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"Let me Deal so Candidly with the Reader"

A Study of the Unnatural Spaces and Narrators of *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Discworld*

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Abstract

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels set in Ankh-Morpork are similar enough that both can be treated as belonging to the subgenre of comic fantasy. The narratives foreground the fantastic, written to entertain and amuse its readers but also contain societal criticism in the form of satire or parody. This paper compares the unnatural aspects of *Gulliver's Travels* and select City Watch instalments of *Discworld*. By using a combination of the fairly recent sub-discipline within narratology, unnatural narrative theory, and Genette's question of "*who speaks?*", this study analyses the narrators and the different kinds of unnatural spaces in which they speak. The analysis is divided into four chapters as follows: how to read the unnatural in a narrative, what constitutes an unnatural space, the respective narrator's voice, and finally, reliability of the narrators within their unnatural space. It becomes apparent that the narrators are unreliable, not only in terms of controlling the information the reader is allowed access to within the narrative but also because of spatiotemporal ambiguity within the narratives.

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Introduction

Even though Jonathan Swift and Terry Pratchett were born almost three centuries apart, their literature touches on several similar points. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Pratchett's *Discworld* contain satiric examinations of the human condition within fantastic or unnatural settings. Despite the temporal gap between the authors themselves, there exists less of such a gap within the literature this thesis will address. *Gulliver's Travels* is set during Swift's own time but events in the Discworld occur in a pseudo-mediaeval setting that sometimes might be mistaken for the 17th century, particularly in terms of technology. What Swift must accomplish by transitioning into the unnatural spaces, by use of unnatural storms or omitting information to the implied reader in terms of Gulliver's location, Pratchett may use indiscriminately because of spatiotemporal ambiguity. Because of Swift's spatiotemporal transitions and Pratchett's spatiotemporal ambiguity, one needs to deal with their respective narratives as fantasy literature. Nonetheless, it is fascinating to note that even though the authors are separated by almost three hundred years, there are similar concerns regarding their respective societies which both authors present and re-examine through the lens of humour using misanthropic characters in their narratives.

This study will treat *Gulliver's Travels* and *Discworld* novels as fantasy novels. The definition of what constitutes fantasy literature is at best opaque, or as Rayment writes, "[t]here is no agreement over whether 'Fantasy' is a genre, mode or stance … [nor is there] agreement over an exact timescale for 'Fantasy' texts. There is no agreement over the texts that can be considered as being part of the 'Fantasy' genre" but it is not for lack of effort (10). It is not an unreasonable assumption that the consequences of the various attempts to assert a fixed definition for the genre has resulted in the term becoming an umbrella from under which many subcategories of literary fantasy have since sprung.

One such subcategory is comic fantasy, consisting of satire or parody that feature or foreground the fantastic and unnatural. Satire within literature has been an integral part of prose fiction for centuries. There are three major styles of writing satirical texts: Horatian, Menippean and Juvenalian satire. Juvenalian satire is characterized by moral indignity or pessimism, whereas the Horatian style tends more to "mild mockery and playful wit", and

finally, the Menippean satire "deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes" ("Satire"; Frye 287). With wide-ranging targets in their works, authors of satiric narratives attack contemporaneous societal issues with sharply barbed hyperbole and cruel witticisms. That many narratives and authors have become immensely popular for their humorous jabs toward, and criticism of, well-known individuals, groups or ideologies is nothing new: Pope's "Rape of the Lock", and Huxley's *Brave New World* are but two well appreciated examples of this. Swift became known for his loquacious antiestablishmentarian—in the sense that Swift frequently directed his criticism at the upper echelons of English society— texts in which England's, and the United Kingdom's, authoritarian, class-divided and colonial society came under scrutiny and criticism. Swift's best known prose text is probably *Gulliver's Travels*, which established Swift as "the master of Juvenalian satire" ("Satire"). Succinctly put, this is the story of how Lemuel Gulliver travels to some fantastic, or unnatural, locations and manages to survive incredible ordeals only to become a misanthropic individual after his expulsion from Houyhnhnmland.

Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* is a fantasy series that consists of 41 instalments that occur on the Disc, thus its name. The narratives are usually divided into groups depending on which protagonist(s) features in the narrative: City Watch (12), Witches (11), the Wizards (11), is a popular way to split them but there are other instalments, independent of these categories that focus on Discworld culture, most notably *Pyramids* and *Small Gods*. Regardless of protagonist(s) and where on the Disc the plot unfolds, the narratives of Terry Pratchett provide the reader with the experience of a journey into an unnatural world in which the narrator relates hyperbolic or pseudo-hypocritical critique which applies to society and its glaring flaws.

Pratchett and Swift are similar in that they use the fantastic or the unnatural to criticize aspects of the society. It should be noted that the unnatural differs from the fantastic—although they can, and frequently do, co-exist within a narrative—in how the norm is presented within the narrative itself. With fantastic narratives, one may expect a sweeping introduction into an unknown world, where the parameters of its existence is made clear within the opening chapters of a narrative and abides by them throughout. The unnatural, on the other hand, establishes the world's norms in a similar manner but there is

instability and ambiguity within the world because the norms can be broken. The unnatural worlds of Swift and Pratchett are therefore also fantastic but a fantastic world is not necessarily unnatural. Two good examples of natural fantastic worlds would be J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth or Raymond Feist's Midkemia, where there is no deviation from the established norms, i.e., physics, magic, species or race relations within these worlds. The characters are unable to bend, break or manipulate the world into which they are written. The unnatural world, however, is malleable. There is little stability in how the world works, and particularly in long series such as *Discworld*, there are discrepancies to be found in terms of continuity, interior physics of the setting, and so forth.

The differing aspects of Swift's and Pratchett's narratives lie in their respective narrators and the focalizers. Due to the fact that Pratchett was such a prolific writer of the same universe, this study will analyse a selection of works pertaining to particular focalizers in order to provide contrast to Swift's autodiegetic narrator rather than the entirety of the *Discworld*. As this study will demonstrate, there are separate breaks in the respective narratives which offer the reader a chance to reflect on information directly pertaining to the relevant narrative while simultaneously urging the reader's attention to compare the situation with matters of society. There are also ambiguous statements that are irrevocably directed toward the implied reader which also addresses issues inside the narrative itself in terms of plot, progression or character development.

Since this study discusses works written centuries apart, it is difficult to define the implied reader. However, one might posit that the implied reader of Swift and Pratchett may be similar since both authors write comically fantastic narratives that contain socio-political commentary and criticism. Swift's and Pratchett's respective intended audiences is the adult reader with knowledge, and understanding, of political systems; a reader who could appreciate that the farcical and satirical representations of power structures and figures within the narratives are outlandish yet somehow maintain a connection to contemporaneously current social and political concerns, figures and events.

The introductory section of this study explains critical components of theories regarding analysis of mood, voice and unnatural narrative theory as well as relevant background information pertaining to Swift's and Pratchett's critical reception as authors.

The background chapter will include definitions and interpretations of key terms regarding theoretical discourse pertaining to the study.

In the third chapter, this study will demonstrate how to read the unnatural. The narratives covered in this study foreground the fantastic, supernatural or unnatural which occurs in the unnatural space. What does it mean to focus on, and read, the unnatural within a narrative? To read the unnatural is to focus specifically on that which is unnatural, fantastic, supernatural or the like. Finally, it is explained that the phrase 'unnatural' does not in any way suggest it being of lesser value to its counterpart, 'natural'.

The fourth chapter will address the unnatural space and how it functions in the narratives. *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Discworld* foreground the fantastic, supernatural and unnatural to create settings that are different. It furthermore contains an examination of how the unnatural space can contradict the natural space as well offering explanations on why it is important to be aware of the unnatural space when reading the *Discworld* and *Gulliver's Travels*.

The fifth and final chapter will consist of analysing the narrators and the characters whose story the narrator delineates. Following the discussion of how to read the unnatural, it becomes crucial to analyse and discuss the narratorial reliability and their voice within narratives containing the unnatural space.

Background

Jonathan Swift was born in Hoey's Court, Dublin. His education, beginning in 1673, aged 6, culminated in 1702 with Swift receiving a D. D. at Trinity College, Dublin[1]. Growing up during a volatile period in Britain's history, it should come as no surprise that politics became his principal interest when it came to writing. A prolific writer of satirical texts, Christopher Fox notes that "Swift was a brilliant controversialist with an uncanny ability to become what he attacked and the burrow from within" (1). As such, politicians attempted to utilize his skills as a writer (Fox 1). Swift wrote political propaganda on pamphlets for both parties in his lifetime but, as David Oakleaf explains, "[a]s Whig and Tory positions changed around him, he found himself neither Whig nor Tory in the terms of Queen Anne's reign" (32; 36). That "Swift and his contemporaries were shaped by the public sphere[2], the emerging social institutions and practices through which public opinion is created" is apparent (Oakleaf 43). Furthermore, Oakleaf explains how Swift's preferences regarding contemporaneous political allegiances will remain inconclusive precisely because Swift himself "registers his ambivalence towards the contentious discourse within which he established his power and authority" (44).

Gulliver's Travels was published under a pseudonym in 1726, long after Swift had established himself as a writer of considerable influence. It was originally published under the title *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* as a travel manuscript written by Lemuel Gulliver, its narrator. As a travel narrative, *Gulliver's Travels* lead contemporaneous readers and critics alike to compare it to Defoe's immensely popular *Robinson Crusoe*. J. Paul Hunter asserts that "there is persuasive textual evidence" that Swift rooted the construction of his narrative as a response to, or parody of, *Robinson Crusoe* and its ship-wrecked protagonist (224). Whether or not it truly is rooted in what is generally credited as being among the first novels segues neatly to the discussion of how to interpret *Gulliver's Travels* in respect to its genre and form of the narrative.

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[1] For further information regarding Swift or explanatory notes on the contemporary political environment in which Swift wrote, see *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift* for an extended chronology of Swift's life and publications.

[2] This term is undoubtedly in reference to Jürgen Habermas and his discourse on *Öffentlichkeit*. See, for instance, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)" for a succinct summary.

The perceptions of the narrative itself and its author has changed considerably over time. Swift was, and still is, a highly respected author but *Gulliver's Travels* is both a canonical text as well as children's literature today depending on what edition is read. Criticism of *Gulliver's Travels*, both initial and throughout the 19th century, became centred primarily on the vulgarity in the text and judged according to society's prevalent customs through which ad hominem attacks directed against Swift himself were not uncommon. Joseph Mcminn argues that this is a direct consequence of Lord Orrery's "Judas-biography", a text that is "responsible for that critical maneuver in Swiftian biography which believes that *Gulliver's Travels* best exposes the 'real' Swift" (15).

Born in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, Sir Terence David John Pratchett is the author of globally successful fantasy series *Discworld*. With 41 instalments to its name and translations into numerous languages, the series' success is arguably greater than he had ever had reason to suspect it would become. Terry Pratchett won several literary awards for his novels but when presented with an OBE in 2009 for his "services to literature … he maintained that his greatest service to literature was to avoid writing any" ("Terry Pratchett Biography"). The sheer scope of the fantastic[3] series, with multiple protagonists in various continents of the world Pratchett built, requires that this study limits the number of novels to be analysed. To that end, this study will concentrate primarily on the novels that are known as the City Watch novels because the protagonist, Sir Samuel Vimes, contains traits comparable to Lemuel Gulliver while also unfolding in an unnatural, or impossible, setting.

What Fludernik would call a new solution to an old problem rooted in the "pressure to be innovative in contemporary writing", I would call a necessary option for readers, that there is more than a 'natural'—i.e., better—way of reading a narrative (112). There is nothing to suggest that the phrase 'unnatural' should be viewed in a negative manner. In this study, at least, the term unnatural is simply a term for the explicitly non-natural aspects of the narrative, such as Jonathan Swift's narrative shifting from the 'real' world from which Gulliver begins his journey into another space with only three words, a factor which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter in terms of unnatural spaces. With that in mind, there is need to discuss how to approach unnatural narratives differently

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[3] Belonging to the genre of fantasy, not a judgement of subjective value.

from other, or perhaps more mimetic, narratives. To read a narrative with prevalent unnatural spaces and satiric social commentary may seem to require prerequisite knowledge but I will demonstrate that this is not necessarily true. There is reason for caution in this, however, since the social commentary is applied primarily through the use of ridiculous, hyperbolic and parodic aspects in which general inferences can, not should, be drawn. In such subjective terms, what I might read as satiric could yield different interpretations for another reader based on prerequisite knowledge. Jonathan Swift's texts, to state an obvious example, will have another meaning entirely for the modern reader than what it held for its contemporaneous audience not only because of differing social contexts or political climate but also because perception of the content and characters within the story has changed over time.

Although much may seem consistent with other *Discworld* novels throughout, this study will discuss the narrator and focalizers of *Discworld* in the narratives pertaining to Samuel Vimes and Lord Vetinari in point of contrast to Lemuel Gulliver as autodiegetic narrator in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. While it has long been my assumption that *Discworld* is narrated entirely by the same omniscient unnamed author, it would seem imprudent to state such as fact when I deal with selected works which cannot be said to be representative for the whole series. However, I will treat the City Watch novels as being told by one narrator.

