, and yet so sensitively ashamed...” (Dickens, 2012a:110). This gives the reader an indication of her inner conflict, and her discourse furthers this.

Although she suppresses her imagination and any evidence of a compassionate tone, Louisa’s conflict and the failure of her father’s system comes to light after

she receives a marriage proposal from Bounderby. In Chapter 15 of Book 1 Gradgrind brings the news of Bounderby's proposal to Louisa. At this point Gradgrind is very proud of Louisa's mental abilities. He is confident that she utilises none of the terms that would denote a compassionate mindset or tone and thus assumes she does not practice them. Gradgrind is therefore startled when Louisa asks if he wishes her to love Bounderby. Louisa's use of the word reveals that she considers the proposal (at least in part) from an emotional point of view. Gradgrind is, however, quick to correct her, explaining that "the expression...may be a little misplaced" (Dickens, 2012a:85).

Gradgrind's hostility towards any words that denote the compassionate tone reveals the strain this utilitarian change has brought on personal relationships. This applies to both the relationship between father and daughter and husband and wife. Gradgrind equates "love" with "fanciful", "fantastic" and "sentimental" before dismissing all of it as an "injustice" to Louisa's upbringing (Dickens, 2012a:85). He furthers this by adding that "the ignorant and the giddy may embarrass such subjects with irrelevant fancies, and other absurdities that have no existence properly viewed" (Dickens, 2012a:85). His explanation does a good job of explaining how abstract concepts cannot be confirmed as facts and should be dismissed, but offers Louisa no actual advice.

Louisa's questions reflect her desperation for advice and direction, and in her discourse the reader is able to detect traces of the inner conflict with her suppressed emotions. When "love" is dismissed, she asks what term should be used in its stead (Dickens, 2012a:85). This can be read as a request for something to substitute in the absence of the emotion, love. However, Gradgrind only reverts back to citing several statistics on marriage which does not answer Louisa's question, but illustrates the lack of value Gradgrind's philosophy and its tone has for Louisa. This is emphasised when the narrator remarks that Louisa's "reserved composure [was not] in the least affected by these *gratifying results*" [own italics] (Dickens, 2012a:86). Through this hybrid construction the term "gratifying results" is ironic, interjected in the author's voice to enforce the idea that Louisa does not react because she does not care about the statistics her

father cites. The same happens when she poses the question, “Shall I marry him?” (Dickens, 2012a:86).

When this question fails to deliver concrete answers, it is not through the character’s direct discourse, but through the narrator that the reader experiences Louisa’s suppressed emotions:

As he now leaned back in his chair, and bent his deep-set eyes upon her in his turn, perhaps he might have seen one wavering moment in her, when she was impelled to *throw herself upon his breast, and give him the pent-up confidences of her heart*. But, to see it, he must have overleaped at a bound the artificial barriers he had for many years been erecting...the barriers were too many and too high for such a leap. With his unbending, utilitarian, matter-of-fact face, he hardened her again; and the moment shot away into the plumbless depths of the past, to mingle with all the lost opportunities that are drowned there [own italics] (Dickens, 2012a:86).

In this passage the narrator takes up the chance to emphasise Louisa’s inner conflict. The narrator speculates about Gradgrind’s inner thoughts, and the description is injected with the author’s intention in the form of a dormant passionate display. The conflict associated with social change becomes visible here as contrasting reactions to the problem at hand come from two separate views in one character. A passionate display in which Louisa would divulge her pent-up confidences is a reaction one could easily associate with the melodramatic characters often found in Victorian Literature. O’Gorman (2005) argues that such powerful displays of emotion, especially in the Victorian novel, are often misunderstood (O’Gorman, 2005:254). While she notes that Victorian critics like Phillip Davis dismiss emotional scenes in novels as tools to manipulate the reader, O’Gorman argues that prominent examples of Victorian fiction have the potential to be self-conscious of its emotional workings (O’Gorman, 2005:253-254).

Using Dickens as example, O’Gorman explains that scenes provoking emotion, such as the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* are created with the purpose of measuring the reader’s ability to feel. She states: “preserving the

notion that there remained a necessary association between the expression of feeling and the possession of virtue, he conceived the *reader's* feeling as confirmation of surviving goodness" (O'Gorman, 2005:256). She adds that the ability to suffer sorrow at the death Little Nell implicitly reminds the reader that modernity "had failed to crush entirely the natural sympathies still surviving in human nature" (O'Gorman, 2005:255). By this reasoning, the absence of emotion can serve the purpose of testing the reader's recognition of its necessity.

In seeing Louisa struggle for affection and compassion, the reader is presented with the effect of a starved imagination and its unfortunate consequences. The social change Dickens recognises in his time runs through a filter of emotion as it enters the novel. By contrasting the potential for Louisa to be emotional at the thought of marriage, but instead presenting her as incapable of the correct emotion, Dickens displays a deviation in behaviour that would be recognised by a Victorian audience.

The passionless tone of Louisa's discourse wavers even as she tries to stay objective. During the conversation with her father she contemplates Coketown's chimneys, remarking that "there seems to be nothing there but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out" (Dickens, 2012a:87). This statement presents both a fact and a metaphorical reference to Louisa's dormant emotions. Humphreys explains that fire is a symbol for Louisa's starved imagination, and appears physically and metaphorically along with her character throughout the novel (Humphreys, 2008:396). When Louisa is introduced, her gaze is described as "a fire with nothing to burn, a starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow" (Dickens, 2012a:22). The significance of the statement is lost on Gradgrind and a true practitioner of the passionless tone would not see the need in expressing it at all. However, it furthers the notion that Louisa's inner conflict affects her discourse. The statement becomes double-voiced in order to reveal Louisa's conflict. To Dickens, Gradgrind and Bounderby are representatives of a potential mechanical society, incapable of affection, love and compassion. In this light, Louisa's mechanical surrender to Bounderby is seen as a defeat of Louisa's chances of expressing the compassionate tone. This

is enforced when the narrator uses the passionless tone to describe their relationship as taking on a “manufacturing aspect” (Dickens, 2012a:93).

A similar occurrence of double-voiced discourse appears when Louisa confirms that she has not had the opportunity to entertain any other marriage proposals. “You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child’s dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle to this hour, that I never had a child’s belief or a child’s fear” (Dickens, 2012a:88). To the practitioner of the passionless tone, this is accepted as a compliment and Gradgrind considers this a testimony to his success. However, the same statement strives towards the compassionate tone and appears as an expression of regret at her inability to express her emotions. As the reader finds sympathy for Louisa’s lack of feeling, the author triumphs in his authoritative depiction of the importance of emotion to the reader and reveals to the reader his or her capacity toward compassion and empathy. The appearance of Sissy at the end of the chapter furthers the contrast between the two tones. Sissy gazes upon the new Mrs Bounderby “in a multitude of emotions” (Dickens, 2012a:90). Louisa seems “changed altogether” to Sissy, and Louisa keeps a cold distance from Sissy from there on, denouncing her as she denounces her own capacity to feel. As Sissy is the embodiment of the compassionate tone, she becomes a physical representation of the emotion Louisa further seeks to suppress.

Louisa’s suppressed emotions eventually burst free in Chapter 12 of Book 2. After her marriage to Bounderby fails, she confronts her father again and this time her discourse displays her previously pent-up emotions, making the compassionate tone more visible than the passionless one with which she was raised.

‘it has been my task from infancy to strive against every natural prompting that has arisen in my heart; if you had known that there lingered in my breast, sensibilities, affections, weaknesses capable of being cherished into strength, defying all the calculations ever made by man, and no more known to his arithmetic than his Creator is,—would you have given me to the husband whom I am now sure that I hate?... With a hunger and thirst upon me, father, which have never been for a moment appeased; with an ardent impulse towards some region where rules, and figures, and definitions were

not quite absolute; I have grown up, battling every inch of my way' (Dickens, 2012a:186)

Much of Louisa's discourse here appears unnatural for someone whose speech manner has been predominantly passionless up to this point. The reason for this is not only that Louisa's character has grown to realise the flaws of her education, but also that the author's intentions again enter the character's discourse. Louisa admits to the conflict she has been experiencing. Her discourse still contains traces of the passionless tone, referencing "calculations", "arithmetic" and "rules, and figures, and definitions", but these stand in contrast to the emotion-filled phrases that has entered her discourse. The statement that she has strived "against every natural prompting that has arisen in [her] heart" is not factual, but dramatic and therefore more natural. The traces of the passionless tone explain why she admits that the "sensibilities, affections" and "weaknesses" that she experiences are not concrete in any way. The passionate tone mingles with this as she explains her "ardent impulse" towards a more flexible environment.

The passionate tone in Louisa's discourse echoes the author's repulsion for "those who see figures and averages and nothing else" and the author's intention to attack this reaches the reader through the double-voiced style of this narrative. Despite the emotional outburst, Louisa remains a figure of Gradgrind's failure. The dramatic display of emotion a contemporary Victorian audience might expect arrives as Louisa falls to the ground and Gradgrind sees "the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system, lying, an insensible heap, at his feet" (Dickens, 2012a:188). The dramatic style, very familiar in Dickens, contrasts Gradgrind's perception of Louisa as the best example of his system with the "insensible heap" she has become which is the opposite of triumph and pride. Unable to remain solely rational, and incapable of the emotion she seeks, Louisa's conflict ultimately leaves her a failure. The novel concludes with Louisa still staring into the fire without revealing if her mind is wondering on fantastical thoughts or calculations and statistics.

5.4 Dickens and the industrial future

The fears Dickens expresses for human relationships in the face of industrialisation go beyond the interactions of his characters as he contemplates the possible futures industrialisation may lead to. The dark, almost dystopian atmosphere of *Hard Times* accentuates the negative opinions Dickens focuses on. In his discussion of *Hard Times* as a dystopian novel, Raj points out that the novel registers as a protest “against the Victorian industrialised society anticipating impending and possible catastrophe which industrialism might bring” (Raj, 2012:98). Diniejko also theorises that *Hard Times* anticipated future debates surrounding industrialisation, including anti-pollution legislation, safety measures in factories and town-planning (Diniejko, 2012). While this is mostly speculative, the negative effects of industrialisation on human relationships is a valid point raised by the analysis above.

The final chapter of *Hard Times* vaguely sketches the futures of many of the novel’s characters. The structure of this chapter’s narrative includes many questions and speculations, with only some indication as to the actual fate of the characters. This is done to evoke the uncertain nature of the future. The authoritative control that presides over this part of the text does not allow for the reader to decide what fates they ascribe to the characters, but instead prompts the reader into thinking about the nature of relationships in an industrial society, and the importance of imagination and fancy in this.

Ultimately most of the characters who followed the utilitarian way and upheld the passionless tone become failures, while Sissy seems to find success and happiness (albeit in a vague manner). The narrator’s direct message to the reader in the closing paragraph becomes the voice of the author, directly pleading with the reader to recognise the grim future that lies ahead, should the importance of fancy and imagination be disregarded. “Dear reader! It rests with you and me, whether, in our two fields of action, similar things shall be or not. Let them be! We shall sit with lighter bosoms on the hearth, to see the ashes of our fires turn grey and cold” (Dickens, 2012a:256). The conflict that was Louisa’s, and those of the other characters here become the reader’s. In the presence of change and

the conflict it brings, Dickens aims to use the fates of the characters to inspire readers to nurture a compassionate view that its tone does in the novel, as opposed to the passionless view of capitalists.

5.5 *Going Postal*: Manipulative economic jargon

The interplay between the passionless and compassionate tones in *Hard Times* indicates that a phase of social change has the ability to affect people and their relationships to different extents. By denouncing the importance or even the existence of emotion and fancy, human relationships begin to deteriorate. As the focus of Dickens' criticism centres on the potential strain and effect of technology on human relationships with the fear of a mechanical society on the rise, Pratchett's criticism centres on the reaction and reception of new technology as it replaces old technology. The fear of a rising "mechanical society" looms in the background and a focus on human relationships still plays a strong role in the technological revolution examined by Pratchett. What is more interesting is the central focus that falls on the manner in which different sets of voices are used to contribute to a debate on the effects of these advances. In *Going Postal*, different speech manners develop not only to separate the businessmen from the postal workers, but also to distinguish between greed and the compassion. In this case however, both speech manners are taken to the extreme for comic effect, and the novel's protagonist serves as "translator" for the underlying messages found in their discourse.

The discourse of *Going Postal*'s businessmen is treated with a parodic stylisation similar to the *Bleak House* aristocrats. As caricatures of greed, the main objective of the businessmen is money and profit and this is indicated in their nature and their discourse. They are created to be the people who, as Dickens put is, "see figures and averages and nothing else". Reacher Gilt, the chairman of the clacks company, expresses the emphasis he places on figures when describing his dislike for his office space: "He had an office in the Tump Tower. He didn't like it much, because the whole place shook to the movement of the semaphore, but it was necessary for the look of the thing. It did have an unrivalled view of the city,

though. And the site alone was worth what they'd paid for the Trunk" (Pratchett, 2004:387).¹⁶

Here the reader observes a distance between him and his own company. He does not like the tower in which his office is situated even though as chairman he is entitled to the best possible seat with an unrivalled view. The view is what makes the office bearable for him, but he does not mention that it is a great view. Rather his thoughts turn immediately to the significant sum such a view is worth. He only keeps the office because it is necessary for his image, not because he wants to be closer to the workings of his company. The only thing that makes the office bearable comes back to its monetary value. This is reflected in his discourse as well. Apart from the persistent occurrence of economic jargon, Gilt mostly manages to bring the subject of cost, value and money into his discourse. When referring to the post office, his first instinct is to call it a "classic example of a corroded government organisation dragging on the public purse" (Pratchett, 2004:99). When the subject of religion is addressed, Gilt merely makes the witty remark that "Gods tend to be interested in prophets, not profits" (Pratchett, 2004:387).

When Gilt and the other businessmen use economic jargon to cover their self-centred schemes and to prevent customers from realising their focus on profit over productivity, their discourse becomes parodically styled. This jargon becomes the speech manner that sets the businessmen apart from the other characters on a professional level, and also emphasises their greed. It employs terms such as "systematic overhaul", "flawed infrastructure" and "miracles of economy" to misdirect from the plain nature of embezzlement and the need for clacks tower repairs. In their introductory meeting with Lord Vetinari, the directors are sure they can outwit the patrician with their words. However, Lord Vetinari proves not to be misdirected by their economic jargon, and his simple discourse exposes the falseness of the businessmen's speech manner:

¹⁶ The location of Gilt's office in the "Tump Tower" could possibly be a parody of the well-known Trump Tower in New York City.

'Last week the Grand Trunk was closed for almost three days. We could not even talk to Sto Lat! Hardly "As Fast as Light", gentlemen.'

'That was for essential maintenance—' Mr Slant began.

'No, it was for repairs,' snapped Vetinari. 'Under the previous management the system shut down for an hour every day. That was for maintenance. Now the towers run until they break down' (Pratchett, 2004:97).

The term "essential maintenance" is applied here as a cushioning term to hide the severity of the situation. Vetinari is unfortunately not fooled by this and exposes the jargonised term as "repairs".

The citizens in and around Ankh-Morpork become accustomed to this jargon and further reveal its deceptive purpose. The mayor of Sto Lat notes that "they never tell you how long you're going to be waiting, it's always 'very shortly'. They're always 'sorry for the inconvenience' - they even got that written on a sign they hang up on the office" (Pratchett, 2004:257). The terms "very shortly" and "sorry for the inconvenience" are used here to parody the way a company may try to indicate their awareness of a problem without divulging any further information. The mayor recognises the terms as empty phrases used to cover up the fact that they are not providing proper service. Even the company's employees explain that the executives are not interested in how the company works. The chief engineer admits, "they never took an interest. It was just money. They didn't know how anything worked" (Pratchett, 2004:390-91).

As egoism is associated with the passionless tone of *Hard Times*, Pratchett focuses on the businessmen's apathy and greed. They are not fazed by the dire state of the clacks towers or concerned for their workers. Professionally, the malfunction of the clacks towers are associated with "fundamental systematic errors" and the death of the clacks worker, John Dearheart, is merely mentioned only as "most unfortunate" (Pratchett, 2004:98,372).

This relates to the apathetic and egoistic image Gradgrind portrays in his discussion about marriage. The directors approach the subject of employees being fired and dying with no concern for the individual. Rather their focus is on the image they display in the face of this and how it would affect them. As masters

of new technology, the directors display the power new technology has on professional relationships. A breakdown in human relationships is noticeable here as the importance of the company's image takes precedence over the welfare of fellow employees. This is evident when the company's chief engineer comes to complain that they made him "sack a lot of craftsmen". The other directors are quick to correct him by saying that "we 'let them go'" and "we downsized" (Pratchett, 2004:358). This allows the reader to recognise the façade the businessmen exhibits and enhances the satiric representation of them.

Gilt himself is portrayed as a businessman in an extreme stage of alienation from his fellow man. Although he is very social, his thoughts betray a man with no real relations. He regards the other directors as "scavengers" and "silly small people" with no vision (Pratchett, 2004:142,361) and is generally feared by everyone he refers to as friends (Pratchett, 2004:364). His focus on profit and the need to excel has estranged him from the people around him and has left him unable to show compassion to anyone. He does not hesitate to kill business associates that threaten his progress and even his servant regards him as a "monster" (Pratchett, 2004:369).

5.6 *Going Postal*: Von Lipwig as translator

In the face of apathy and economic jargon, Moist von Lipwig enters the novel as a translator for what the directors attempt to hide. His discourse overlaps with many of the novel's other speech manners. He is a conman, a postmaster and a native from Uberwald. His speech incorporates words from all the speech manners associated with these positions. As a conman, he is familiar with using words for misdirection and manipulation. He tends to use phrases like "glass into diamond" and "find The Lady" (Pratchett, 2004:386,426) to refer to his attempts at using luck and misdirection. This talent allows him to recognise the manipulative nature of the economic jargon and its intentions. In Chapter 11, von Lipwig reads an article written by Gilt, and literally degrades Gilt's jargonised words:

It was garbage, but it had been cooked by an expert. Oh, yes. You had to admire the way perfectly innocent words were mugged, ravished, stripped of all true meaning and decency and then sent to walk the gutter for Reacher Gilt, although “synergistically” had probably been a whore from the start (Pratchett, 2004:372).