Gerard Genette is best known for his scholarly work within the field of narratology. Genette's approach of focussing on not the story itself but rather how it is told, and by whom, is something which is critical to not only fantasy literature as this thesis deals with but to literary studies in general. By analysing the structure of narration, one can find similarities between narratives that might otherwise seem unrelated as I will show with Swift's and Pratchett's narratives. In *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Genette applies the theoretical discourse to Marcel Proust's *Á la recherche du temps perdue* to provide with concrete examples. Jonathan Culler writes that "[i]t is as though Genette had determined to give the lie to the skeptics who maintained that the structural analysis of narrative was suited only for the simplest narratives" (9). By systematically analysing Proust's narrative according to the tenets of his theory, Genette shows readers that it the

density of narrative is irrelevant. The theories of voice and mood will then be applied to the narratives authored by Swift and Pratchett to provide with examples of voice.

Voice refers to the narratorial voice. Genette insists that there needs be a distinction between the terms mood and voice by asking "*who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?*—or, more simply, the question of *who sees?* and the question *who speaks?*" (186 italics original). Although these are relatively simple questions, they are hard to answer concretely. Furthermore, one must distinguish the distinct voice's presence within the narrative. If the narrator simply recounts events from outside the narrative itself without intrusion, they are heterodiegetic. If they are present, they are classified as homodiegetic but here further classification is required since "absence is absolute, but presence has degrees" (Genette 245). Genette argues that there are at least two different types of homodiegetic narrators: protagonists of their own narrative which he terms autodiegetic versus observers who unobtrusively recount the story. An example of the latter type being Arthur Conan Doyle's Dr. John Watson as the "most representative of all" examples of a narratorial bystander (Genette 245). Generalizing the statement by using the term protagonist rather than hero, the theory of presence still applies without the implication of a heroic journey. By using this analytical platform, this study will provide examples of how the respective narrators become subject to their fantastic setting rather than agents of it when recounting the story.

Mood is connected to the interpretative side of Genette's theories. In an attempt to explain how a narrator *shows* or *tells* the reader of occurrences within the narrative, Genette adds a modifying caveat by stating that "…mimesis in words can only be mimesis of words. Other than that, all we have and can have is degrees of diegesis" (164). The terms *diegesis* and *mimesis* are usually understood as having their origin in the Platonic discourse of marking the speaker, usually of poetry, but has since evolved considerably. Theoretical evolution of, and discussion around, *mimesis* aside, one must keep in mind that in order to understand a narrative and its speaker, readers must establish a relation to the speaker in the narrative, the vehicle through which the plot is related. Henry W. Sanz argues that by placing the narrative in the first person, Swift places Gulliver in an ambiguous position in

which the relation and interpretation of parody and satire becomes intertwined with the interpretation of plot.

The issue of reliability in narrators is without doubt tricky. To complicate matters even further, James Wood posits in *The Irresponsible Self: on Laugher and the Novel* that there is yet another level of narratorial analysis to be considered: the theory of "unreliably unreliable" versus "reliably unreliable" narrators (10). Although the term is taken from Wood, the definition and examples given in this thesis are considerably different from the context and use of which Wood provides. This thesis seeks to expand on Wood's insightful discourse on narratorial reliability in the modern novel and discuss it in the context of narrators in fantasy literature. An unreliably unreliable narrator may sound like an oxymoron at first, and moreover, irrelevant in the context of diegetic or mimetic narrative categorization. A reliably unreliable narrator maintains a professional distance, gulling readers into believing the tale, only to reveal the truths of which the narrator has been aware throughout the narrative. Such actions are typical in the case of a reliably unreliable narrator. By maintaining distance rather than, for lack of a better term, stepping in close to the reader by supplying the true and correct information as the plot proceeds, the narrator manages to be reliably unreliable.

According to Wood, an unreliably unreliable narrator is a mix of reader susceptibility, authorial skill of implementing ambiguity in his narrative and the narrator attempting to control information throughout (11). While this seems acceptable within the context of the modern novel, it is not narrow enough a definition to apply to narrators within fantasy literature. This is where one may disagree with Wood's otherwise excellent and succinct theory on what constitutes unreliably unreliable narrators. For the purposes of this thesis, an unreliably unreliable narrator is one who lashes out at the tenets of its author's setting, plot or genre by subverting the expectations of the reader in terms of space or plot. This difference is most easily gleaned by juxtaposing two fantasy narrators, the narrator from Jim Butcher's *Codex Alera* to Pratchett's *Discworld*. The *Codex Alera* allows readers to quickly realize that there will be little ambiguity in plot progression. There is straightforward, linear progression in these narratives, in which the narrator and focalizers are in concert without ever letting the reader lose sight of the coming conflict. In the

Discworld, the reader can, one might almost say should, expect the most basic of logic and knowledge of our reality to be questioned. Even then, when the narrator of the *Discworld* has established a set of rules within the fictitious world, the narrator, or authorial insertions, may break or alter the conditions of the world/character/setting. What constitutes unreliable in this aspect is the assumption that the narrator will rely on and continue to use the information which the reader has already read with the option of adding or subverting to it.

Although Monika Fludernik's advice of not mixing theoretical discourse is understandable, it is necessary for the purposes of this study to discuss Genette's *Narrative Discourse* in conjunction with specific theoretical approaches pertaining to unnatural narratology. Contrary to Fludernik's directive, Mieke Bal asserts that "there is an area of overlap in which new approaches ask narratological questions or use narratological methods and analytic categories, often in subordination to their own purposes" which is in line with how this study will proceed rather than adhering to Fludernik's method where one would keep Genette's approach and unnatural narratology theories apart (50). Whereas Genette's analysis of narrative is effective, it does not discuss the nature of the text, or whether a text is uncanny or marvellous, or fantastic, or unnatural. By incorporating different, and more recent, theories of unnatural narratology, this study will show that Shang Biwu's assessment of the subdiscipline's recent research is apt (188); unnatural narratology is suitable as a complementary theoretical approach as well as a platform in its own right. Unnatural narratology is, first and foremost, directed at the neologism "mimetic reductionism", or "the argument that each and every aspect of narrative can be explained on the basis of our real-world knowledge and resulting cognitive parameters" (Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson 115 (2010)).

And finally, this study will be applying unnatural narrative theory combined with Genette's question of "*who speaks*?", resulting in the question "*who speaks and where*?" (186). The narratives in which these narrators relate their stories are fantastic. To ask only who speaks is but half of the question since the setting and how the events within unfold is also an integral part of a narrative and its narrator. This study will demonstrate that Swift's narrator travels to the unnatural space and that Pratchett's narrator is part of the unnatural space because there are no transitions in the narrative.

Reading the Unnatural: Strategies and Approaches

As stated in the introduction, it is important to ask what it means to read the unnatural. In this study, the term refers to identifying such aspects, themes or events which not only are not real but which do not only seem real, have no pretence of mimicking reality in narratives. It is a highly inclusive definition, to be sure, but only because I feel that to offer too narrow a distinction would be counterintuitive in the sense that theory should be applicable to most, not all, fiction. However inclusive, it fits the primary texts which are used in this study without precluding its use on other texts, and as such, becomes useful not only for this study also for further research into unnatural narratology. I would argue that the mimetic, or naturalizing, analytical approaches of Genette or Fludernik are perhaps not sufficiently inclusive when it comes to narratives in which the setting, theme or subject is fantastic rather than realist from the outset. Reality, or the perception of reality, within an unnatural narrative is the combination of author, narrative and reader reception.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's term "willing suspension of disbelief" is a perfect description how readers might typically approach the reading of fantasy narratives (Biographia Literaria Ch XIV). On behalf of the readers of fantasy, the willing suspension of disbelief is an underlying foundation because the reader is concretely aware that the regulations of the physical world do not apply. Rather than referring to it as a form of escapism, this thesis will approach this particular issue as being a matter of habit and reading preference, since that is almost exclusively the case when it comes to readers of fantasy. Lanchester states unequivocally that there exists a reader that simply does not read fantasy in any way, shape or form (n.p.). Although this may seem a particularly discursive topic, there is reason to speculate further. The assumption that there exists a reader that has never read or engaged in a fictional narrative[4] that contains at least a smattering of the fantastic seems far-fetched.

The order in which Swift's four distinctly separate yet still connected narratives in *Gulliver's Travels* are arranged suggest they were deliberately ordered in such a manner. It

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[4] Here, in this particular instance, the term "narrative" includes an intermedial frame of reference. One cannot ignore that literature and film have become intertwined in their presentations of narratives.

is my opinion that they are read on the scale of least offensive to most offensive, i.e., the scope, scale and sequence in which Gulliver's insults to society and mankind are read were most likely an educated guess in order to elicit reactions from both contemporaneous as well as modern readers. By comparison, Pratchett's *Discworld* has no clear linear progression, no firm stance on the development of a monomythic protagonist, yet it supplies the reader with plenty of socio-ethical commentary. Objectively philosophical meanderings regarding morality mediated through the actions and statements of multiple agents is not uncommon to the *Discworld* without the subjective position and control of information as readers may experience in *Gulliver's Travels*. The subjective position and control of information in *Gulliver's Travels* is due to what Genette would call an autodiegetic narrator: the protagonist of the narrative is also its narrator, spatiotemporally removed from the events but in control of all information which is told from the protagonist's subjective position, which this study addresses in the final chapter. The author and narrator also become conflated, i.e., the opinions presented by the narrator are attributed to the author.

There is reason to comment on the perceived reality of *Gulliver's Travels*. Firstly, I will argue in the following chapter that the spaces into which Gulliver moves during the switches from natural to unnatural spaces are specifically unnatural and fantastic because reality is displaced by the unnatural, a transition which makes the impossible possible. The impossible transition from the natural space to the unnatural space proves that the impossible becomes possible. There is a disparity here. Secondly, I will demonstrate that there are no transitions from or to natural spaces in *Discworld* narratives, marking them as set entirely in the unnatural space. Swift's autodiegetic narrator places himself within the natural by explaining the approximate distance to Tasmania for the specific purpose of providing the reader with a natural anchor, or reference point, in order to shift to the unnatural. This should be the first of many instances in which the reader might consider the narrator as being unreliable, not because he is being untruthful or withholding information but because he genuinely cannot adequately explain the shift into the unnatural. The shift into the unnatural occurs when the narrator explains that the survivors of the storm had surrendered to the "Mercy of the Waves", a mercy which only Gulliver survives (Swift 16).

Inspecting Gulliver's transition back to the natural upon leaving Lilliput shows the reader that Gulliver has no idea where to go: "My Intention was to reach, *if possible*, the North-East of Van Diemen's Land. I discovered *nothing* all that day" (Swift 70 italics mine). Similar loss of control of circumstances is exhibited throughout the narrative. The voyage to Brobdingnag, in which the first shift is reminiscent of the first voyage when the "Sea broke strange and dangerous" (Swift 76), is countered by the fantastic return:

> My box was tossed up and down like a Signpost on a windy Day. I heard several Bangs or Buffets, as I thought, given to the Eagle (for such I am certain it must have been that held the Ring of my Box in his Beak) and then all on a sudden felt my self falling perpendicularly down for above a Minute; but with such incredible Swiftness that I almost lost my breath (Swift 130)

There is little difference in the shifts in the voyage to Laputa, beginning with a "great Storm (Swift 142) which is not countered by a shift but an anachronic ellipsis: "In Six days I found a Vessel ready to carry me to Japan; and spent fifteen Days in the Voyage", where Gulliver is dependent on the expertise of others rather than being in full control (Swift 201). Finally, the shift to the unnatural in the fourth voyage, where Gulliver-as-protagonist is glad to survive the mutinous crew, is inexplicable. Gulliver-as-protagonist "knew not what Course they took, being kept close Prisoner in my Cabbin", which by extrapolation explains why Gulliver-as-narrator is unable to provide the reader information regarding Houyhnhnmland (Swift 208). An interesting note on the last transition back to the natural is Gulliver-as-narrator's assertion that the "Reader may remember what I related when my Crew conspired against me … [and] how the Sailors told me with Oaths, whether true or false, that they knew not in what Part of the World we were" (Swift 265). The statement not only proves the narrator's unreliability, but it also directly contradicts his previous statements of being kept close prisoner in his cabin. Here, the reader should decide which approach is most favourable. Either accept the word of a narrator who has proven himself unreliable through contradictions and withholding of information as acceptable due to the unnaturalness of his situation or discard the unnaturalness of the narrative completely and naturalize the reading, dismissing the inexplicable as omission of information by an unreliable narrator.

Some contemporaneous readers of Swift's narrative subscribed to the latter option mentioned above. The assumption that any reader might do the same with a *Discworld* novel at face value is unlikely. As Claude Rawson explains in his introduction to *Gulliver's Travels*:

> this plain, matter of fact narrative, immediately following the frontispiece and foreword[5], is said to have deceived some readers into believing they were being offered a true story. One sea captain claimed to be 'very well acquainted with Gulliver' … [and a]n old gentleman searched for Lilliput on his map. Best of all, an Irish bishop reportedly preened himself on not being taken in, having been taken in to the extent that he thought he was meant to be taken in. He proudly declared that he thought the 'book was full of improbable lies, and for his part, he hardly believed a word of it (xiii)

It is imperative to explain the differences in approach, as explained above regarding narrators and their setting, when it comes to reading unnatural narratives. It is a fair assumption when it comes to readers whose primary interest is fantasy that they regularly willingly suspend their disbelief in terms of world-building, character aspects, physical laws or narratorial discrepancies. For instance, Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time* is built on the premise of a temporally cyclical pseudo-mediaeval world recovering from the after-effects of Shai'tan's[6] attempt to break free of his imprisonment, and thus the cycle. It is a fair assumption that readers would not interpret any of Jordan's narratives, characters or their actions as 'real' but the implicit agreement readers enter into when reading fiction is to abide by the terms of the author/narrator for the duration of the narrative. The implicit agreement between reader and narrator to accept the story at face value until such a time as the narrator is found unreliable or a paradigmatic change becomes apparent within the narrative itself.