Here the character confronts the economic jargon directly, disputing both the words, their meaning and its view. He is familiar with the selected terms such as “compound interest” and adjectives such as “synergistically” that add little or no meaning to the message that is given. As Sissy Jupe is not affected by facts in *Hard Times*, Von Lipwig recognises Gilt’s jargon without being fooled by it. He mentions that as a conman, Reacher Gilt is a master where Von Lipwig would be an apprentice and that his reading Gilt’s words is like an apprentice reading the work of a master (Pratchett, 2004:306,372). It is then especially significant that von Lipwig chooses to see the speech as nothing other than a tool for manipulation. The metaphor comparing the words to innocent beings turned foul by Gilt places a sharp satiric twist on Gilt’s words and on Moist’s opinion of them. Gilt’s economic jargon is disputed and ridiculed while in the same breath, the reader realises that von Lipwig has taken a scornful stand against the language and possibly the viewpoint he once shared.

If von Lipwig was not able to distance himself from the jargon of the directors to reveal their apathetic nature, the emphasis on the passion for human relationships might be less prominent. These varying degrees of distance also manage to highlight the divergence in views created by sudden social change as it highlights the effect of each view on relationships. The author’s opinion reaches the reader through a filter created by the various languages. Primarily von Lipwig’s discussion and way of dealing with the different languages and its views make Pratchett’s stand for the Post Office and the difference between technologies that is cared about versus technology that seeks profit alone.

The speech manner found in the post office contrasts greatly with the clacks company’s economic jargon, but is also taken to the extreme for comic effect. The mixture of speech manners found here is a religious dialect combined with

Post Office terms. The two old postal workers who manage the abandoned Post Office practically transform the postal service into a cult. There have not been customers for years, yet the two postal workers keep everything in order according to the Book of Post Office Regulations, which is treated as a bible. It is read every day and all its commandments are met. The Post Office even has its own equivalent of a god. In Chapter 2 the reader is introduced to Stanley and Mr Groat's ceremony of reading the Book of Regulations.

As per ceremony, Stanley requests to see a picture of the "spirit of the post", which Groat does not often grant as "It's not good to look too often on the face of a god" (Pratchett, 2004:65). The picture they are referring to is a statue resembling the ancient Greek messenger Hermes with wings on his ankles and on his postal hat. In the description of this figure the reader first becomes acquainted with the post office's speech manner. Pratchett uses the postal workers' discourse as an example of the motivation that can be portrayed by dedicated workers in a work environment which they are passionate about.

Stanley describes the function of the wings on the figure's hat and ankles, "So he could fly the messages at the speed of...messages" (Pratchett, 2004:65). As the narrator in *Hard Times* manipulates the phrase "heaven forbid" into "Fact forbid", here we see the phrase "at the speed of light" being turned into "at the speed of messages". This implies that, to postal workers, messages are the fastest things they know. It is then ironic that the clacks company chooses the slogan "faster than the speed of light" even when their service line very rarely lives up to this motto.

Stanley's expression also stands in direct contrast to the description Gilt uses to describe the clacks delivery system: "The image is attractive...The dark of night, the waiting towers, and then, one by one, they come alive as a serpent of light speeds across the world, softly and silently carrying its . . . whatever" (Pratchett, 2004:391). Whereas Stanley cannot think of anything faster than messages, Gilt is not able to comprehend that what the towers are sending messages.

The speech manner of the post office can be likened to the compassionate tone we find in *Hard Times*. Like the people of the circus, the postal workers are dedicated to passion and emotion almost in a romantic sense. Groat has a lot of pride in being a postman, and romanticises the position of postal workers: “We used to be heroes, people wanted us. Everyone watched out for us. Everyone knew us. This was a great place, once. Once, we were postmen” (Pratchett, 2004:119). The emphasis on “postmen” illustrates the weight Groat places on such a position, a position so honourable that he equates it with being a hero. Groat even goes as far as saying that one needs “postman’s blood” to be a true postman. He is also the one to admit that the clacks system has no sense of passion, saying that “It’s got no soul, sir, no heart. I hates ‘em” (Pratchett, 2004:58).

Von Lipwig’s character is aptly constructed for the novel. He is not a typical, valiant fantasy hero and at the beginning of the novel he is no better than the capitalist businessmen. As Bitzer points out, Pratchett creates heroes which are often ill-suited for disaster and are usually normal and cowardly people that are easy to identify with (Bitzer, 1998:95). Von Lipwig is a rational man (for most of the novel) and it is easy for a reader to identify with and understand him and his nature.

Being a con artist, Moist specialises in using the right words to speak to and often manipulate people. As mentioned earlier, his speech manner bridges many speech manners and tones found in the novel and creates necessary conflict to illuminate various perspectives in the novel, which can be seen as characteristic of heteroglossia. However this makes him seem no better than the businessmen fooling others into believing a false appearance of security. The fact which indicates to the reader that von Lipwig is in fact not just pretending to adapt to the post office’s speech manner is that he starts to use it unconsciously. When woken up at an unruly hour, he demands to know ““what’s so important that I’ve got to be dragged off my nice warm pile of letters?”” (Pratchett, 2004:235). This can be considered as a point which Bakhtin describes as “regarding one language (and the verbal world corresponding to it) through the eyes of another language” (Bakhtin, 1981:296).

Von Lipwig knows how to use manipulative words as are found in the jargon of the directors and also know that the postal workers incorporate postal terms into their language to show their passion for being postal workers. Once he understands the nature of both these languages, he is able to distance himself from both of them. Any invincible quality that the languages could possess disappears, and it becomes necessary to choose an orientation among these languages (Bakhtin, 1981:296). Von Lipwig reaches the point where he can look at the speech manners of the businessmen though the speech manners of the postal workers, and has to choose his orientation towards it.

He chooses to use his skill as a manipulator to save the post office by merging it with the speech manners of the postal workers. Unlike the businessmen who use organised jargon to confuse their customers, von Lipwig uses the postal terms to express the passion the other postal workers have. In Chapter 7, von Lipwig is interviewed by the local newspaper and asked why the post office would be better than the clacks towers. His reply is:

'I dare say the clacks is wonderful if you wish to know the prawn market figures from Genua. But can you write S.W.A.L.K. on a clacks? Can you Seal it With A Loving Kiss? Can you cry tears on to a clacks, can you smell it, can you enclose a pressed flower? A letter is more than just a message. And a clacks is so expensive in any case that the average man in the street can just about afford it in a time of crisis: GRANDADS DEAD FUNERAL TUES. A day's wages to send a message as warm and human as a thrown knife? But a letter is real.' (Pratchett, 2004:220).

This is a good illustration of the effect technology can have not only on a society and their relationships, but also their language. While the clacks towers do provide rapid delivery of messages, the human aspects of the messages degrade and discourse itself is affected. The message "GRANDADS DEAD FUNERAL TUES" is void of emotion and essence, barely giving the necessary information such a message would require. This emphasises the apathetic distance attributed to those who excel with technology with no regard for compassion. As the clacks towers present new improved technology, people tend to use it despite

its flaws. In this sense the clacks towers are much like Gradgrind's school, providing children with hard facts and knowledge, but no emotion or compassion.

Von Lipwig appeals to the sentimental, compassionate side of people to promote the Post Office. By incorporating emotions and senses into the mail system and asserting that a letter is "real" because of the aesthetic value that can be included, he argues that any communication without emotions and senses are not genuine and do nothing for people. The postal terms such as the acronym S.W.A.L.K" which stands for "Sealed With A Loving Kiss", also strengthen his point.

What is significant however, is that he does not condemn the clacks towers as unnecessary. He mentions that the clacks towers are useful for business-related enquires, such as prawn market figures. The point he makes is that technology does help people and businesses advance, but draws a line at the point when it has a negative effect on people's relationships with each other. He illustrates the statement Sleary makes in *Hard Times*, "People mutht be amuthed" (Dickens, 2012a:37).

Unlike Dickens, who seeks to condemn the new advances based on their effect on society, the advances of technology in *Going Postal* are not seen in a bad light, but focus on how these advances are treated. If the advances are treated with respect, and do not negatively affect society, they are useful. It is only when technology is abused by people in power that it falls in a negative light. Von Lipwig admits that his manner of running the Post Office is not perfect, even as the Post Office thrives. But he does admit that "I'm not the person everyone thinks I am. I just wanted to prove to myself I'm not like Gilt" (Pratchett, 2004:466). Here it is evident that although two different views exist on how new technology should be managed, the choice of view determines the effect of the advances on those it influences. Von Lipwig does prove that he is not Reacher Gilt, and his overambitious rule gets the Post Office back on its feet, making it much more popular than the clacks for the human element that he has placed back into delivering messages. Even the old undelivered mail that von Lipwig start to deliver makes an impression. An old discarded love letter that finds its way to two old people leads to them getting married (Pratchett, 2004:120-121).

The clacks system itself is not placed in a negative light, only the effects of its mismanagement. At the end of Chapter 12 von Lipwig is introduced to the people who helped build the clacks system and who watched it being handed over to its greedy new owners. In this passage, the reader experiences the clacks system's potential. It is also here that the reader realises the connection between the clacks system and modern-day internet, and Pratchett addresses a few problems that come with the development of new technology.