By analysing key passages in Swift's and Pratchett's narratives, one can begin to read the unnatural. Beginning with Swift, the most obvious example is found in voyage IV, wherein the prevalent social criticism deals with how the animal Houyhnhnm, or the natural, is superior to mankind, whose existence is made unnatural by cruelty and innate vices. It is appropriate to insert a caveat here: I do not mean that the Houyhnhnm are either

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[5] Foreword which adds and mocks the realist interpretative efforts.
[6] An obvious reference to Satan who is continually referred to as the Dark One due to the inherent belief throughout the narratives that to speak his name would be to call his attention to oneself.

the satire's negative nor positive examples of morality. Ian Higgins, in compiling the notes for the Oxford World's Classics edition, to which I will refer throughout, explains that there are two schools of interpretation regarding the Houyhnhnm, and that it is a rather modern interpretation to hold that the Houyhnhnm are the oppressors rather than viewing them as exemplary inhabitants of a Utopian state. It is a fair assertion that Gulliver-as-protagonist's experiences of the unnatural, as described in the first through the third voyage, ought to have prepared Gulliver-as-protagonist in terms of the binary natural/unnatural which culminates in his encounters in Houyhnhnmland rather than entering the discussion of defining the binary good/evil and contextualizing Gulliver-as-protagonist on that spectrum. Nevertheless, the tension between the Houyhnhnm and the Yahoos is of interest because it offers a choice; one can choose to read Gulliver as distantly related to the Yahoos—thus naturalizing the unnatural because it would mean that the reader is placing Gulliver in the natural world since the Yahoos are only dehumanized humanoids—or one could read Gulliver as the unnatural in that particular voyage, where he is effectively the destabilizer in a functioning society whose existence causes the Houyhnhnm to question the basis of their moral superiority due to their oppressive tendencies toward the Yahoos.

There is a particular statement in Gulliver's fourth voyage that I would argue directly and deliberately mocks the reader for his gullibility. When Gulliver-as-narrator admits that he seeks to "deal so candidly with the Reader, as to confess, that there was yet a much stronger Motive for the Freedom I took in my Representation of Things", he is ironically lamenting the reader's willingness to keep reading (Swift 240). Gulliver-as-narrator directs the statement to the reader but after journeying through the unnatural spaces of Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib, and Japan, one might also hypothesize that rather than directing the speech to the reader, Gulliver is incredulously soliloquizing that the reader has made it this far without surrendering to the impulse of disbelief, a point which will be discussed at greater length in the fifth chapter.

One cannot consider Gulliver's later voyages without taking into account his past experiences. While one must be mindful of the chronological distance of events and narration, it is far more useful to consider the light in which Gulliver-as-narrator affects readers in that his misanthropy colours the exposition of human society. Here, Gulliver-as-

narrator and Gulliver-as-protagonist are combined in their criticism. Mankind, as it is described in *Gulliver's Travels*, is similar what one finds in the *Discworld*: the reader should understand that the protagonist is acting as programmed by human nature and instinct in an unnatural space. There is no question nor debate that the narratives in this study are mimetic in the sense that they attempt to imitate reality and abide by natural laws, as they are understood in terms of temporality or physics.

It is perhaps far too argumentative a stance to assert that every fictional narrative is subject to a 'natural' or 'unnatural' reading. What I would argue is necessary is the ability to choose. Although naturalizing readings might be how theorists traditionally approach narratives, it is not the only way. To claim that there are only a few correct approaches to reading narrative would seem an unnecessary limitation on interpreting the narrative, or for that matter, specific thematic aspects of it but it will serve as a starting point. As Henrik Skov Nielsen writes in "Naturalizing and Unnaturalizing Reading Strategies: Focalization Revisited":

> The naturalizing suggestions all have in common that they explain the passage as if real-world limitations apply and thus work from the assumption that the rules and constrains of real-life narration have to be in place. Even if I believe that these interpretations are misguided, I do not want to claim that they are self-evidently wrong. On the contrary: naturalizing and unnaturalizing options will necessarily stand in an agonistic relationship to each other, so that it is always a matter of competing interpretations. This is not something to regret. Instead it is an opportunity to emphasize that naturalizing readings are options and interpretational choices as opposed to the idea that it is natural or necessary to naturalize (82)

By locating and identifying what the unnatural is within a particular narrative, one has effectively begun to unnaturalize the reading. If what the reader perceives as unnatural features on an irregular basis and has little importance or link to the protagonist or narrator, it would be easier to dismiss unnatural aspects as irrelevant, but in Swift and Pratchett, the unnatural, fantastic and ridiculous are foregrounded and shapes the reading. As I will show in the following chapter, there is little reason to assume that the Disc, as an inhabited planet, is subject to the laws of the world to the same extent that Swift's is. This is not to say that Pratchett's narratives are somehow more, or less for that matter, unnatural than Swift's, only to be approached in a different manner despite the texts in question essentially being similar: satirical narratives set in and founded on unnatural principles that reflect

flaws of natural society. The dichotomy of fabricating an unnatural setting in order to expose the flaws of the natural is fundamental to writing subversive humour, whether in the context of parody or satire.

The satire or situational comedy is thus rooted in the unnatural mirroring the natural within an unnatural narrative. Although the social criticism is understood by the reader, it only becomes humorous because of the subversion of the 'natural' occurring in an incredible setting, in which the protagonist experiences an inversion of reason or logic which causes the reader to understand the unnaturalness of the event as an absurd reflection of society. For instance, Pratchett uses the perception of statistics in a comic manner throughout *Guards! Guards!*:

> There was one of those silences you get after one clear bright note has been struck and the world pauses. The rank looked at one another. 'Million-to-one?' asked Carrot nonchalantly. 'Definitely,' said Vimes. 'Million-to-one.' The rank looked at one another again. 'Million-to-one,' said Colon. 'Million-to-one,' agreed Nobby. 'That's right,' said Carrot. 'Million-to-one.' There was another high-toned silence. The members of the rank were wondering who was going to be the first to say *it*. Sergeant Colon took a deep breath. 'But it might just work,' he said. 'What are you talking about?' snapped Vimes. 'There's no—' (Pratchett *GG* 367-368 italics original)

The passage above is only the final statistical anomaly in *Guards! Guards!*. In near all cases of a character realizing the outlandish odds for success and subsequently expressing or discussing them with a companion, success (or at least survival) becomes more likely simply because it is so illogical to survive the odds. However, this is not a universal condition of the *Discworld*. This is a clear instance of what I would call Pratchettness: the deliberate play with, and subversion of, conventionalized narrative deaths. If something is impossibly unlikely to occur, it can still occur. Another explanation would be to speculate that Pratchett wrote the interior logic of *Guards! Guards!* according to what is colloquially referred to as Murphy's Law: what can go wrong, will go probably go wrong.

There is such a wide variety of what constitutes unnaturalness in a narrative that it is almost impossible to recommend a single reading approach or strategy. Maria Mäkelä even holds that the "literary tokens of unnaturalness would obviously seem countless", which might be considered an overstatement but the natural/unnatural dichotomy is subjectively dependent on readers (164). However, there are functions to be analysed in unnatural

narratives which are useful as a point of comparison. While much of the following discussion is rooted in Nielsen's article on focalization and narration, I will attempt to explain how to apply the different functions in the context of unnatural space and how they can subtly manipulate the interpretation of a narrative.

Unlike Terry Pratchett's comical interpretation of mediaeval misconceptions regarding the Earth being flat[7], Jonathan Swift sets his narrative in the real world and leaves much of the world open to reader interpretation. Since Swift's use of the unnatural space is rooted in and extrapolated from the real world, it becomes different from what is unnatural in a Pratchett narrative. Gulliver-as-protagonist's transitions into the unnatural space will be addressed in the following chapter but the signal of transition is crucial in regards to a strategic reading of the unnatural. Gulliver's loss of control in the opening paragraphs of each voyage is how the reader is warned that the unnatural transition is imminent. Consider, for instance, how inexplicably lost both Gulliver-as-protagonist and Gulliver-as-narrator are in the following sequence:

> For my own Part, I swam as *Fortune directed me*, *and was pushed* forward by Wind and Tide. I often let my Legs drop, and could feel no Bottom: But when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my Depth; and by this Time the Storm was much abated. (Swift 17 italics mine).

The unnatural space is possibly less noticeable during the first voyage, but becomes pronounced as one progresses through the narrative, culminating in the appearance of a giant floating island, Laputa. To offer a comparison, the unnatural space is a prevalent constant in the *Discworld* which requires no transition unlike *Gulliver's Travels*, or to use a more modern example than Swift, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series where natural and unnatural are interweaving in the narrative. What I mean with interweaving natural/unnatural is that there are distinct locations where either one is the predominant norm and the other is the minority. The *Harry Potter* series would be an excellent example to use as an explanation: There is magic in the natural world, but only available to a select

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[7] At least, that has long been my interpretation of why Pratchett incorporated the flat disc where ships might sail off the edge, were they not careful.

unnatural few. There are magic shops and train stations in 'natural'[8] London but only accessible by unnatural means or knowledge. London is Muggle territory, Hogwarts for the Wizards and Witches yet the two occupy the same space and the inhabitants of London may come into contact with magic by accident. The boundaries of natural/unnatural is opaque and is continually re-examined by the reader when the exposition reveals something completely unnatural within the natural, such as platform 9¾ inside King's Cross. Those of Pratchett's narratives which are covered in this study are set in a fictional urban environment in which society is mirrored, subverted or distorted. The city of Ankh-Morpork is an unnatural space, not only because of its supernatural inhabitants and tendency to ooze magic but because it is set in another unnatural space, balancing on the four elephants' backs who in turn stand on A'Tuin the space-swimming turtle's back. Many, if not most, of the Discworld instalments begin in such a manner which would surely prevent a reader from mistakenly interpreting even the first few paragraphs as anything but fantastic or unnatural[9].

Briefly, it is also necessary to open the discussion on narratorial voice and mood of unnatural narratives directly following the discussion on how to approach the unnatural spaces. Nielsen's summary of the discussion in *Narrative Discourse* reminds the reader that "Genette categorizes the narratives of the world on the basis of the different ways in which they do or do not give us access to minds" (77). Herein lies the crux of the analysing the mood and voice of narrators in narrators in unnatural spaces and satiric narratives because of the subversive aspects of such texts. Genette's insistence that "[w]e have to make allowance for this relationship, which varies according to individuals, groups, and periods, and does not, therefore, depend exclusively on the narrative text" is insightful but obfuscates the approach to unnaturalness and its role in narratives (165-166). To focus exclusively on the minds of narrators within unnatural narratives is insufficient. The

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[8] I marked the natural in single quotation marks because the *Harry Potter* series clearly do not transpire within London as we might know it; rather it becomes the example by which the non-magical Muggles and their simple society are judged according to unnatural and fantastic standards of Wizards and Witches.
[9] A noticeable point when reading Pratchett's earlier instalments of *the Discworld* is the style and form in which the narratives were arranged. In most of Pratchett's narratives, there are no chapter splits unless specifically written for children.

inclusion of unnatural spaces in conjunction with an analysis of mood and voice in unnatural narrators may yield more consistent results.

There is reason to reiterate a statement above. There is no one right way to read a narrative. To naturalize a reading is to absorb the inexplicable into a frame of reference where no explanations are required because the narrative is its own space. To unnaturalize a reading means to focus on those aspects of interest within a narrative which seem strange, fantastic, inexplicable or unnatural and analyse it without necessarily explaining it in terms of our own physics or world. While both Jonathan Swift and Terry Pratchett's narratives can be read as 'simple' entertainment, I would assert that there is nothing simple about reading them or any of the subjects they wrote about. There is a facetious tone throughout much of the narrative which is possibly traceable to authorial insertion but there is also considerable anger; anger at the state of our society. The narratives covered in this study are not unnatural narratives. They contain aspects of the unnatural that the authors have used to create a distorted mirror of our own society; it is through this distortion that the juxtaposition of divisive issues might become humorous but only when the reader understands the distortion and reacts to the examination in a favourable manner. Otherwise, it is read as a fictional narrative filled with impossibilities and fantastic creatures, which is an entirely acceptable approach.

Unnatural Spaces: A Less Visited Corner of Fiction

This chapter will focus on the use of unnatural space. While I have predominantly discussed Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Pratchett's *Discworld* in this study, I will here offer a wider discussion on what the unnatural space is in the context of genre. Fantasy foregrounds the unnatural space. It is the dominant setting through which the reader can approach the characters, be it protagonists, antagonists or likeable and recurring fringe characters. As discussed in the previous chapter, understanding the transition from the natural space to the unnatural space is, in my opinion, the most important factor of how to read the unnatural in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* because it activates the implied reader's suspension of disbelief. It is this suspension of disbelief that allows the reader to experience the unnatural space as ordinary because it belongs to the interior logic of the narrative, and moreover, the feature which allows for the natural, unnatural and supernatural to merge into a single narrative. In the case of the unnatural space without transitions, such as Pratchett's *Discworld*, it becomes critical to define and mark the boundaries of what constitutes the unnatural within a universal setting. In non-transitional narratives that foreground the unnatural space, it is not the supernatural, or even the natural, which marks the boundaries of the unnatural. In non-transitional narratives, it is hard to mark the unnatural space but I would posit that the combination of breaks in interior logic and Pratchett's playful disregard for narrative traditions, or what I above termed Pratchettness, is what marks the boundaries in the *Discworld*. It is not a question of defamiliarizing or destabilizing the natural, it is a different approach to using a setting which, judging by Pratchett's success, simply works.

What one reader may experience as unnatural within a narrative may not be so unnatural for another because it has familiar connotations of, say, another fantasy narrative wherein the unnatural space has featured in a similar manner. For instance, the unnatural spaces in Jim Butcher's long-running urban fantasy series *The Dresden Files* is ambiguous in the sense that there are multiple ways in which to reach it from the real world: by tearing a rift between the worlds with magic or by accessing Faerie courts through abandoned parts of the sewer system of Chicago, or a remote island he names Demonreach in a conveniently

ambiguous location which subsequently becomes Dresden's base of power are but a few examples of this. Nevertheless, the narrative is set in what amounts to Chicago for a reader without intimate familiarity of the city. It is essentially Chicago but simultaneously an alternate depiction: a distinct but slightly vague setting called Dresdenverse[10]. As I will discuss below in more detail, this is the transitional unnatural space, in which the settings interweave with the actual world and there are clear and markable shifts between the worlds. The use of unnatural space in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is very similar to the Dresdenverse in that they both use the natural space in order to direct the reader's attention to the explicitly unnatural space.

The unnatural space depends, to some extent, on alternate depictions of our world. In order to establish the unnatural within a narrative, I would argue that there is need to establish its counterpart, the natural, as well. When the relationship between the natural and the unnatural has been established within the narrative, other forms might be introduced, such as the supernatural or the fantastic. Amit Marcus criticizes Alber's assertion that the

> supernatural (in the form of monsters, ghosts, etc.) differs from other cases of the unnatural by its familiarization and its acceptance as a given in specific narrative genres, such as Gothic novels and fairy tales. By contrast, I believe that the supernatural should be defined thematically as a force that intentionally intervenes in the events of the fictional world for achieving a certain purpose (e.g., avenging a protagonist for his sins). The supernatural was indeed conventionalized in some genres, but it cannot be defined on the basis of conventionalization, which is a historical (and therefore dynamic and alterable) process. The supernatural retains to some extent its defamiliarizing (or destabilizing) effect in the fantastic genre, and if it is represented in unfamiliar contexts in future narratives, it will presumably still strike the reader as being odd (Marcus 11)

Marcus' assertion that the supernatural retains the abovementioned effect in the fantastic genre is one with which I can only agree to a certain extent. It is not only the supernatural which strikes the reader as odd in the fantastic genre. The supernatural, in its current form found in modern fantasy, is a supplementary tool for authors of fiction to rely on should they so choose and is different from the unnatural space. I would instead offer that within modern fantasy, the supernatural has featured heavily alongside the unnatural spaces or

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[10] See for instance Dungal Sigurðsson's "Of Wit, Wisdom and Wizardry: Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* vs Harry Dresden *of The Dresden Files*".

alternate depictions of actual reality, so much so that the border has become muddled, almost indistinct. To find the supernatural within the unnatural spaces is common but it would be too general to speak of it as having become conventionalized. It is correct that the *Discworld* features core aspects of conventional fantasy, such as humans, dwarves, lycanthropes, trolls, wizards and witches, and Marcus' assertion that this should be dealt with thematically may be true of the conventional narratives but once one examines how Pratchett incorporates these conventions, the question becomes more difficult to answer. Pratchett's dwarves are gender-neutral (both sexes have beards, can work a forge, knit a chainmail vest and consume copious amounts of beer), the wizards abstain from using magic because it might damage their reputation in society, the species live on different levels of the city but they ultimately can be said to coexist (fairly) peacefully.

To reiterate, the unnatural in both *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Discworld* is deliberate and is subject to interpretation. The reader is *supposed to* experience an unfamiliar context while reading about familiar subjects because that is fundamentally how the satirical connotations can be conveyed. To hold that Swift wrote about miniscule humans, giants, floating islands with scatologically inclined scientists and morally superior talking horses with expectations of it being taken seriously is unfeasible. The same holds in Pratchett's narratives, in which the natural and the unnatural (and the supernatural) appear alongside each other without distinction. There are destabilizing effects in the primary narratives of interest to this study but in such cases it has little to do with, as Marcus phrases it, the "defamiliarizing (or destabilizing) effect in the fantastic genre" and more to do with the fact that Swift and Pratchett are subverting the implied reader's expectations by using the unnatural spaces to establish a distorted mirror through which society is reflected and commented upon by the narrator (11). There is a systematic approach to the social criticism in *Gulliver's Travels*. By breaking the four voyages down, it becomes clear that each voyage has its own thematic social critique: the first voyage criticizes politics and the implications of religious strife within the UK, the second voyage is a scathing indictment of the colonial English and the arrogance with which they rule their inferior subjects, the third voyage offers criticism toward education and the state of the nation whereas, finally, the fourth voyage criticizes the United Kingdom, its political structure and abuse of its colonial

subjects. Although *Gulliver's Travels* is far from as insinuatingly subversive as the narrator and subject of Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, it is just as critical of the contemporaneous political structure. There is one particular passage in the voyage to Brobdingnag, where the ruler is

> perfectly astonished with the historical Account I gave him of our Affairs during the last Century; protesting it was only an Heap of Conspiracies, Rebellions, Murders, Massacres, Revolutions, Banishments; the very worst Effects that Avarice, Faction, Hypocrisy, Perfidiousness, Cruelty, Rage, Madness, Hatred, Envy, Lust, Malice, and Ambition could produce (Swift 120)

Here, Swift is condemning the contemporaneous political systems of the British Monarchy but since the account is set in a transitional narrative and the event occurs within the confines of the unnatural space, it also becomes a question of narratorial reliability, a topic which will be discussed in the final chapter. What clearly defines the unnatural space in each voyage is different, although not vastly so. The King of Brobdingnag's reaction is a prime example of how the unnatural space experiences the natural civilization as barbarous and low, distinctly marking natural culture, which exists only in the natural space, as other in the unnatural space.

The unnatural spaces of the *Discworld* are numerous. Perhaps most obvious is the fact that it is a setting, a fictional universe as I have already stated. What is less obvious is that there are layers of unnatural spaces within the *Discworld*. For instance, when a character dies, Death comes to guide the deceased to the afterlife. Death's weakness is that he cannot understand the 'natural'[11] space of the *Discworld* because he is relegated to the unnatural, because void of life, space in which he guides the deceased to their afterlife. Death suggests to a recently deceased character to "think of [dying] more as being … dimensionally disadvantaged" (Pratchett *Mo* 33). Moreover, Death views the *Discworld* as an "increasingly irrelevant world", which would suggest that there are other worlds of which the reader is not informed (Pratchett *Mo* 33). This, combined with Gaspode the talking dog and a weapon that can mentally project thoughts to, and tries to manipulate, its bearer, clearly marks the unnatural. Moreover, there are several examples that *Discworld*

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[11] The quotation marks are included as clarification: to mark that Death exists within a separate unnatural space, different from the 'natural' *Discworld* which is still an unnatural space because it contains its own sets of physics and interior logic, showing that it should not be considered natural.

does not comply with temporality as we understand it. Therefore, I would posit that the *Discworld* is not only spatially but temporally unnatural as well: "the octarine[12] grass country … was one of the few places on the Disc where plants produced reannual varieties. Reannuals are plants that grow backwards in time. You sow the seed this year and they grow last year" (Pratchett *Mo* 8-9).

The function and role of a narrator in an unnatural space is the same as in its natural counterpart: to establish rapport with the implied reader. Whether the narrative contains fantastic events in an unnatural storyworld or in a natural storyworld with crucial paradigmatic shifts to subvert the natural—or fantastic creatures whose existence is clearly impossible or a narrator (or character) whose journey requires interaction with these impossibilities—is largely irrelevant. It seems, then, superfluous to argue that there is a need to contextualize the narrator in unnatural spaces in regards to whether the narrator belongs to the natural or to the unnatural space itself. If one naturalizes, or explains the why or the how, the functions of a narrator in the unnatural space, its counterpart, or the narrative in which he relates the events, countering the narrative's original effect on the implied reader, the unnatural may lose its effect. The prevalent structuralist mode of deconstructing narratives in order to analyse commonalities is effective in dealing with thematic aspects. To analyse the unnatural as a single thematic aspect, when there are so many different analytical approaches and subjects which constitute unnatural, serves only to obfuscate the ongoing discussion still in unnatural narratology. However, there is cause to analyse the reliability of the narrator in terms of the unnatural space because, as in *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Discworld* particularly, the narrator may be deliberately withholding information or events because they do not properly understand what has occurred in the unnatural space.

The implausible coincidence in a narrative is an aspect which, according to Amit Marcus, best suits the comic genre, but it seems a gross overgeneralization to dismiss implausible coincidences only in terms of setting up comedy within a narrative. To simply accept Amit's assertion without discussing it in context of the texts in this study would be imprudent. Core examples of the unnatural in Pratchett's narratives are often implausible

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[12] Octarine is the eight colour of the Disc, the colour of magic.

coincidences all of which somehow relate to the plot, and not as a figurative setup of checks and balances in relation to comical balance in the novel. For instance, if one accepts Marcus's premise of comical implausibility relating only to plot, I would recommend a different interpretation. Pratchett's *Discworld* is not only comedy although that is how it is perceived. Pratchett's novels also contain social and religious criticism, historical references, character development (in quite the Dickensian sense of developing caricatures but Pratchett rather develops caricatures to fit stereotypical, because satirical, moulds.) which also relate to plot progression. The implausible, impossible or unnatural is simply there. To offer a subjective value judgment: the lack of mimetic pretence in the Discworld may be exactly what has made it so popular but it might also be why some critics view his writing with disdain.

As I have explained in the previous chapter, unnatural narrative theory has a wide scope. It is appropriate to offer a narrower platform, both in terms of what this study is analysing and how to approach them as well as how to proceed after the analysis has been provided. The unnatural narrative theorists all have their specific interests and aspects which they specialize in, but this study will be incorporating a discussion mostly based on, although not restricted to, the analytical approaches of Jan Alber—whose focus lies on the "physically, logically, or humanly impossible scenarios or events" (Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson 373 (2012))—and Henrik Skov Nielsen's approach which focuses on "representational level as well as on the level of the act of narration" (Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson 373 (2012)). The focus on mimetic, or realistic, narrative offers comparably little insight into the works that revel in their unnatural or illogical storyworlds. It is interesting to apply these theoretical approaches to Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* narratives and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* in order to ascertain whether or not the unnatural can be said to remain constant in their respective works. I would argue that the core difference between Swift's and Pratchett's narratives lie in their use of the unnatural spaces: Swift's narrative is transitional with interludes spent in the natural before returning to the unnatural spaces whereas Pratchett's narrative is set and occurs entirely within the unnatural space.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's definition of literature as an art of time rather than space (qtd. in Alber, Nielsen, and Richardson 45) offers insight into why it might be considered that fantasy literature is of lower status than 'traditional' mimetic narratives in which the realist elements and aspects are celebrated rather than the unnatural. As it is, there is a clear but inexplicable divide between 'real' literature and those narratives that 'fail' to meet mimetic standards. I would posit that tradition is an inherent part of how fantasy literature functions as a genre and, as Alber writes, that "readers may account for impossible spaces by identifying as belonging to particular literary genres and generic conventions" which when used often enough, as is the case with modern fantasy literature, become basic cognitive frames (Alber, Nielsen, and Richardson 48). Furthermore, Alber continues, unnatural spaces are commonly used in satirical texts and can be read allegorically, reinforcing why I should root my discussion in the unnatural narrative and how it is of use to both Swift and Pratchett (Alber, Nielsen, and Richardson 49). The difference between 'real' literature and fantasy is more than just an interpretative difference as offered by Lessing or Alber. The fundamental difference is space and how the authors utilize it. The celebrated realists can take the world for granted in their writing, regardless of whether they describe it in detail or not[13]. The mimetic functions of physics and laws of reality combined with the reader's grasp of the aforementioned functions reflected in the literature make reading it more real, more relatable or more visceral. A fantasy author cannot take the space for granted in the same manner. For a narrative to constitute as fantastic, or belonging to the fantasy genre, it simply needs to contain fantastic events but it is also conventionally set within a (fictitious) world built on principles that the author usually explains in detail to the reader before introducing the characters or plot. However, to compare how important particular kinds of spatiotemporality is for the different kinds of modern fantasy narratives seems irrelevant because such a comparison is, in my opinion, highly subjective rather than structurally or contextually descriptive. There will be differences between the various conventional spatiotemporalities that are commonly used but when in comparison to the realists, whose writing efforts sought to emulate and

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[13] See for instance the difference between how nature and ecosystems play their part in the various cultural heritages of tribes and cities in Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series, as discussed in the fourth chapter of Ekman's *Writing Worlds, Reading Landscapes*.

celebrate the natural, or *real*, experiences of humans, of society, of nature, there are bound to be interesting issues which call for attention. Moreover, both Swift and Pratchett were using the unnatural space in order to convey criticism at the natural. It is not the case that Swift's or Pratchett's narratives are unnatural, to definitively argue that they are would be arrogant. I would, however, posit that they are different from the realist novel, Gothic novel, horror fiction, creepypasta fiction, or urban fantasy in that they use a combination of the unnatural space and (mostly[14]) human interaction in order to satirize and parody aspects of society through space, not time. By using the unnatural space in their narratives, both authors managed to put some figurative distance between their descriptions of society and how they were condemning certain aspects and figures within society but still able to maintain that the narratives are simply fantasy. The narratives themselves are not unnatural but the content, the primary characters or the setting is unnatural.