The passage begins with von Lipwig admiring the clacks towers for the creations they are:

But what was happening now . . . this was magical. Ordinary men had dreamed it up and put it together, building towers on rafts in swamps and across the frozen spines of mountains. They'd cursed and, worse, used logarithms. They'd waded through rivers and dabbled in trigonometry. They hadn't dreamed, in the way people usually used the word, but they'd imagined a different world, and bent metal round it. And out of all the sweat and swearing and mathematics had come this . . . thing, dropping words across the world as softly as starlight (Pratchett, 2004:399).

This passage accurately describes the actions that lead up to the technological revolution which Discworld - as a representation of Earth - is experiencing.

The narrator describes how people imagined a world different from the one they live in and how a foundation of metal shapes this world. When looking at this passage with the Industrial Revolution in mind, this metaphor takes on a more realistic image. As metal works were one of the sectors that advanced greatly in the Industrial Revolution, it is plausible that the vision of a more productive future was shaped by metal. As the Industrial Revolution brought on the building of factories and the invention of the steam engine, a different world than the one which the Victorian society knew before these inventions.

Looking at the technological revolution as example, the emphasis the narrator places on the effort of those creating this new world can be likened to the

advances mathematics have given this contemporary society. The origin of what is known today as the internet is first recorded in the notes of J.C.R Licklider, in which he describes a “Galactic Network” concept. He envisions interconnected computers across the globe, allowing people to share and gain access to data and programs (Leiner, 2009:23). This can be likened to the dream which the narrator mentions here, a dream that involved something that did not yet exist, but came into being through the minds of these mathematicians and scientists. And the results of their labour is, in the narrator’s mind, “magical”. It is not inherently evil or negative, and it has been created to make life more convenient for those who use it. Like the internet, the clacks towers have the potential to be very effective.

Dickens chooses to focus on the negative effects that came with the Industrial Revolution, such as pollution and poverty. However, Pratchett emphasises that the new technology and advances are beneficial, provided that they are not abused. It is when technology is abused, for example by greedy investors, that this technology loses its functionality. Later in this same passage, von Lipwig meets the former clacks workers, and in their conversation the reader notices yet more resemblances between the clacks and modern day internet. The clacks workers had been fired for speaking their minds about the new management, and had started their own rival company, which also failed after Gilt had the founding member killed. The workers have experienced the agony of looking for jobs when their ideas are too advanced for the work that is available. As the narrator describes “the trio had done the kind of jobs available to new square pegs in a world of old round holes” (Pratchett, 2004:403).

In their spare time, they work on their own small company, in which they use the clacks towers without anyone knowing. In this description the reader realises that these workers are medieval hackers, who send messages for free through the clacks towers. They refer to themselves as “crackers” because they crack the system, in the same manner through which hackers penetrate various internet system by surpassing computer securities (Moore, 2011:17).¹⁷

¹⁷ Moore does point out that the term “cracker” is often used when a hacker develops criminal intentions (Moore, 2011:19).

It is pointed out that the crackers Pratchett speaks of, are in fact stealing, but that it is not seen as a crime. “It was a little like stealing. It was exactly like stealing. It was, in fact, stealing. But there was no law against it because no one knew the crime existed, so is it really stealing if what’s stolen isn’t missed? And is it stealing if you’re stealing from thieves?” (Pratchett, 2004:403).

Laws against computer fraud and proper legislation against hacking were not introduced until 1986 (Moore, 2011:20). Before this, hacking, or even cracking, was not recognised as a crime. This gives us an indication where the clacks technology is in its progression. The crackers in *Going Postal* believe that the clacks system can improve lives and their presence indicates the hope that new technology bring. Dickens only focuses on the negative effects of advancements in technology when it manifests a certain mindset, such as Gradgrind’s utilitarian approach to facts. Pratchett, on the other hand, points out both positive and negative effects as technology presents to a person’s mindset, but places the focus on the potential abuse that results when such technology is not handled with proper care. It is in its abuse that human relationships begin to deteriorate, as the relations of the clacks directors do.

The social commentary presented by both Dickens and Pratchett focus on similar repercussions of technological advance and captures the conflict in social change that looms with it. This conflict is captured on a textual level in the discourse of the characters and the narrators.

In *Hard Times*, instead of refracting the author’s opinion through the filter of different languages or tones, the combination and contrast of two prominent tones reveal the struggle that rise with social change. Dickens presents conflicting opinions relating to the importance of compassion and human relationships when the value of facts are given preference. The conflicting opinions take form in a manner similar to Bakhtin’s idea of heteroglossia. These conflicting opinions reveal a glimpse of a phase in social change as industrial

advances ultimately changes the way people assess technology, its use and its effects on people. In placing a dialogical distance between the characters who strive to keep ahead of technological advance and those who prefer to focus on compassion, Dickens' scrutiny of industrialisation is revealed. The difference between the industrial and compassionate tones used by the characters, and their resulting actions highlight the value Dickens places on compassion in a time that social changes proliferate.

Pratchett in turn provides features of heteroglossia with conflicting opinions on technological advances, expressing its potential to breed greed and passion, forage human relationships, or to alienate them completely. Compared to the authoritative control of *Hard Times's* themes, the satire in *Going Postal* is messier, but also effective. Instead of providing scrutiny of technological advances, Pratchett focuses on the resulting conflict that comes from old technology replacing new technology and the difference in approaches to this change. The discourse found in *Going Postal* comically tracks the different social approaches to new technology, offering isolation and self-indulgence on the one hand, and functionality to improve human relations on the other. This is a step in social change recognisable in our modern world. Unlike Dickens, Pratchett does not consider technology to be a threat, but warns people against its misuse.

In this sense, *Going Postal* becomes a comic guideline to remind people that compassion is a necessary tool in the workplace. Bakhtin's statement conceiving the written word with the capacity to register momentary phases of social change is evident in the conflicting opinions illustrated by Dickens and Pratchett and the aspects of heteroglossia of their novels. Pratchett even notes in the closing of his interview that people should look back at what history has given us and take it to mind. In his words, "I think we should remember, where we've been and how we got here, because if you don't know where you've been or how you got here, you don't know where you're going" (Pratchett, 2010).

CHAPTER 6: DICKENS'S CIRCUS AND PRATCHETT'S CARNIVAL

Imagination, not intelligence, is what made us human.

– Terry Pratchett¹⁸

At the centre of the literary carnivalesque that Bakhtin investigates is the presentation of freedom in many forms, and its methods of subverting hierarchy and seriousness. As previously noted, the description Bakhtin gives to the carnival states it as a time subjected only to the “laws of freedom” and promotes revival and renewal (Bakhtin, 1984b:7). This renewal and revival is often preceded by a downgrading, as in the case of the carnival king. The carnival king (usually a jester) would be crowned and decrowned to create a continuation of authority shifts which emphasises the merger of the low and the lofty and promotes change (Bakhtin, 1984b: 123). What Bakhtin also terms the “feast of becoming” results in a temporary liberation from the prevailing hierarchy, norms and prohibitions (Bakhtin, 1984b:10). In this sense, the carnival can have both a comic and a serious role, mocking or parodying society with subjective criticism in mind. Carnival culture, humour and laughter thus emphasise the absence of formality, endorsing the idea of a free, equal society (albeit temporary within the frame of the carnival).

Morson and Emerson (1990) theorise that Bakhtin’s carnival has two separate images, reflecting both a humanistic and an antihumanistic view. They argue that Bakhtin’s theory points towards an image of an antihumanistic carnival that seeks only to mock and not to imply progress, creating a “depersonalizing” atmosphere that does not communicate effectively (Morson & Emerson, 1990:440-441). Alternatively, the humanistic carnival view suggests what is labelled a “responsible carnival” that adds a positive aspect to the carnival actions, stressing Bakhtin’s description of carnival as “destructive in order to affirm” (Morson & Emerson, 1990:440-441).

¹⁸ Pratchett in Pringle, 2006.

Some of these aspects are relevant to this investigation as it relates to the seemingly humorous social commentary present in the novels of Dickens and Pratchett, with a subjective serious side. This chapter will explore these aspects as they manifest particularly in *Hard Times* and *Snuff*. As the carnival promotes equality and freedom, Dickens argues that a society which places importance on imagination and compassion stimulates equality and freedom from monotony. Of course the circus does not directly correspond to the Bakhtinian carnival. However, there are aspects associated with the carnival found in the novel and aids this investigation. Here seriousness is deliberately satirised through the utilitarian characters, whose rational thinking fails them in the space where the ability to use fancy and imagination thrives. Although Dickens does not set out to present a carnivalistic view, his emphasis on an over-sympathetic society governed by fancy resembles a humanistic portrayal. However, this portrayal does not reconcile the members of this carnival to reality. Some of the circus characters are also reminiscent of Bakhtin's description of the appearance and function of the grotesque. While the circus characters are not portrayed as fully realistic, they serve to add a level of indirect satire when placed against the vividly contrasted political economists.

In Pratchett's case, the Discworld can arguably be seen as a better developed humanistic version of the Bakhtinian carnival. Pratchett uses the comic space of the Discworld to humourously present the equality and freedom imagination and fancy can bring. This gives the reader a glimpse of what is possible, while critically contrasting it to the world of seriousness in true carnival fashion. The grotesque element of the carnival especially features here as the grotesque uses degradation as its primary principle to promote renewal and change. In *Snuff*, this can be attributed to the portrayal of the Discworld's goblin race.