Ekman writes that "[s]ome critics go so far as to suggest that in fantasy, or in some kinds of fantasy, or in some fantasy works, the landscape can be equated with a character on one level or another", a comment that shows how important the environment becomes for narratives using the fantastic and the unnatural (10). The unnatural space of the *Discworld* is the better example in this regard. If Pratchett had not qualified that his narratives were set in such a specific spatiotemporal place, would the narrative be as effective or as highly regarded if it were set within England? If Swift had written the narrative so that Gulliver had supplied legitimate coordinates—in terms of his contemporaneous audience, providing with maps and references to the real world rather than leaving the reader to wonder—to the unnatural spaces to which he travelled, there would presumably have been dissenters whose efforts at disproving the facts of Swift's narrative in order to prove that the narrative was impossible. The unnatural space is equal to a character: it assists in maintaining the suspension of disbelief, it allows for impossibilities within the narrative, and as stated above, it allows for a combination of the unnatural, natural and supernatural within a single narrative. Although it is speculative to question whether or not the narratives would remain the same should the settings have been

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[14] Since both authors use supernatural creatures, I cannot claim that there is *only* human interaction. But both narratives consist mainly of human, or hybrid human constructs, interacting with each other.

different, I consider it an important, but ultimately unanswerable, question because the settings of Pratchett and Swift are crucial to interpreting the unnatural space and the characters within it.

Some examples of unnatural space from Jonathan Swift and Terry Pratchett are in order here. Jonathan Swift's storyworld setting is his own time, or 18th century England, which he subverts without supplying much more than generally vague geographical information. The lack of specificity when Gulliver-as-narrator explains to the reader that "[i]t would not be proper for some Reasons, to trouble the Reader with the Particulars of our Adventures in those Seas" is part of the transition into the unnatural space but it also relates to the reliability of the narrator, which will be discussed in the final chapter (Swift 16). Nevertheless, there is reason to specify that three of the voyages involve weather, such as storms that render nature "strange and dangerous", that disorients the sailors and signifies the entry into the unnatural (Swift 16, 76, 142). The fourth voyage's shift into the unnatural is relatively straightforward: Gulliver-as-protagonist is confined to his quarters due to mutinous members of the crew removing him as captain, which explains his subsequent loss of bearings (Swift 208). Swift's use of the unnatural spaces become unnatural because of a combination of the unknown location of the continents and its inhabitants as in voyages I, II and IV rather than being unnatural in and of themselves. When it comes to the third voyage to Laputa, there is no doubt of the unnatural space when Gulliver-as-narrator explains that "the Reader can hardly conceive my Astonishment, to behold an Island in the Air, inhabited by Men, who were able (as it should seem) to raise, or sink, or put into progressive Motion, as they pleased" (Swift 144). Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* is, if not more unnatural, then more fantastically unnatural than Swift's spaces. As shown previously, the cosmic turtle A'Tuin is the moving foundation on which the four elephants rest as they bear the weight of the Disc on their backs but this is not the only unnatural space used in *Discworld*.

In the opening paragraph in *Guards! Guards!*, the narrator foreshadows the interweaving of two unnatural spaces while explicitly stating that there are other dimensions accessible by magic:

> This is where the dragons went. They lie … Not dead, not asleep. Not waiting, because waiting implies expectation. Possibly the word we're looking for here is … … dormant. And although the space they occupy isn't like a *normal space,* nevertheless they are packed in tightly. Not a cubic inch there but is filled by a claw, a talon, a scale, the tip of a tail, so the effect is like one of those trick drawings and your eyeballs eventually realize that the space between each dragon is, in fact, another dragon. They could put you in mind of a can of sardines, if you thought sardines were huge and scaly and proud and arrogant. *And presumably, somewhere, there's the key.* (Pratchett *GG* 9 italics mine)

The passage above requires attention on three points. Firstly, the space where dragons reside is not a part of *Discworld* but accessible by magic, or unnatural, means. Combined with Death's realm and the Roundworld project—"a magical containment field the size and shape of a football that kept magic out. Inside it would be our universe, where science replaced magic" (Stewart n. p.)—it becomes clear that *Discworld* operates in more than one unnatural space. Secondly, magic on the Disc is markedly different from other modern fantasy in that the practitioners, Wizards of the Unseen University particularly, attempt to restrain the use of magic because the use of magic may bring unintended consequences or harmful irreversible effects to the denizens of the Disc. While systematic magic and its use is a staple aspect of modern fantasy, it is an exception in the Discworld. Magic exists, there are practitioners of it but it's frowned upon, particularly by the wizards. Thirdly, the italicized "*normal space*" and "*presumably, somewhere, there's the key*" in the passage above alerts the reader to two separate issues of unnatural space in the *Discworld*. The narrator considers the Disc as the natural (normal) space, and that there is no single, definite way of breaching into the various unnatural spaces that are interconnected with the Discworld.

The unnatural spaces in the *Discworld* do not adhere to the physical laws of our world. Pratchett's novel *Guards! Guards!* is immediately rooted in the unnatural unlike Swift's narrative, whose shifts between natural and unnatural spaces become noticeable because of the disparity in logic: one moment he is situated on a ship travelling to Tasmania and the next he is tied down to a beach by humanoids "not six inches high", or as Higgins explains, "one twelfth [of Gulliver's] size" (17; 289). For instance, in the Library of the Unseen University "it was said that, since vast amounts of magic can seriously distort the mundane world, the Library did not obey the normal rules of space and time" whereas

Gulliver's experiences all point to unnatural inhabitants rather than the impossibly unnatural storyworld in which the natural, unnatural and supernatural co-exist (Pratchett *GG* 11). To return to an example used above, it is clear that the root of Swift's story-world is the natural. Gulliver-as-narrator explains that the "Land was divided by long Rows of Trees, not regularly planted, but naturally growing; there was a great Plenty of Grass, and several Fields of Oats … [and] a beaten road" (Swift 208). There is nature here, a natural manner in which sustenance and balance is maintained, but the natural becomes contextually unnatural because its sustainability and maintenance falls to morally superior speaking horses.

Since there is no pretence of adhering to natural laws in the unnatural space in which the Disc finds itself, logic dictates that its inhabitants also be unnatural in the interior logic of the space into which they are written. This relates, then, to Pratchett humorously subverting the implied reader's expectations of what will occur only to bring the narrative into a direction the reader had little reason to suspect. In his criticism of Swift, Sir Walter Scott, prominent author of his own time and critic, argues that there is a

> marked difference between real and fictitious narrative, that the latter includes only such incidents as the author conceives will interest the reader, whereas the former is uniformly invested with many petty particulars, which can only be interesting to the narrator himself. Another distinction is, that, in the course of a real story, circumstances occur which lead neither to consequences nor to explanations; whereas the novelist is, generally speaking, cautious to introduce no incident or character which has not some effect in forwarding his plot. (Scott 313)

Scott's argument is convincing but I would question his use of the term "real story" and why such a comparison—Swift's obviously fictional text to Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* on character, incident or plot is a poor example in a comparative context—would seem appropriate. However, Swift and Pratchett both write about issues which they know will be considered vulgar and inflammatory: Swift's faecal-studying academic contra Pratchett's use of excrement in *Snuff*. Furthermore, Swift's and Pratchett's use of the unnatural space would, in my opinion, preclude any comparison in terms of plot or comparing incidents to a "real story" because *Gulliver's Travels* and *Discworld* lend themselves to a primarily allegorical, not literal or realistic, reading. It is obvious that neither author's text is not realistic in terms of plot or in its range of characters, or in terms

of setting. As such, it is difficult to understand why Scott would criticize Swift's text as he did unless he did so to attempt to assert that the literature of Scott's own time had moved in another direction than Swift's fantastic satire; literature had moved away from the fictitious and silly, having become realistic and respectable. However entertaining, further conjecture on this subject is futile.

Humanity, species, races and class on the Disc are complex issues of the unnatural which requires further explanation. A long-standing joke in the City Watch instalments of the *Discworld*, readers are reminded that Cecil Wormsborough St John "Nobby" Nobbs is required to carry a plaque as proof of humanity and that he had been "disqualified from the human race for shoving[15]" (Pratchett *MA*) but there are no such demands made of any of the lycanthrope species inhabiting the unnatural spaces of the Disc. The Igors, for instance, are surgically skilled servants of the vampires. A typical Igor yearns to maintain tradition above else. Ostensibly a single family, they perfect their skills on each other, exchange organs and maintain the village's health and population in order to keep their master stocked with blood. While the description sounds grotesque, the Igors are quite benevolent and happy to assist anyone in need unless it directly harms their master. Despite their reputation for being solid assistants and medical experts, Vimes cannot be brought to trust the Igor who signs up for the city watch. It is here that it becomes interesting to compare Vimes and Gulliver as characters with similar yet different outlooks on humanity. While Gulliver detests mankind after his extended stay in the unnatural spaces and explicitly states as much in the closing chapter of the fourth voyage, Vimes is an equal offender in that he despises mostly everyone except his wife and child.

In stark contrast to Gulliver's introduction of himself as a respectable doctor and seafarer, readers are introduced to Samuel Vimes as being a bigoted alcoholic whose rank as captain of the Night Watch is mostly decorative because he only commands two other individuals. Pratchett makes it clear to the reader that Vimes is incompetent in his position as commander and, frankly, it is understandable that some readers might mistakenly interpret private Carrot as being the protagonist of *Guards! Guards!* since Pratchett often

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[15] A pun on the words "human race": that Nobby was disqualified from the human race (species) is a joke but a participant can be disqualified from a human race where the word means running contest which consists solely of human participants. This sort of wordplay is typical in Pratchett's novels.

allows the reader access to Carrot's private correspondence. It gradually becomes clear throughout *Guards! Guards!* that Vimes is indeed the narrative's protagonist, despite being offset by the classical depiction of a hero in the form of Carrot: a towering orphan whose passion for law and order is second only to Vetinari's, a kind character who seems to earn everybody's trust simply by existing. Pratchett uses the classical image and backstory of a seemingly budding hero effectively but again, uses it on his own terms. Carrot might be a budding hero but what Ankh-Morpork needs is a copper who can anticipate or understand the street and its inhabitants. There is no better suited character to fulfil that particular duty than the experienced but alcoholic Captain even though he wishes someone else could do the job for him.

The narratives are a distorted reflection of culture, a subversion of societal norms and functions. I submit that the unnatural spaces into which the protagonists are written and the social criticism are integral to one another. Without the fictional distance of the unnatural space, or allegorical use of fantastic creatures to depict the injustice of slavery, *Gulliver's Travels* would perhaps be read as a tragicomedy since Gulliver, throughout the narrative, is tied down, threatened with physical violence from giant dwarves and birds, and sexually harassed by a Yahoo to mention only a few instances that threaten Gulliver-as-protagonist.

It is questionable to state whether either narrative is using the unnatural than the other but the fact remains, as established above, that there is no pretence of reality in the *Discworld*. *Gulliver's Travels* is ostensibly a travel narrative in which the transition to the unnatural is inexplicable and sudden, the border between spaces obfuscated by the autodiegetic narrator's lack of knowledge. The reason this is important to note is because this demonstrates just how important the acceptance of the unnatural, the fantastic, the strange and the uncanny has come to be throughout the development of modern fantasy. As I showed in the previous chapter with Rawson's comment of the chaplain whose proud refusal to accept Swift's text as real, I have no intention of arguing that these texts are realistic. By focussing on the unnatural aspects and the fantastic elements in the narratives covered in this study, I would posit that the characters, and the worlds in which they are set, are of interest to unnatural narratology because they so unabashedly revel in the unnatural

or fantastic in unreal settings rather than reading the unnatural as Brian Richardson does in Woolf's *Orlando*, which is briefly discussed in the following chapter.

There is one particular type of fiction that uses the unnatural space in much the same manner as Swift but for a different purpose. The dystopian novel—such as Karin Boye's *Kallocain* and George Orwell's *1984*—use the unnatural space as a platform to criticize Western civilization, culture and society. However, both novels are futuristic visions of what may come to pass as an evolution of our own society, using then-current fears[16], social and cultural developments to call attention to it from a futuristic and ominous perspective. I call this a post-transitional unnatural space which originated from actual society, markedly different from Pratchett's *Discworld*, whose setting is predominantly inspired by a pseudo-mediaeval setting that subsequently develops its interior substantially throughout the course of 40 instalments, or from *Gulliver's Travels*, set in contemporaneous transitional space. While this may seem a slight digression, it is simply meant to establish that the unnatural space is far from unique to the two authors this study covers.

The unnatural space, as read in *Gulliver's Travels* and in *Discworld* instalments, is a combination of the natural, supernatural, fantastic, uncanny or strange within a single narrative. Gulliver cannot believe his eyes when he first encounters the flying Island of Laputa because it is unnatural, it breaks the known laws of physics (Swift 144). Still, he visits the Island and finds its inhabitants even stranger than he could have expected, conducting experiments that requires covering oneself with excrement (Swift 167). I have demonstrated that Pratchett's *Discworld* is rooted entirely in the unnatural spaces whereas Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, most likely due to when it was written, is rooted in the natural world with transitions into the unnatural space: a spatially transitive narrative in which the borders between the natural and the unnatural are made opaque. In the following chapter, the narrator of the narratives pertaining to this study will be analysed in order to establish whether or not, or how for that matter, they are reliable or unreliable as a consequence of their being set in the unnatural space.

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[16] *Kallocain* is Karin Boye's dire warning to readers that military strength and scientific measures cannot be the axis upon which society revolves. Written in 1940, it is a warning to her readers that the dominant Nazi Party with its obsession with eugenics was unacceptable.

Revelling in the Unnatural: Voices of the Disc and Land

As discussed above, this study intends to analyse both mood and voice in *Gulliver's Travels* and the City Watch instalments of the *Discworld*. To provide a correct assessment of these two aspects, I must also address the unnatural setting of Swift's narrative which affects the narratorial tone as well as cover the indisputably fantastic *Discworld* in which logic is often, but not always, illogical. There are plenty of examples of unnatural narratives but perhaps the most easily recognizable narrative in which the unnaturalness of the narrator is brought to the forefront is Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Brian Richardson argues that it is the dual chronology that constitutes *Orlando*'s unnatural state, where "the eponymous hero ages at a different rate than the people that surround him (her), as one chronology is superimposed on another, larger one" (qtd. in Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson 115 (2010)) but from that single comment, one must also note the not so subtle nod to the character's gender switch. Not only is the protagonist subject to a distinctly different temporality than the other characters in the narrative, s/he also experiences[17] a gender switch. The narrative itself is an exploration of, and commentary on, societal pressures and restrictions that respective genders experience—It would be unfair to state that *Orlando* only explores the restrictions upon the female gender. The opposite applies just as well, in how Woolf explores the male societal subjective pressures and its problems—during an extended temporal setting is rooted in the real-world. However, the narrative becomes detached from the implied reader's mimetic expectations because it is unnatural.

Since the subdiscipline of unnatural narratology is still in an early stage of development, there is at present little fixity in terms of definitions within the field. Alber, Nielsen and Richardson confirm this by identifying, in *A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative*, "the impossible, the unreal, the preternatural, the outrageous, the extreme, the parodic, and the insistently fictional" as its primary target (9). By approaching the texts which I have chosen for this study with these directives, I hope to demonstrate that both *Gulliver's*

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[17] Phrased thusly because it is not the character's cognitive, conscious choice to change gender, it simply occurs abruptly, having gone to sleep as a man and waking up as a woman.

Travels and Pratchett's City Watch novels celebrate these aspects of the narrative. Perry Nodelman states in "Some Presumptuous Generalizations about Fantasy" that this celebration of the unnatural may be inherent to the genre, and I would, to some extent, agree. There are fantasy texts which are rooted in the mediaeval societies of England and its historical conflicts being modernized with a smattering of the fantastic thrown into the mix, of which George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* is a stellar example. Pratchett, on the other hand, writes pseudo-mediaeval fiction in which there are seemingly no limits as to what he might introduce. "The writer of ordinary fiction," Nodelman continues, "must persuade us that the events he describes could possibly happen in a world we live in and are already familiar with" rather than a fantasy author whose narrator traditionally needs to convince the implied reader to believe in (5).

Although *Gulliver's Travels* is an autodiegetic, i.e., protagonist and narrator are one and the same, and the *Discworld* a heterodiegetic narrative with zero focalization, i.e., a narrator outside the narrative with access to multiple characters, there is ample reason to analyse the differences between the respective narrators. Fludernik states in *An Introduction to Narratology* that there is "disagreement among researchers as to whether there is such a thing as an unreliable … third-person (*heterodiegetic) narrator" (161-162). This, then, would seem to be an optimal place to discuss precisely how the narrator of the *Discworld* is not only unreliable but doubly so. As James Wood writes, "unreliable narrators tend to become a little predictable, because they have to be reliably unreliable: the narrator's unreliability is manipulated by the author. Indeed, without the writer's reliability we would not be able to 'read' the narrator's unreliability" (111-112). I would argue that Wood's comment regarding the writer's reliability is what allows Pratchett the necessary manoeuvrability, as it were, to subvert the narrator's unreliability into unreliably unreliable. This is connected to the discussion of narrators in unnatural spaces, since it is the unnatural spaces that affects the reading and ultimately prove to be a crucial factor of the unreliably unreliable narrator: if the world the narrator is set in can be seen as inexplicably unnatural, how can the narrator reliably inform the reader of what is natural, unnatural, supernatural or preternatural? I will address these issues in detail in the fifth chapter.

The typical description of the Disc, where it rests on the back of four elephants balancing on a turtle called A'Tuin swimming in the cosmos, allows insight into how Pratchett introduced and maintained his world structure. Readers of *Discworld* will know that there is a particular instalment called *The Fifth Elephant*, in which events unfold that bring into question the natural laws in that world. The laws of the Disc, and its constant movement, would suggest that the metaphysics might be in flux along with everything else. There is one particular passage, found in *The Light Fantastic*, that explains what to expect when it comes to the Disc:

> It was a sight to be seen on no other world. Of course, no other world was carried through the starry infinity on the backs of four giant elephants, who were themselves perched on the shell of a giant turtle. His name – or Her name, according to another school of thought – was the great A'Tuin; he, - or as it might be, she – will not take a central role in what follows but it is vital to an understanding of the Disc that he – or she – is there, down below the mines and sea ooze and fake fossil bones put there by a Creator with nothing better to do than upset archaeologists and give them silly ideas. (Pratchett 7-8 *LF*)

Dissecting particular scenes, such as the one above, within a narrative allows for insight into a particular world and its logic, or lack thereof in terms of comparison to our own. The passage above suggests that the heterodiegetic narrator of *Discworld* is aware of the existence of other worlds, or alternate realities. It further explains to the reader that despite knowing much, the narrator is not a definitive authority on everything, a conclusion which one can draw from the comments on the Creator's gender and/or the decision that such a powerful being would spend its time giving its own creations "silly ideas" (Pratchett 8 *LF*). Marie-Laure Ryan's assertion that "through narrative[18] we also explore alternate realities and expand our mental horizon beyond the physical, actual world—toward the world of dreams, phantasms, fantasy, possibilities and counterfactuality" is directly applicable to how readers approach the narrative (3). The term "on no other world" informs the reader that there are probably other worlds connected to the Disc, inaccessible to the reader but known to the narrator. It also informs the reader that, in terms of religion, the narrator of the Disc is quite derisive and considers organized religion to be a farce. The irony of this

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[18] Here, Ryan refers to narrative in an inclusive meaning: novels, films, theatrical productions, etc. A narrative scene remains such regardless of medium.

statement is reinforced by the narrator's preceding argument that the Creator is real and present on the Disc, actively engaging in its existence.

In terms of how to approach *Gulliver's Travels*, one would do well to keep the narrator's misanthropy in mind but without letting it colour the entire reading because the respective narrators do at times provide the implied reader with truthful, useful information regarding the narrative or the unnatural world. When explaining the dangers of the political system in Lilliput, with its ridiculous acrobatics and stunts, Gulliver-as-narrator explains that "by contending to excel themselves and their Fellows, they strain so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a Fall … [and] I was assured that a Year or two before my Arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broken his neck" (Swift 34). While it would be easy to leap to the conclusion that Swift is parodying the inner workings of the English Parliament and the hoops through which they were made to leap before coming to power[19], I would argue that Gulliver-as-narrator is simultaneously attempting to insinuate his non-political nature to the implied reader and how unfit for politics a man of his grand stature is.

At this point it would seem to be an appropriate place to bring the discussion to what types of humour Swift primarily uses in *Gulliver's Travels* and how dissecting the unnatural narrative relates to satire, parody and social criticism. By returning to the example of Flimnap and the royally cushioned fall, it is my assumption that the implied reader would be expected to understand the "satire in *Gulliver's Travels* suggests that the corrupt and dexterous Flimnap (innuendo Walpole) has his neck saved at the court of an arbitrary oriental despot, the Emperor of Lilliput (innuendo King George)" (Higgins and Swift 292). The ambiguity in humour will not have become a factor until later, when later readers attributed the description to the type of playful silliness children might exhibit. This, coupled with the fact that adaptations or publications intended for all audiences— meaning that the narrative has been sanitized of its more vulgar components that are deemed unfit material for children to read, which usually results in the story consisting only of the first and second voyage—would explain why the perception of *Gulliver's Travels* is

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[19] See for instance note 34 on p. 292 of *Gulliver's Travels* where Flimnap's fall and a king's cushion breaking it is explained to be a Swiftian jibe at Walpole and King George.

ambiguous in the sense that some readers may mistake the original narrative for children's literature.

Although much of Swift's narrative could be read as consisting mostly of satirical jibes at contemporaneous political targets, it would be far too simple to dismiss the narrative as being nothing more than that. It might be argued that the use of an autodiegetic narrator within an unnatural space is preferable when using allegorical humour but as this study will show, it has over time become a question of reader reception of the allegory on which the humour hinges. Readers, be they modern or contemporaneous, can understand the targets and context of the satire that Swift is alluding to on the topic of Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos in the fourth voyage. That Swift is criticizing oppression is clear enough. What may not come through without the prerequisite knowledge is that the original criticism was directed at the British colonial rule and its treatment of the Irish population. In modern readings, the fourth voyage can be interpreted to refer to just about any religious or political movement without too much effort. It is interesting to note that much of Swift's contemporaneous satirical criticism is still applicable to modern society, albeit in a different context. This is why it becomes imperative to choose, or at least be aware of, the various reading strategies discussed in the first chapter.

Night Watch is spatiotemporally ambiguous, as has been mentioned earlier, and is written under the paradoxical assumption that Vimes can train his younger self in order to set him on the 'correct' path to ensure that his future self marries Lady Sybil while simultaneously trying to avert the disastrous events in which several of his colleagues were killed. But it is more than that. *Night Watch* can also be seen as an object lesson in how narratives and characters are subject to temporality. The narrative is almost entirely made up of analepses *while simultaneously not being analepsis*. Fludernik explains that analepsis is "a flashback to earlier stages of the story … often found in connection with remembered events or with the introduction of new character, whose history and experience before this point have to be told" (150). Consider the fact that Vimes has travelled back in time (flashback) and is actively using his (admittedly corrupted by alcoholism) memories (analepsis) to navigate the political situation in which he is chasing a murderer from his own time. *Night Watch* is almost a case study of a focalizer's memory as related to the

reader by a heterodiegetic narrator in an unnatural space where spatiotemporal ambiguity suggests that, despite the focalizers memories, everything is not as it seems to be.

Pratchett's facetious examination of the emotionally charged utterance "they may take our lives but they will never take our freedom" which inspires the Scottish troops to fight the English in Mel Gibson's 1995 film *Braveheart* is a basic example of the Pratchettness. In the build up toward the climax of *Night Watch*, when Vimes is fleeing Carcer, whose cheerfully violent nature had caught the attention of Lord Snapcase[20], Reginald Shoe[21] decides to take a stand against injustice:

> Reg had stood up, was waving the flag back and forth, was clambering over the barricade … He held the flag like a banner of defiance. 'You can take our lives but you'll never take our freedom!' he screamed. Carcer's men looked at one another, puzzled by what sounded like the most badly thought-out war cry in the history of the universe. Vimes could see their lips moving as they tried to work it out. Carcer raised his crossbow, gestured to his men, and said: 'Wrong!' (Pratchett *NW* 441-442)

Facetiousness is common ground for both authors discussed in this study. Despite the temporal gap between authors, there are remarkable similarities in how they present their subjects. Consider Gulliver's explanation that:

> [i]t is computed, that eleven Thousand Persons have, at several Times, suffered Death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the smaller End. Many hundred large Volumes have been published upon this controversy: But the Books of the Big-Endians have been long forbidden, and the whole Party rendred incapable by Law of holding Employments. (Swift 43)

Swift's passage above is similar in tone to Pratchett, but whether or not this is due to both authors' satirical purposes is uncertain. I would argue that the facetious tone is authorial, that these examples are indications of what the authors found contradictory or counterintuitive in their own cultural or societal trends and traditions and thus, incorporated a tongue-in-cheek reference in their works. I can only speculate but it would seem a fair assumption that both authors, regardless of how many centuries between them and their texts, found the constant presence of organized religion simple to criticize. It is far from the

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[20] As I have stated elsewhere, the individual names in *the Discworld* are fascinatingly ambiguous and subject to research in its own right.

[21] Reginald Shoe's involvement does not end in his death. He returns from the dead as a zombie due to unfinished business, to join the City Watch at a later date.

being the only such instance although this particular criticism toward organized religion is found in *Discworld* and the first voyage of *Gulliver's Travels*. Dealing with specific thematic aspects of each *Discworld* novel would take up far too much space here but it would be fair to state that such narratives that include Vimes or Vetinari are the instalments in which the tone and voice is most similar to Swift's narrative. Swift is satirizing religion and the ingrained prejudices that condition conflict between established organized religious practices. While Swift's passage, quoted above, is directed toward Catholicism and Protestantism, it is still applicable to how organized religion is discussed and can be perceived in modern society, where one religion is similar to, or directly opposite, another religion with a history of tension and outright conflict. Pratchett's parody, and satirical subversion, of religion in the *Discworld* is far too extensive a topic to be explained here.