6.1 *Hard Times*: Decrowning Gradgrind

Although Sleary's travelling horse-riding circus bears little resemblance to the untamed chaos that rules the Bakhtinian carnivalesque, some of the circus's aspects overlap with the ideas behind the Bakhtinian carnival. Not intended as a source of such chaos, Dickens's circus is meant to be a humanistic presentation

of a world governed by fancy. In this endeavour, it shares many characteristics with Bakhtin's perception of the carnivalesque, but uses these aspects in a responsible, "Victorian" manner.

Dickens's presentation of the circus and its role in the novel have received much criticism. Presented as a counterbalance to the utilitarianism of the Gradgrinds, many critics consider this function of the circus lacking and find it very unrealistic. Michael Wheeler labelled the attempt a failure (Wheeler, 1979:72) while Gribble recognised its potential, but admits that it does not provide a self-sufficient answer to the problem it explores (Gribble, 2004:439). F.R. Leavis (2012) argued that the circus is not representative of Victorian travelling circuses and that Dickens's version is fraught with sentimentality. This may, however, have been the intended effect. Nayak and Mohapatra (1995) argues that the Dickensian fancy, as represented by the circus, is presented as marginal to society, and states that Dickens tends to "mystify the daily lives of the circus people by dressing them up as culture" (Nayak & Mohapatra, 1995:82).

Lodge (1966) also suggests that the role of the circus people is to merely show aspects of a contrasting world instead of providing a better alternative. He explains that: "as long as the circus-folk represent a kind of life that is anarchic, seedy, socially disreputable, but cheerful and humane, they are acceptable and enjoyable. But when they are offered as agents or spokesmen of social and moral amelioration, we reject them" (Lodge, 1966:162). This is in line with Leavis's notion that recognises *Hard Times* as a "moral fable" (Leavis, 2012).

The circus is not created to actively rebel against social norms and does not seek to actively overthrow hierarchies. Nevertheless, taking Lodge's argument of an anarchic representative into account, Dickens's over-sympathetic presentation does contain some carnivalistic elements. While it is true that the circus is a "temporary liberation from prevailing truth" as the carnival describes, it does not aspire to the "revolutionary" quality that the Bakhtinian carnival has (Bakhtin, 1984b:10, 92). The circus's function is to act as a temporary escape from the oppressive fact-oriented worldview of the utilitarian perspective, but it does not (and does not aim to) present a solution to this worldview as a lifestyle. This is

noticeable in the way the circus people are portrayed in Chapter 4 of Book 1. The chapter serves to introduce the people of Sleary's horsemanship and is also the point where Sissy Jupe leaves the circus to join the Gradgrinds. It is one of the few scenes in the novel that actively involve more than one circus member.

From the beginning of the chapter the circus and its surroundings offer a stark contrast to the rest of Coketown. The public-house where the circus people reside, named the "Pegasus's arms", offer a mythological and theatrical introduction to the house (Dickens, 2012a: 25). The mythical Pegasus is the direct opposite of the mechanical description of the quadruped described by Bitzer a few chapters earlier. The image of the horse is later repeated when Bitzer is frustrated by Sleary's trained dancing horse, which neatly presents the contrasting world of fancy and fact in this simple symbol (Humphreys, 2008:397). Every aspect of the circus company also sharply contrasts with its surroundings. As Clausson points out, the general cultural variety of the circus, with its Gothic architecture and its Japanese and Indian riders opposes the bland uniformity of Coketown, where everything looks the same (Clausson, 2010:174).

As Sissy searches for her father, Gradgrind and Bounderby meet the circus folk. The people of the circus are described with animal imagery and exaggerated bodies, a visual display of their devotion to their art. Mr E.W.B. Childers has a chest "much too broad, as his legs were too short" and looks "a most remarkable sort of Centaur" (Dickens, 2012a:27). Childers and master Kidderminster walk "with their legs wider apart than the general run of men" as indication that they spend much time on horseback and Childers also behaves much like a horse, shaking his long hair in such a manner that "all shook at once" (Dickens, 2012a:27,29).

This exaggeration puts us in mind of the grotesque aspect of the carnival. As the grotesque emphasises exaggeration, the overstated aspects of the circus members who are so in touch with horses that it seems to affect their bodies, transforms them into references to the natural world (Humphreys, 2008:397). The unconventional appearance of the grotesque, according to Bakhtin, gains its satirical function when moral satisfaction is drawn when the reader realises the

portrayal is intended to be mocked (Bakhtin, 1984b:106). The circus characters present an unconventional version of this grotesque element as the satire in the passage is not directed at them, but rather at the economists to whom they are contrasted. Like Leavis, readers may have found it improbable for circus folk to take on such an appearance. However when placed next to the rigid Gradgrind, himself described in very square terms, and Bounderby, this serves to exaggerate the contrast between stiff economists and artists of fancy. This also emphasises the direct differences between the two communities, and paves the way for the contrast between them to only deepen.

The manner of the circus folk is also unashamedly eccentric and at times even inappropriate. During the conversation the circus people show little restraint in their dislike for Gradgrind and Bounderby. Kidderminster, offended by Bounderby's condescending manner, calls him "on the Tight-jeff". Childers constantly makes sarcastic retorts at the two men and remarks that enough of Bounderby might bring the building they are in to the ground (Dickens, 2012a:28). The circus people's language is in general filled with terms that only the circus people understand and their use of these specialised terms greatly upsets the well-educated economists. This ability to ridicule the economists with their ridiculous language is another aspect of the grotesque that aids in satirical presentation (Bakhtin, 1981:29). In the passage, the various specialised terms the circus people use, such as "nine-oils", "missing tips", "tight-Jeff" and "ponging" mock Bounderby and Gradgrind on a linguistic level as it is beyond the comprehension of their limited frameworks. Gradgrind has to force himself solemnly to use a word such as "goosed", and Bounderby is so offended by the clownish term as a "cackler" that Childers has to translate it for him to "speaker" (Dickens, 2012a:29).

One of the most prominent characteristics of the carnival comes to the fore in one particular remark. Commenting on the queer nature of the circus people's language, Bounderby adds his well-known phrase, "a man who raised himself" to which Kiddermeister retorts "lower yourself, then" (Dickens, 2012a:28). This brings to mind the crowning and decrowning of the carnival king. In this case, Kiddermeister foreshadows the decrowning and lowering of Bounderby after he

is revealed as a fraud. The same crowning and decrowning sequence is imminent for Gradgrind, as will soon be discussed.

Leavis found the circus folk “fraught with sentimentality” because it is not meant to be an accurate representation of Victorian circus people. To be perceived as the direct contrast of anything rigid, they are portrayed as a group contrasting stupidity and prudence. This can be considered a specialised version of the dualistic concept associated with the Bakhtinian carnival. This is effectively shown in the following passage:

They all assumed to be mighty rakish and knowing, they were not very tidy in their private dresses, they were not at all orderly in their domestic arrangements, and the combined literature of the whole company would have produced but a poor letter on any subject. Yet there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people, a special inaptitude for any kind of sharp practice, and an untiring readiness to help and pity one another, deserving often of as much respect, and always of as much generous construction, as the every-day virtues of any class of people in the world (Dickens, 2012a:32)

While they may be conceived as foolish and stupid to the educated Gradgrind and Bounderby, they bring out and focus on the latent, caring side of human nature, which affords them a wisdom Gradgrind’s education cannot provide. In initial description, they seem inept when it comes to rational practicality. Yet despite this they understand the humane aspect of life, and their pity and generosity are their prime focus.

The same quality that makes them uneducated, makes them deserving of much respect, a feat neither Bounderby nor Gradgrind manages to achieve despite their efforts. Unlike Bounderby, who constantly tries to elevate himself beyond the lower classes, the people of the circus seem to represent the “every-day virtues of any class of people in the world”. This renders the idea of class ineffective to the circus folk, as they do not belong to just one class.

In addition to class, there is also no mention or need for a hierarchy among the circus people, as is also found in Bakhtin's carnival. All the members of the company participate in the company with no indication that one is more important than the other. The men and fathers do acrobatics, the women dance and the children are used as mythical fairies and cupids (Dickens, 2012a:32). Even the circus master, Mr Sleary, does not pretend to be of a higher stature than the other company members. Although he does refer to the members of the company as "my clown" and "my people", he is never condescending towards them. When addressing Gradgrind, he pleads that he must "make the best of them" (Dickens, 2012a:37). By asking Gradgrind to make the best of them, he includes himself as one of the company rather than its owner. With his comical lisp and wheezy voice, his fondness for brandy and his ridiculous appearance, having one fixed eye and one loose, Sleary also adds to the grotesque image of the circus people.

If *Hard Times* is considered to be a "moral fable" or a "parable" as critics have claimed, it is also possible to see the roles characteristic of the carnival play out on a somewhat dismal note in *Hard Times*. This is with specific reference to the metaphoric carnival king. As a carnival king is crowned at the beginning of the carnival, he is also inevitably decrowned, which comes to indicate a death and rebirth in the carnival sense, creating a sequence of death and renewal. In *Hard Times*, it is possible to see Gradgrind as this carnival king. Being crowned at the beginning of the novel as "sir – peremptorily Thomas Gradgrind" the undisputed "man of realities" and the schoolmaster of the school who reigns by facts, Gradgrind is the ideal candidate to thrive. This is until his utilitarian doctrine turns on him and destroys the lives of all his children, with the exception of the adopted Sissy Jupe.

Gradgrind remains above the other characters in the novel until the realisation comes that his son, Tom has become a thief. It is at this point that the decrowning of Gradgrind begins. Inevitably, his decrowning takes place within the carnival setting of the circus in Chapter 7 of Book 3. Here Louisa, Sissy and Gradgrind travel to meet the fleeing Tom, who, by instruction from Sissy, has taken to hiding with Sleary's travelling horse-riding company. The beginning of the chapter shows the decrowning of Gradgrind begin as he locks himself in his office, and

appears a day later, looking much more “aged and bent” (Dickens, 2012a:236). However it seems as though Gradgrind has found the latent compassion hidden beneath the fog of facts he lives by, and which brings him a glimmer of the humane wisdom that the circus people share. In addition to having aged, when he emerges, he looks “a wiser man, and a better man, than in the days when in this life he wanted nothing – but facts” (Dickens, 2012a:236).

He travels to the circus, where he finds Tom, now dressed up as a black servant in circus clothes, and a truly pitiful sight. Suddenly the hardness of facts is gone as Gradgrind has to behold his creation. The description of Tom is filled with words conveying Gradgrind’s desolation. He sits down, “forlorn” on the clown’s performing chair and gazes at the “disgraceful grotesqueness” that he has “the misery to call his son” (Dickens, 2012a:242). Tom is now another grotesque figure of the carnival, becoming the living embodiment of shame in his coarse coat made of exaggerated cuffs and flaps and his painted face that makes for the visage of a “grimly, detestably, ridiculously shameful whelp” (Dickens, 2012a:243).

As if the humiliation of his son is not enough to decrown the king of facts, a battle follows with what was once his brightest student, Bitzer, who is now himself a grotesque fact-producing android. To Bitzer Gradgrind is forced to beg forgiveness for the safety of his son. When Bitzer is defeated by the circus people, Gradgrind is decrowned, and the path is made open for his renewal. Although no true indication of renewal is given, the closing words on Gradgrind suggest his path to bending his immovable facts into a much more flexible direction.

It must be said that although the circus acts as refuge and partly as a hero in the novel by saving the doomed Tom Gradgrind from Bitzer, it is clear that the circus is not an alternative answer to utilitarianism. Like Bakhtin’s carnival, the circus amuses people, and presents that “brief second life” where compassion reigns and all is equal. In reality the circus’s bohemian and peripatetic atmosphere is not a viable home for Sissy, who must leave it in order to grow and to thrive (Gribble, 2004:440). It also offers no solution to the problem of utilitarianism, but

merely indicates that there is an alternative way of life where human values are emphasised. The circus sets the scene for renewal, humiliation and revival, much as Bakhtin's carnival does. As Bakhtin indicated about the format of the actual carnival in the nineteenth century, the humour found in *Hard Times* is satiric, but not entirely carnivalistic as the laughter that unifies all is absent in light of the satire the novel portrays.

6.2 Snuff: The “responsible” carnival of organised chaos

The aspects of Bakhtinian carnival and carnival laughter in particular can be found prominently in Pratchett's Discworld novels. Pratchett's Discworld, as we have seen, is not only a comic alternative to reality, but also a satiric one. Within the fantasy space, the whole of Discworld, with its improbable eccentricities and its non-official nature, becomes a carnival space. In Butler's discussion on theories of humour, he makes the point that the Discworld always operates “within the carnival time of the collapse or reversal of hierarchies” (Butler, 2004:84). He even goes as far as to say that Pratchett's work is the nearest we have to Bakhtin's written folk humour (Butler, 2004:84).

Pratchett also presents his own version of a carnivalesque space that in places overlap with Bakhtin's ideas. The carnivalesque enters Pratchett's Discworld as a “second life” to all that is ordinary. However the carnival in Pratchett's novels is much more abstract and detached from time and space. The Discworld is subjected to no laws but those of the carnival and laughter and thrives on reversibility (Butler, 2004:86). Constructed as a parody for clichés in the fantasy genre, the Discworld constantly lies on the edge of anarchy. Pratchett names reversibility as one of Discworld's main functions, describing it as “taking something that you know is ridiculous and treating it as if it is serious” (Pratchett, 2008). This is evident in many of the inner workings of Discworld. Ankh-Morpork is an inversion in enough itself. Unlike the famous cities of other fantasy worlds, Ankh-Morpork is not a proud city. Expecting white towers and flags rearing over the landscape, travellers to Ankh-Morpork are met with the visage of a city that “sort of skulked, clinging to the soil as if afraid someone might steal it” (Pratchett, 1989a:31).

The city also seems to operate on organised chaos. The famous guilds of the city, such as the thieves' guild and the assassin's guild, provide "organised crime" to the city, but present the comic, inverted image of legal crime. The reversibility of Discworld also explains why most of Pratchett's heroic characters often do not have any heroic characteristics. Rincewind is a cowardly wizard who knows only one spell; Moist von Lipwig is a con artist in charge of people's valuable information, Granny Weatherwax is described as being wicked by instinct, but good by choice.

Ultimately this is where the humanistic value of the Discworld novels seeps through. In a space absent of laws, ethics still manage to creep through because it wills to do so. Hanes reflects that many of the Discworld heroes often face leaps of faith, where their choices are always to surrender the comfortable certainty of what is, in favour of what ought to be, despite this being against their nature (Hanes, 2004:180). This is especially noticeable in Samuel Vimes's character.

Despite his achievements, Vimes is a very unlikely hero, being described upon introduction as "a skinny, unshaven collection of bad habits marinated in alcohol" (Pratchett, 1989a:67). He is not courageous or ambitious by nature and prefers to see ambition as "something that happened to other people" (Pratchett, 1989a:62). But Vimes is good at his job as a policeman, and in doing his job; he faces most of the inversions of the Discworld as much as he is one. In contrast to the reigning anarchy often found in carnival spaces, Vimes appears as a character just stable enough to keep his surroundings from falling into chaos. Clute agrees that a selected few of Pratchett's characters, which include Vimes, are kept as the "adults" who "labour mightily to keep the Discworld a venue for comedic stability" (Clute, 2004). Vimes provides the seriousness that gets brought down to earth by the Discworld's own brand of carnival space.

While Ankh-Morpork can be seen as the primary focus of carnivalistic inversions, these inversions branch out to other spaces of Discworld. In *Snuff*, its parodying power moves to the city's adjacent countryside. As the city becomes a comic inversion of a fantasy city, the countryside becomes a parody of the Victorian

English countryside. This sets the scene for more inversions, made all the more serious as Vimes becomes inverted as well. As revealed by the analysis in Chapter 4, Vimes finds it difficult to play the role of a duke instead of the practical policeman he is used to being. Here Vimes takes on the form of the carnival's crowned and decrowned king. In the true fashion of the inverted hierarchy, at the beginning of the novel Vimes is forced to hand in his police badge and go on holiday under his new title as the duke of Ankh. Once in the countryside, he is made the fool by the landscape and its inhabitants. He reflects that in the country, "the world is back to front" (Pratchett, 2011b:53). All the skills that would normally aid him are useless to him in the unfamiliar setting. While he still retains the title of Duke, he is generally disliked in the town because of his title. Prejudices reign in the countryside, which results in Vimes immediately being labelled as one of "them as grinds the faces of the poor" (Pratchett, 2011b:58). Despite his position, he is later arrested in such comical fashion that he needs to aid the country police officer in getting him arrested by reciting the correct procedure. This directly parodies his position as a police officer.

The unusual hobby his son picks up also further degrades him, and also presents a characteristic of the carnivalesque. As Bakhtin explains, the carnival focuses on that which is seen as unsavoury in the eyes of classic aesthetics (Bakhtin, 1984b:25). In *Snuff*, this is reflected in young Sam's fascination with the excrement of animals. After reading a book named *The World of Poo* young Sam embarks on an adventure to study the excrement of all the animals he can find and embarrasses his father in the process. The subject is given mock seriousness. Young Sam speaks "as if imparting the results of strict research" when describing the variety of shapes poo take on (Pratchett, 2011b:88).

The narrative style of *Snuff* enhances Vimes's decrowning by incorporating and parodying features of early nineteenth-century romantic writing. A characteristic of the carnival that Butler explores in his essay on Pratchett finds that Pratchett harnesses parodying power the carnival would place on sacred texts. During these carnivals, words from sacred texts would be twisted and applied to earthy acts. Instead of using sacred texts, Pratchett parodies fantasy stories or fairy tales. Butler uses an example from *Mort* (1987) in which the fairy tale of the

princess and the pea is distorted. In the distorted version, princesses are remembered to be beautiful, and noble, but said to be able to “pee through a dozen mattresses” (Butler, 2004:85). This brings what is thought to be divine, down to earth and introduces a bodily aspect famously associated with the carnival.