Vimes and Gulliver are similar in that they feel put upon by authority figures. To be specific, the autodiegetic narrator of *Gulliver's Travels* presents his plights in voyages I, II and IV in such a manner that one can read his discontent quite clearly, not to be confused with the temporally distant misanthropy. In Lilliput, Gulliver saves the palace and its inhabitants albeit with vulgar means: "I had the Evening before drank plentifully of a delicious wine … which I voided in such a Quantity, and applied so well to the proper Places, that in three Minutes the Fire was wholly extinguished" and her Imperial Majesty's life is saved which eventually results in his expulsion from Lilliputian society (Swift 49-50;61). In Brobdingnag, Gulliver is forced to work until he "was half dead with Weariness and Vexation" (89), insulted and almost drowned by the Queen's Dwarf (97), and confined to a box to prevent his escape (88). The only place into which Gulliver ventures without being at physical risk is Laputa: "Although I cannot say that I was ill treated in this Island, yet I must confess I thought myself too much neglected, not without some Degree of Contempt (Swift 161). The unfairness with which Gulliver feels that he has been treated is interesting for two reasons. First, it only becomes apparent once the reader has completed the narrative that this is a narrator whose disappointment in his voyages has lead him to ignore, leave out, censure and colour his own account to such an extent that he becomes unreliable. Second, his disenchantment with humanity is entirely his own fault with the exception of his treatment in Houyhnhnmland, where Gulliver-as-protagonist cannot be

held accountable for the indigenous hatred/fascination of his existence. Consider the treatment Gulliver is subjected to in the first two voyages: in Lilliput, he is treated as a freak tourist attraction on which tens of thousands climbed, poked and prodded while unable to move due to restraints (Swift 23). In Brobdingnag, Gulliver-as-protagonist is little more than a novelty pet (or a tempting morsel for their actual pets). There is little in the way of respect for this tiny human whose presence seems a nuisance, imprisoning Gulliver simply for being different. While the box is ostensibly for his own protection, it is understandable that his during his imprisonment, following the ordeals in Lilliput, have caused Gulliver to become frustrated with how seemingly humanoid creatures are dismissive of him—a dislike he transfers to humanity because the only difference lies in size and culture—before meeting the Dutch pirates whose visceral hatred of Christians finally consolidates Gulliver's position in the narrative: he is doomed to be treated with disrespect and menial cruelty regardless of how he attempts to vindicate himself. I would posit that his reluctance to leave Houyhnhnmland stems not from the fact that he has come to respect the Houyhnhnm more than humans but from his deep and abiding fear that he would have to return to human society in which he never got a fair chance to succeed.

Key to, and a particular problem of, analysing the mood in *Gulliver's Travels* is the separation of protagonist and narrator. Rawson explains that "[a] difficulty for the reader[22] is that [*Gulliver's Travels*] is mediated through a narrator who is variously unreliable, and who in the later parts of the story … seems actually deranged" wherein "the reader is left, at the end, to negotiate this mood in a void, without support or signposts from the author" (xl; xlii). That Gulliver-as-narrator is unreliable has been discussed above but Rawson's comment regarding the narrator being seemingly deranged must be discussed further, particularly in the context of unreliable narrators in unnatural spaces. Gulliver-as-protagonist is subjected to several unnatural experiences which results in a skewed voice in Gulliver-as-narrator. Here, it is a mixture of the disappointment in his interactions with the humanoids of the narrative and his fascination for the structured society of the beasts that come together to skew Gulliver's voice into an unnatural narrator. I am also aware of the paradoxical fact that Gulliver-as-narrator would perhaps not be as unreliable were it not for

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[22] Rawson is presumably referring simultaneously to the implied, contemporaneous and modern reader.

Swift's need to frame his discussion in the hyperbolic unnatural, with morally superior equine creatures and gigantic inconsiderate bullies.

Gulliver-as-protagonist had the potential of being a gigantic bully in Lilliput. He never realized that he might have had the opportunity for seizing power for himself, reinforcing that he while he is morally ambiguous in his regard of humans, his stance toward the unnatural creatures and humanoids he encounters is straightforward. John Scalzi's exploration of the darker side of human action toward lesser species in *Old Man's War* is not as noble: "I'm stomping people to death with my fucking *feet* … [t]hese people are *one inch tall*. It's like Gulliver beating the shit out of the Lilliputians" (Scalzi 187). In this particular regard, I would speculate that Gulliver-as-narrator has simply coloured the narrative in order to paint himself in the most favourable light by omitting any violent occurrences, or accidents, between himself and the Lilliputian humanoids. Gulliver-as-protagonist is a reactionary character, in the sense that much of the narrative happens to him rather than occurring as a direct consequence of his actions. Given Gulliver's explanations of the workings of human society to the Lilliputians, Brobdingnagians and the Houyhnhnm, it is surprising to find that Gulliver-as-protagonist is not more combative or belligerent in his attitude toward the unfamiliar or unnatural species he encounters. I would posit that this is further proof of Gulliver-as-narrator's unreliability.

Rawson, on the topic of satirical tradition, writes that:

> the idea that the world is unmendable, that the satirist is a fool for trying, is one of the oldest in satire, and occurs in various forms in all Swift's major satires from *A Tale of a Tub* to *A Modest Proposal*. It goes with the ambiguous idea that if the world is mad and bad, the satirist's virtue will itself appear mad by that standard, ambiguous because one can be virtuously crazed, like the Modest Proposer, into vicious alienation, like that of proposing wholesale cannibal trade, through the latter is a reflection of the supposed depravity of the satirized population (Rawson and Swift xli)

Rawson's comment of satirical worlds being unmendable is far too arbitrary. For Swift, this is true but in the context of Pratchett, I would argue that it is not. The *Discworld* is decidedly mendable, and moreover, is in a state of rapid evolution from pseudo-mediaeval standards of living to what amounts to the equivalent of an unnatural representation of Victorian times. However, as this progression occurs over the course of 40-something

instalments of the series in its entirety, one must be careful to note that the culturally tumultuous changes occur with Ankh-Morpork as its epicentre with significantly less effect in the mountainous Ramtops. The leading cause of the city's rapid development is surely due to Lord Vetinari and his strict, structural organization of every detail in his city to which I referred earlier in the text. The best example of how Vetinari rules the city is perhaps his innovative approach and logic in regards to crime[23]: "[c]rime was always with us, he reasoned, and therefore, if you were going to have crime, it at least should be organized crime" (Pratchett *GG* 59). Moreover, in direct contradiction to Rawson's comment, "under [Vetinari's] hand, for the first time in a thousand years, Ankh-Morpork *operated*. It might not be fair, but it worked" (Pratchett *GG* 102 italics original). Further confirmation on how sweeping reformation irrevocably changes the city and its narrative can be found in the fable in *Feet of Clay*, in which the city's Golem representative struggles for their civil rights because the Golems themselves have no voices to be heard and are overworked as slaves.

Another interesting aspect to address regarding Rawson's comment is his assertion that the characters in satire are "fools for trying" (Rawson xli). I concede that to call Gulliver foolish is correct but for an entirely different reason. Given that the different voyages Gulliver takes situate him in distinctly different social circumstances, I would posit that Gulliver is not even foolishly attempting to change the unmendable world. My suggestion would be to read Gulliver-as-protagonist as foolish in the sense that he does not realize that he, as a human from England, is the unnatural element in the worlds into which he is written. To support this approach of reading *Gulliver's Travels*, I would state that Gulliver is the unmendable element in the narrative, or an incongruous autodiegetic narrator whose obsession with teaching unnatural species the flaws of his society rather than speaking of its accomplishments.

If one can accept that Gulliver travels to the unnatural space, one can analyse Gulliver-as-narrator as unreliable within that unnatural space accordingly. Having already discussed the misanthropy, I will instead focus on Gulliver-as-narrator's explanations of his

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[23] Barring sanctioned murders, which is in the realm of the Guild of Assassins, a different matter entirely in terms of etiquette. See *Pyramids* for in-depth explanations on the subject.

own society to unnatural beings and how that reflects his inability to correctly convey information, both in the narrative and as a source of information to the reader.

(Un-)Reliability of Narrators in the Unnatural Space

Generally speaking, fantasy authors and their narrators tend to be reliable, straightforward in their worldbuilding, and follow the hero's journey throughout either a single narrative[24] or a series. Series such as David and Leigh Eddings'[25] *The Belgariad*, *The Malloreon*, *The Elenium* and *The Tamuli*, Terry Brooks' *The Shannara Chronicles*, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Brandon Sanderson's *The Mistborn Saga*, Jim Butcher's *Codex Alera*, Raymond E. Feist's *Riftwar Cycle* series, and many more examples than could be recounted here have a reliable narrator. In an unnatural setting, it is important to trust that the narrator is reliable, or as Nodelman puts it, "we must trust the narrator before we can accept the world he describes" (5). Yet in the case of *Discworld*, there is an unreliably unreliable narrator who changes the implied reader's perception of previously established rules and metaphysical laws of the world by changing the original paradigm on which the world was originally explained. This type of deliberately playful, sometimes contradictory, somewhat silly tone on what is ultimately a serious topic is the essence of what might be called Pratchettness. I would argue that there is need for the neologism: Pratchettness is obviously part of the *Discworld* but it is also found in collaborative works, most notably in *Good Omens* which Pratchett co-wrote with Neil Gaiman. It has also been established the autodiegetic narrator of *Gulliver's Travels* is known to be unreliable, to such an extent that one can find on the back matter of the Oxford edition the question of "how far can we rely on a narrator whose identity is elusive and whose inventiveness is self-evident?" (Rawson, and Higgins).

Many of the *Discworld* novels set in Ankh-Morpork require further explanation. Because of its fantastic multicultural and pseudo-mediaeval setting, Pratchett is given free rein to construct discussions within the narrative that mirrors, criticizes or ridicules modern society. Rayment explains that in approaching Pratchett in this manner of reading, readers are "attempting to seek correspondences between elements in the Fantasy text and those in

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[24] Which, admittedly, is quite rare. The Eddings' *The Redemption of Althalus* or Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* are excellent examples that it does occur but it is far more common to find fantasy in serialized form.

[25] Although Leigh is not given credit in the earlier editions, David confirmed in a note to the reader of *Belgarath the Sorcerer* that it was time to end the worst kept secret of "contemporary fiction … [and that] it is time to give credit where credit is due" (Eddings).

the real world … at the level of *content* of [his] work" (18). One would only have to look at the Oxford edition[26] of *Gulliver's Travels* to establish that this manner of judgment is exactly how Jonathan Swift is for the most part read and criticized. The content of *Gulliver's Travels* is simply older than that of the *Discworld* and thus has been the subject of speculation and academic interest for a longer period of time. There have been a great many abridged and extensively edited versions of Swift's text, however, that prove that vulgarity remains an inflammatory issue within literature, and moreover, modern film adaptations in which the third and fourth voyages are completely cut. The notion of 'sanitizing' a narrative in order to make the material socially acceptable for all ages are commonly done for altruistic yet misguided reasons. While it allows the younger readers to consume the 'vulgar' narrative without being exposed to impropriety or offensive material, it also creates an entirely different narrative. If one reads only the first two instalments of *Gulliver's Travels* without its vulgar incidents—e.g. when Gulliver urinates on the Lilliputian Queen—or its politically charged undertone is misconstrued as playful and open toward children—e.g. when Gulliver is describing the ridiculous antics of Lilliputian Parliament and the acrobatics they must perfect should they wish to be elected by the public—the narrative loses its sarcastic tone. That particular tone deliberately "tends to be dropped in children's adaptations, which perhaps helps partly to explain why one of the world's most disturbing satires has also survived as a children's classic" (Rawson, and Swift xliiii).

The aggressive tone Gulliver-as-narrator uses throughout most of Swift's narrative differs significantly from the more playful, benign tone of Pratchett. While this could be attributed to the difference of focalization in which the author roots their narrator, it nevertheless requires analysis. Lemuel Gulliver is autodiegetic, or both protagonist and narrator, addressing the reader from a first person perspective, allowing access to his, and only his, thoughts unless otherwise verbalized within range of his hearing. In accordance with Genette, this will be referred to as internal focalization throughout this thesis (189). The *Discworld*'s narrator, on the other hand, is what will be referred to as zero focalization: there is a narrator present, offering readers access to multiple characters' thoughts,

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[26] This edition of *Gulliver's Travels* is the edition to which this study will refer to throughout.

verbalizations and perspectives may vary throughout the narrative. This is not without its own set of complications. By being able to change the focalizer through which the reader experiences the text, the narrator must remain objective in the narrative in order to avoid influencing the reader's interpretation of subjective events. This in turn offers an even greater venue for parody and/or satirical content by being able to play with the ambiguity of morality through an objective narrator using different focalizers whose beliefs and positions may vary. It is not enough to simply state that the narrator of the *Discworld* is objective.