In *Snuff*, texts from the early nineteenth century are parodied, with specific focus on the works of Jane Austen. Parodying the famous introductory lines from *Pride and Prejudice* (originally published 1813), *Snuff*'s dustcover prompt begins by saying: “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a policeman taking a holiday will barely have had time to open his suitcase before he finds his first corpse” (Pratchett, 2011b). This serves to set the scene for the novel as a parody of the nineteenth-century countryside, and also plays on the tendency in detective fiction for policemen to find work even when he is not on duty.

The countryside itself is also a parody playground of nineteenth-century habits. When arriving at the Ramkin estate, Vimes's wife, Sybil mentions that they have been invited to various balls and remarks that these occasions is “all about getting the daughters married to suitable gentlemen” (Pratchett, 2011b:32). This coincides with the theme from *Pride and Prejudice* as the Bennet sisters also hunt for proper suitors. The Ramkin estate is also a parody of the large getaways the English aristocrats kept in the countryside. It has butlers and gamekeepers and servants who are accustomed to not look the master of the house in the eye. Vimes, with a decidedly modern world-view, stands out like a sore thumb.

The most prominent example of this parody is found when Vimes visits one of his wife's friends, whose family bear a remarkable resemblance to the Bennet family. Ariadne is blessed with six daughters who see themselves as “gentlewomen” and think it scandalous to do any sort of work. Their ultimate aim is to find and marry a gentleman (Pratchett, 2011b:68). This concept utterly confuses Vimes, who immediately sets about encouraging the girls to make their way in the world and find a suitable job. The stature of nineteenth-century gentlemen is thoroughly brought down to earth in a carnivalistic fashion by Vimes. Upon hearing the definition of a gentleman as a “man who does not have to sully his hands by

working”, Vimes emasculates the term by simply referring to a gentleman as “a layabout” (Pratchett, 2011b:68). He also brings the concept of a gentleman down to the lower stratum by commenting on his own clothes. While Sybil remarks that Vimes looks “just like a country gentleman” in his new breeches, Vimes simply remarks that “country gentlemen had different arrangements in the groinal department” (Pratchett, 2011b:67). By shifting the focus of what should be the image of a charismatic nobleman; this comment brings the impractical aspects of this visage into question.

Pratchett takes the parodying of nineteenth-century ideas to a new level when he introduces a character, incidentally one of the daughters, with a remarkable resemblance to Jane Austen herself. The daughter is named Jane and indicates that she endeavours to be a writer. To Vimes, she also seems “somewhat brighter” than her sisters (Pratchett, 2011b:71). She explains to Vimes that she is working on a novel exploring the complexity of personal relationships, which is the main theme of Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. However this is also brought low by Vimes. In true carnivalesque manner which battles against seriousness, Vimes suggests that she puts “a lot of fighting, dead bodies falling out of wardrobes and maybe a war” into the novel (Pratchett, 2011b:72). Whether she takes his advice is unclear, but the end of *Snuff* brings the parody of Austen’s work to the foreground as it indicates that Jane did indeed publish a bestseller, dedicated to Vimes, and named *Pride and Extreme Prejudice*.

While Butler briefly explores Pratchett’s parody of fantasy through carnivalisation as part of his theories on Pratchett’s humour, it is evident that Pratchett parodies many other genres as well. In addition to its parodying function, the carnivalisation of *Snuff* serves to highlight the importance of human values and fancy in the light of the rigid and old-fashioned aristocrats. The narrative style of *Snuff* harnesses the power of carnival laughter and the grotesque to bring the reader a close-up experience of the novel’s action. *Snuff*’s indirect discourse focuses primarily on Vimes’s consciousness to bring the reader closer to the experiences of the character. By relating the individual consciousness, the reader experiences the action of the novel from the point of view of the carnival

characters, removing the metaphorical stage and footlights Bakhtin mentions, and making the reader part of the carnival.

This can be seen in the passage where Vimes meets Stinky. Although a description of a goblin would serve as a sufficient introduction, the reader is introduced to Stinky through Vimes's experience of its overwhelming odour. When Vimes enters the countryside lock-up, Vimes notes the "fragrant memory" the pigs who usually occupy the area left in the room, but reflects that "for a boy from Ankh-Morpork this counted as fresh air" (Pratchett, 2011b:115). If this serves as a basis of what the definition of a bad smell would be to Vimes, this helps the reader experience the goblin's smell from the point of view of someone from Ankh-Morpork:

Anyone who walked the streets of Ankh-Morpork was more or less immune to stinks, and indeed there was now a flourishing, if that was the word, hobby of stink collecting. You couldn't bottle the intrinsic smell of a goblin because it wasn't so much a stink as a sensation, the sensation in fact that your dental enamel was evaporating and any armour you might have was rusting at some speed (Pratchett, 2011b:119).

The fact that the smell of the goblin is experienced on such an extreme level by a person accustomed to bad smells serves to intensify the experience for the reader, and exaggerates the appearance of the goblin.

The goblins, which appear as a metaphor for oppressed races, become the primary source of the comic grotesque in *Snuff*. Their plight is a serious one, but the reader experiences the goblins through the eyes of Vimes, which provides scattered comic and grotesque descriptions. This periodically downplays the seriousness surrounding the situation the goblins find themselves in without sacrificing the sympathetic tone needed to present them as victims.

The Discworld goblins are a degraded race, perceived in a frozen state of becoming. Just like the grotesque images Bakhtin examines, the goblins are comically grotesque in order to degrade seriousness, but also focus on renewal as its function. By the Discworld inhabitants they are described as "half-finished

folk” and in the opinion of some, “insolent creations made as a mockery of mankind” (Pratchett, 2011b:121,147). Marginalised by society, they are believed to “live on the edge, often because they have been driven there” (Pratchett, 2011b:11). Even the goblins describe themselves as a “waste people” (Pratchett, 2011b:151). This stereotype, which lowers them to the status of pests and vermin, is the point from which they seek to improve themselves.

Not much is said about their appearance, but the suggestion is made that they are a small and strange humanoid race, with a rugged face “that only a mother could tolerate and perhaps love” (Pratchett, 2011b:151). The religion of the goblins, known as “Unggue” is also inherently grotesque, and another example of the novel’s inversion. The religion of Unggue, while only briefly discussed, has similarities with the grotesque body. Like the grotesque body, which focuses on the body’s primal needs as part of its degradation, the goblin religion of Unggue believes in the sanctity of bodily excretions. Following this “remarkably complex resurrection-based” religion, goblins store many bodily excretions including earwax, fingernail clippings and snot in Unggue pots (Pratchett, 2011b:9). As the degradation of the grotesque body is part of its journey towards renewal, it is suggested that the degrading collection of bodily excretions is functional for the goblins in their hope for an afterlife. This tradition brings about much disgust from other races and is one of the reasons the goblins are marginalised.

Some goblins believe that their religion is not the answer to their process towards renewal. While some humans, like Felicity Beedle help to educate the goblins, others disown their religion in favour of becoming “modern”. Billy Slick, the goblin working in the Ankh-Morporkian junkyard is embarrassed about his background. In the spirit of renewal, he leaves behind the religion of Unggue saying that he is working his way up, and “cannot be bothered with fairy stories” (Pratchett, 2011b:229).

Religion is often an object of comic ridicule in Pratchett’s novels, and on the Discworld, the reigning belief is that gods grow when belief in them grows, as is depicted in *Small Gods* (1992) (Clute, 2004:27). It is therefore not impossible for Vimes to imagine an obscure god with an obscure amount of belief in him to

create the goblin race. Vimes criticises the god for its creation, but chooses not to blame the goblins for their fate. The gift of self-knowledge, a dooming feature in Vimes's eye, is in fact what attracts sympathy to them, and enables them towards renewal.

The carnival characteristic of death and renewal takes on a literal meaning in the novel as it is the death of one of the goblins that catches Vimes's attention and sets him on his investigative path. Although Miss Beedle claims that goblins are used to undeserving and casual deaths, the murder causes Stinky to continually seek the police's help to find justice. It is Vimes's investigation that ultimately buries the thought of goblins as vermin and makes the world aware of their talents, ultimately enabling renewal.

In the passage, Vimes reflects that this sense of self-knowledge leads the goblins to believe they are rubbish. However, with the help of people like Miss Beedle and Vimes, this sense of self-knowledge is directed in a positive direction. A prominent example is the talent the goblin girl Tears of the Mushroom expresses in her music. Without giving up her status as goblin to become what Miss Beedle expresses as a "fake human", the goblin girl manages to steal the hearts of the Discworld's elite and encourages the law for goblins to have human rights. This is the renewal the goblins find.

From this it can be said that Vimes is intentionally degraded to set the renewal of the countryside in motion. The resulting image has much in common with Bakhtin's carnival and promotes a space in which freedom and equality reign. The carnival enters Dickens's world primarily to serve a sentimental role and to present an attack on rigidity in favour of freedom and fancy. The carnivalesque characteristics found in *Hard Times* serve to intensify the contrast between a life lived only through facts and a life in which imagination reigns and brings both worlds to the extreme. When the carnivalesque enters *Snuff* the result is, in Morson & Emerson's terms, both destructive and humanistic. The destructive elements, including the degradation of Vimes and the goblins set him on the path to affirm human values even to those who are not human.

The relationship between the Discworld and Bakhtin's carnival is only touched on here and could merit a separate study further investigating the presence of carnivalistic aspects in the other aspects of the Discworld. While it may seem that many aspects of the Discworld exist in chaos, it is always organised chaos. The nature of the Discworld's inversions make them improbable to work in reality, but in the fantasy space, it presents a responsible carnival with the ability to thrive on the edge of anarchy, but never losing its grip on humanistic morals.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Readers of Pratchett, in all their millions, have, whether they realise it or not, been given some serious lessons in politics, civics and ethics.

Edward James¹⁹

Terry Pratchett has been formally and informally “found guilty of literature” and social commentary by his critics (Butler et al., 2004:ix). This dissertation has set out to explore the portrayal of social commentary in selected works by Terry Pratchett and the author he is frequently compared to, Charles Dickens. The dissertation set out to investigate the statement comparing Pratchett to a “20th century Dickens” (Thomas quoted in Butler et al., 2004: viii). As method for this study, Mikhail Bakhtin’s concepts of polyphony, heteroglossia and the carnival served as a starting point from which social commentary in the novels of Dickens and Pratchett were examined.

Examining corrupted governing structures as theme in *Bleak House* by Dickens and *Going Postal* by Pratchett reveals aspects of both monologic and polyphonic discourse in both novels. The lack of diversity found in the caricatured Chancery lawyers’ discourse and behaviour exposes their satirical representation and reveals a measure of authorial control. A similar strategy is found in *Going Postal* as the clacks company directors also experience uniformity of thought and discourse. This reveals the novel’s monologic attributes and satirises the characters associated with these attributes. In contrast to this, the discourse of Esther Summerson displays aspects of a polyphonic tone as she is able to differ from the author in some of her thoughts. While Dickens already endorses a certain degree of morality in his novels, Esther’s thoughts and actions point towards the need for an even more active method of social reform. Pratchett’s protagonist is also surrounded by aspects of a polyphonic tone that not only aids

¹⁹ James, 2004:216.

in building suspense in the novel, but also allows the character to develop thoughts into action.

The potential for different voices and perspectives to further a novel's social commentary was further investigated by analysing the relation between different speech manners and its links to character, narrator and theme. The theme used as a starting point for this was social class and race. In *Bleak House* the narrator's descriptions of the novel's aristocratic characters are undercut by Dickens's intention to criticise what he perceives to be an idle, ineffective elite. The result is that many of the passages dealing with aristocrats become double-voiced. On the one hand the thoughts of the aristocratic characters are presented while a strong underlying tone of criticism regarding aristocracy presides over their passages. A similar authoritative tone is visible in Dickens's descriptions of London's poor classes. While their speech manners are not considered historically correct, their speech and thoughts are double-voiced as they are organised with the intention of eliciting sympathy from the reader.

In contrast to this, Pratchett's criticism is presented in a more subtle manner. While the narrator in *Snuff* serves to present what is considered the "common view" on class and race, the novel's characters speak with a great variety of overlapping speech manners which purposefully clashes with that of the narrator's common view. Pratchett's criticism of class and race comes through in the speech and thoughts of the characters, creating an internally persuasive argument for his social commentary.

The result of Pratchett's subtle, but strong criticism is considered an indirect response to Dickens's criticism as both authors criticise an ineffective aristocracy. While Dickens criticises the ineffective roles aristocrats hold in powerful positions, Pratchett expands on this by investigating the consequences of their actions. By building on Dickens's argument, Pratchett's criticism bears resemblance to the Bakhtinian notion of an open-ended dialogue between texts as it investigates a subject (here class and race) and brings new meaning to it.

Features of the open-ended dialogue are also found in Dickens's and Pratchett's thematic treatment of social change and technological revolutions. While Dickens examines the effect of technology on human relationships, Pratchett indirectly builds on this discussion by expanding the argument to the positive functions of technology for human relations. In *Hard Times*, a conflict of tones presents the different effects technology has on the characters, with a focus on morality and compassion. *Going Postal* features a similar variety of conflicting tones that depict the resulting conflict of technological change, with the importance of compassion as focus.

Dickens's circus in *Hard Times* bears some possibly unintentional resemblance to Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. Sleary's circus is created not as the realistic presentation some critics wished for, but to instead be a space for moral freedom and equality. The carnivalesque also shares many characteristics with Pratchett's Discworld. Being a fantasy setting filled with destructive but functional elements, Discworld is a realm of organised chaos. Much like in Bakhtin's carnival, it is reigned by comic inversions, ridicules authority and subtly expresses elements of degradation. However, the primary difference between Discworld and Bakhtin's carnival is the fact that Discworld is productive and ultimately promotes a measure of morality.

From the beginning of the Discworld's creation, the fantasy space appears as a testing ground for moral ideas that mature with time. In this sense, the Discworld can be considered a responsible version of Bakhtin's carnival that incorporates chaos and liberating inversions without falling into complete anarchy. While this has only briefly been explored here, a separate study analysing elements of the carnival in the Discworld series is a field with vast amounts of potential. For example, this study examines the resemblances between Samuel Vimes and the carnival king, but it does not yet consider the Discworld's own hints of a "carnival king". From the suggestive content in the novels, the character called Captain Carrot could be considered for this as it is suggested that he is Ankh-Morpork's true king. Additionally the notion of degradation and renewal Vimes and the goblins experience and that is explored here can also be examined in other Discworld's other novels.

Pratchett's novels have emerged as what can be considered recasts of the social themes explored by Dickens, tackling similar themes in complex ways. As the issues Dickens examines evolve with time, so has Pratchett's way of writing adapted to accommodate these changes. The criticism presented on these problems takes on aspects of Dickens's original criticism, but builds on this as Pratchett uses a writing style that readers easily associate with, while maintaining an entertaining but informative style. Comparing Pratchett to, or naming him a contemporary Dickens is, however, an inadequate statement. While it is true that Pratchett's social commentary does relate to that of Dickens, their respective approaches and styles differ, as do the types of reform they envision.

Dickens's social commentary is presented in an authoritative manner, showcasing social problems through amusing caricatures and tragic characters with the aim to inspire reform. He places great emphasis on the impressions his characters leave on the reader as it is through these impressions that he seeks to manifest his social criticism. Taking into account the fact that Dickens was writing against the grain of Victorian society, this is an achievement in itself. A strong measure of anger is discernible in Dickens's criticism, but this criticism remains aimed at morality and human nature. Epic declarations such as that of Jo's death in *Bleak House* becomes the epitome of Dickens's authoritative call to moral reform.

Pratchett's engagement with social commentary is much more casual and internally persuasive in comparison to Dickens. There are no epic declarations calling for reform, but rather a display that convinces the reader of a moral standpoint against those who practise immoral conduct. Pratchett is not prepared to sacrifice a happy ending for the sake of social commentary and the endings of his novels showcase solutions to the problems he explores, whereas Dickens prefers to exhibit social problems with reform in mind. Discworld becomes a very functional comic space that reveals problems in contemporary society and also comments on its relationship with progress. The discourse found in *Going Postal* comically tracks different approaches and views on technology, and argues that technology has the capacity to enhance human relationships when used

correctly. This not only registers a moment of social change, but also provides further commentary on how contemporary society is affected by technology.

It can be argued that Pratchett may have been influenced or inspired by Dickens's dramatic caricatures and scrutiny of nineteenth-century England. Ultimately, Pratchett emerges as a social critic in his own right, indirectly recasting some of Dickens's arguments along the way. Praised for his parodying portrayals, Pratchett creates a new kaleidoscope of perspectives free from narrow-mindedness, resulting in entertainment with reflection. Pratchett's Discworld becomes a parodic playground for social commentary through the filter of fantasy. While the characters may be laughable and strange, their manner and language still resonate with our reality. Serious themes such as racism and capitalism are addressed through a medium accessible to contemporary readers, making it easy to recognise the criticism.

The level of responsiveness that emerges between the works of the two authors can be seen as evidence of Dickens's continued influence. Dickens critically inspects the effects the Industrial Revolution and utilitarianism will have on future generations, giving a small hint of some of the problems that evolved in Pratchett's novels. In turn, Pratchett looks towards the Victorian era, both criticising Victorian ideals from a contemporary viewpoint, and praising the technological progress achieved in this time. When viewed from Bakhtin's perspective, this can be termed as two utterances in an open-ended dialogue discussing social progress. This also has the capacity to be studied beyond these novels, and indeed beyond these two authors, with the possibility of investigating a dialogue on social commentary across several novelistic genres.

Anyone calling Pratchett a contemporary Dickens needs to take into account the individual progressive achievements of both authors. Pratchett and Dickens share an anger towards injustice that powers their writing and subsequent commentary. In this they are similar, but the results of their labour are unique to their own style. Dickens created a platform where opinions could be raised, readers educated and change considered. Pratchett recognises this platform and steps up to it to show readers how social problems can be dealt with in a vast

variety of ways. This is not limited to reality and subtly inspires others to do the same. In this it is true that Pratchett educates readers (sometimes unknowingly) on serious social matters as much as Dickens educated the Victorians. Pratchett picks up the reigns to further this commentary with his own personal flair.

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²⁰ This novel is a parody of the tale of the German legend, Dr Fausto, or Faust. To accentuate this, the title of the novel was stylised to appear as ~~Faust~~ *Eric*.

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