Reviewing exactly how common, and subtle, some switches are in Pratchett's focalization with an example from *Night Watch* is appropriate here. The following textual analysis contains the characters of Sir Samuel Vimes in a setting where he, along with the antagonist, has inadvertently travelled back in time. Sam's temporal journey to his past requires readers not only to keep in mind the storyline of Sam's life thus far in the series[27], but also on how to keep that particular strand of possible outcomes intact within time travel and the paradoxes of a character meeting, let alone conversing or instructing, his younger/older self. As will become apparent, such is not the case within this narrative:

> All three watchmen were silent. Then Vimes heard a very faint, very close noise. It was the sound of the hairs in his ears rustling as, with great care, the tip of a crossbow bolt gently entered his ear. 'Yes, sir, I have a question,' said a voice behind him. 'Do you ever listen to your own advice?' (Pratchett *NW* 78) … Then Sweeper[28] added: 'It must have occurred to you.' 'Why? I've spent most of the time here being beaten up or unconscious or trying to get home! You mean I'm out there somewhere? 'Oh, yes. In fact last night you saved the day for your squad by aiming a crossbow at a dangerous miscreant who was attacking your sergeant.' The silence ballooned larger this time. It seemed to fill the universe. Eventually, Vimes said: 'No. That's not right. That never happened. I would have remembered that. And I can remember a lot about my first weeks in the job.' 'Interesting, isn't it?' said Sweeper. 'But is it not written: "*There's a lot goes on we don't get told*"? (Pratchett *NW* 97 italics mine)

Sweeper's flippant closing remark is infuriatingly ambiguous. It is either a statement from the narrator to the reader that there may be more such traps along the perilously paradoxical route of spatiotemporally open narratives or it may be a tongue-in-cheek authorial statement through which Pratchett is blatantly telling his readers that this should have been

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[27] Night Watch is the sixth instalment in which Samuel Vimes is the protagonist.
[28] Another recurring figure of the *Discworld* but of little import to this thesis. See for instance, Pratchett's novel *Thief of Time* for more on this particular character.

clear: nothing is as it seems until explicitly explained. Given Pratchett's love for word play and insinuating remarks, it is not unreasonable to assume that Sweeper's closing remark is deliberate. Such speculation is, however entertaining, pointless. The paragraphs above clearly show that not only do the two Samuels[29] meet in the novel, Pratchett takes it a step further and inserts the older Vimes into the role of the younger Vimes training sergeant to ensure the character's survival.

Readers of the *Discworld* will know that before Lord Vetinari took control of the city, social class was of major concern in the city and still is in other parts of the fictional world. By setting the story in a spatiotemporally open narrative and given the opportunity to expand upon topics only hinted at in previous instalments, Pratchett's use of humour becomes crucial. "Considering the case of the Discworld," writes Camilla Hoel, "it becomes clear that we are dealing with a multidimensional, multi-layered parody … [which] allows different positions to meet in unresolved play" (2). It would be an oversimplification to state that Pratchett only uses parody in his novels because, just as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the issues being addressed or criticized in the texts can vary radically, thus requiring different approaches of humour. One can definitively state that part of Pratchett's charm is how he engages in play with his adult readers[30] but to argue that the positions from which his plot progressions are presented are left unresolved seems harsh. What Swift manages to complete in four voyages, Pratchett establishes over several instalments of *Discworld*. Samuel Vimes, the hardened alcoholic in *Guards! Guards!* whose will to live had nearly been snuffed out by the state of the city in which he grew up, becomes a respected citizen and Lord Commander of the City Watch after defeating the dragon. This may seem as if the narrative adheres to the hero's journey but there is Pratchettness to be observed in its execution: Vimes never asks for, nor does he want any of, the promotions and titles which are bestowed upon him by Vetinari as the City Watch narratives progress. The character progression of Samuel Vimes is considerable but the

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[29] Sir Samuel Vimes, Lord Commander of the Night Watch of Ankh-Morpork and Samuel Vimes, wet-behind-the-ears-recruit of the Night Watch of Ankh-Morpork differ significantly.
[30] See for instance Linda L. Richards' interview with Pratchett. There is a definite difference between younger and adult readers. Pratchett's stance on writing for children is that it is harder than producing novels for adults already steeped in genre fiction.

manner in which the narrator describes him never changes. To the narrator of the *Discworld*, there is little difference in how the low-born alcoholic Vimes and His Grace Duke Samuel Vimes, Commander of the City Watch is described. The *Discworld*'s narrator is unimpressed by rank, unlike Gulliver-as-narrator, who sets great store in maintaining the proper respect for Lilliputian, Brobdingnagian, Japanese and Houyhnhnmland social class and rank.

However unimpressed the narrator of the *Discworld* may be with rank, the city of Ankh-Morpork is a setting in which the perception of rank and authority is important. In *Guards! Guards!*, being the first of the City Watch novels, the narrator makes it clear to readers that one of city's key figures is Lord Vetinari, the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, who has a very straightforward manner of organizing his subjects. It is made clear to the reader that he rules with a firm hand: "the Patrician was not a man you shook a finger at unless you wanted to end up being able to count only to nine" (Pratchett 59 *GG*). It is only five City Watch instalments[31] later that one finally learns more of his organized, scheduled and leisurely rise to power. The political system of Ankh-Morpork is oddly similar to the Lilliputian version in that both authors have created farcical political power structures where the highest authority, the monarch of Lilliput and Lord Vetinari respectively, control the positions of power by restricting access. It is also clear that Vetinari manipulates Samuel Vimes in order to further Vetinari's, thus by extension Ankh-Morpork's, best interests. It is only in *Night Watch* where one can observe Vimes acting completely without being manipulated by Vetinari. However, it is due to Vimes' extensive experience of dealing with Vetinari that he is able to impress and manipulate the then-current commander of the Watch into awarding him the rank of Sergeant-at-Arms, a measure Vimes takes to ensure that he is under no obligation to follow orders from anyone but the ageing Captain's.

The characters of the Night Watch begin in *Guards! Guards!* with only Vimes, Nobby Nobbs[32] and Corporal Colon as Watchmen. The novel parodies the classic hero's

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[31] One must be careful when dealing with *Discworld* instalments. For a comprehensive list in publication order and which characters are involved in each novel, it is easiest to consult the Goodreads list at: https://www.goodreads.com/series/40650-discworld

[32] The names in Pratchett's world are, in and of themselves, worthy of a study in humour. See for instance the use of names in *Carpe Jugulum* and *The Fifth Elephant* with particular emphasis on the vampires and dwarves respectively.

journey, in which the prodigal son of the city would pull a sword out of the stone, slay the big dragon[33] and restore the monarchy, thus order, to the criminal sinkhole that Ankh-Morpork had become since Vetinari had become the Patrician. While the original intent had been to assign the comparison between Lemuel Gulliver as an autodiegetic narrator and the narrator of Discworld as a heterodiegetic, it quickly becomes clear that this text must give significant space to the character progression and evolution of Samuel Vimes because of how often he is a crucial component of the City Watch instalments. Over the course of the instalments in which he features, Samuel Vimes rises from lowborn to nobility by marriage to Lady Sybil, assumes command of both the Day Watch and the Night Watch and becomes Vetinari's preferred foreign diplomat in journeys where a policeman's instinct might be useful. It should be noted that the local nobility with whom Vimes is regularly forced to interact with nobility that look down upon him, or at least his background, since Vimes' ancestor, old Stoneface, killed the reigning monarch who had no heir, ensuring that Ankh-Morpork's royal line died out. This resulted in the Vimes' family being stripped of its lands and titles, casting the family down from its eminent social class. Although there is more to it than this short summary, it is a good starting point through which the reader can begin to understand why Vimes is so distrusting of authority, or those who claim superiority over him. Because the narrator is heterodiegetic in *Discworld*, the reader is sometimes also able to access the authority figure that Vimes is disobeying or rebelling against, which in turn provides with an interesting tension within the narratives themselves in terms of duality where the reader might choose to side with the authority figure rather than Vimes.

According to Claude Rawson, *Gulliver's Travels* is "neither 'modern' nor (at least in many people's view, including my own) a novel" (481), a twofold statement which will be addressed on both points. While the narrative is certainly not modern in the sense that it is published in the form of a diary which, in Swift's time, was common enough with travel narratives. It cannot go unmentioned that during the time of Swift's writing *Gulliver's*

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[33] The dragon's size matters significantly in the narrative. In other fantasy, dragons are most often huge, winged serpent-like creatures with respiratory abilities of either acid, fire or some such. See for instance, the colour coded abilities of dragons of R. R. Salvatore's *Icewind Dale* trilogy or how Smaug is described in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. In the Discworld, these have died out and only swamp dragons remain, creatures that can barely spit fire, and moreover, are a fire hazard.

Travels, the novel itself was a fairly fresh occurrence, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* generally credited as being the first novel. It is hardly surprising, then, that *Gulliver's Travels* is not critically received as a novel because it is fundamentally different in form. The four voyages that are distinctly different parts of the same story, the narrative breaks in which the narrator directly addresses the reader, the fantastic elements and the caricatures through which Swift satirizes quantitatively rather than qualitatively—meaning that Swift's satire is broadly applicable to many groups/settings/social aspects rather than targeting individuals. Admittedly, individual criticism does occur in *Gulliver's Travels*, some of which is mentioned within this study but in those instances, Swift is criticizing the politics of the situation rather than the person. These are all fundamentally aesthetic differences from Defoe's novel but does it disqualify the narrative from being considered a novel? With contemporary definitions of a novel quite ambiguous[34], I would definitely consider *Gulliver's Travels* a novel, in much the same manner that one should consider *The Castle of Otranto* or Brandon Sanderson's *The Way of Kings* in the *Stormlight Archive* series novels respectively despite the enormous differences between the two. If the argument used against *Gulliver's Travels* being a novel is its format of four distinctly different adventures using the same protagonist combined into a single narrative, one should not forget how common such a format is: Robin Hobb's *Assassin's Apprentice*, Terry Goodkind's *Wizard's First Rule*, David and Leigh Eddings' *The Redemption of Althalus,* and to a lesser extent, Dickens and *A Christmas Carol* are all examples of narratives in which the protagonist is subjected to three, or more, separate adventures that might as well be split into four distinctly separate volumes. Although *A Christmas Carol* is split into staves rather than chapters, the argument still holds. Each spirit within their own stave (or chapter), working toward the same goal yet using drastically different measures within the narrative. It is similar with *Gulliver's Travels*, but for the autodiegetic presence of Gulliver who refuses to blur the boundaries of each incredible instance. Although it would be simple to assign this particular choice to Swift's preferences of how his writing should be presented,

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[34] Ranging from definitions of word count in the narrative, from 40000 words and upward, does not exactly define what a novel is. It only establishes that such texts that do not reach above that number are to be called something other than a novel.

such speculations are surely subject to the intentional fallacy, and thus, will not be pursued here.

The inconsistencies one can glean from Gulliver-as-narrator are no more obvious than in comparing Part I with Part IV. In the first voyage, he states near the end of the adventure that he would "never more to put any Confidence in Princes or Ministers, where [he] could possibly avoid it" but throughout the entire narrative, Gulliver trusts authority figures without questioning their actions or motives (Swift 69). This is, of course, a fundamental basis on which Swift builds his satirical criticism aimed at various authority figures or ordinances yet it also confirms that Gulliver-as-narrator cannot be trusted. Explicitly stating vows of intent to readers, such as here above, only to renege on them upon meeting the next authority figure is one of the clearest indications of untrustworthy narrators yet also one of the most insidious. Should the reader approach the narrative non-sequentially, this may not have as clear an impact because Gulliver might simply be perceived as an imperfect narrator. It is only by reading them sequentially that one realizes that not only is one dealing with a highly satirical text aimed targets which the implied contemporaneous reader has prerequisite knowledge about. Being confronted with the idea of a narrator that cannot be held to his own word throws the entire account to be questionable on an entirely different level, especially considering the extent of Gulliver-as-protagonist's misanthropy.

There is, however, method to Gulliver-as-narrator's rambling tone and savage mood. By soliciting sympathy for his "… desolate Widow, and Fatherless children…", the narrator is effectively pulling the reader deeper into the scheme of the narrative (Swift 78). As discussed above, Gulliver-as-narrator is a misanthropic individual whose subterfuge in the narrative becomes obvious when discussed in the context of internal narrative temporality coupled with reliability. Here, readers must consider not only the phrasing with which he refers to his wife and children but also how often and where in the narrative it occurs because, as Gulliver-as-narrator clearly states at the very end, "the sight of them filled me only with Hatred, Disgust and Contempt…" (Swift 271). The discrepancy with which he refers to his family must be framed here in terms of interior narrative temporality. Gulliver, as a misanthropic narrator, solicits sympathy from his readers in the knowledge

that first-time readers might not be aware that he hates not only his family but the entire human race. When readers return to the narrative, Gulliver's references to family and the society from whence he came becomes almost entirely hypocritical without losing any of its satiric bite. Readers aware of the discrepancies implicitly become accomplices to the unreliable narration due to the humorous nature of Swift's depiction of a fantastic society.

While there is no question that Gulliver-as-narrator is unreliable, for reasons explained above and more, he is at least consistent, or confined, to the interior narrative. Consider that Gulliver-as-narrator asks us to believe that there are species proportionate to one 15th of a normal human's size, its direct opposite which is 15 times bigger than a normal human, flying islands and talking horses whose moral code far surpasses humanity's. While this is certainly indicative of an unreliable narrator, he is still reliably consistent in that he does not break the rules set forth in the entire narrative. Breaks in the set, or previously established[35], narrative would be instances where the narrator or protagonist directly contradict how the world works—subverting the rules of the fictional universe—to suit the narrative's needs at any given instance. When Gulliver-as-narrator establishes the rules of the fantastic journeys, there is no deviation from them within each particular voyage. Whether or not one takes examples from the first voyage to Lilliput and its tiny indigenous species or the more hyperbolic descriptions from his excursion to Laputa, there is no change in regard to the narrative rules that he stipulates from the beginning. Conversely, nothing seems set within Pratchett's fictional world except perhaps that its readers can and should expect the unexpected, as illogical as that statement may seem.

Pratchett's most overt type of comedy, parody, or satire, is to a certain extent dependent upon the reader's comprehension of logic, which he subverts in situational or verbal misunderstandings between his characters. The same might be said of Gulliver's voyage to Laputa—in which readers find a seemingly scathing indictment of intellectuals and the active pursuit of knowledge for science—but there is an argument to be made that in this particular instance, Swift's satire is twofold. When Gulliver-as-narrator states that

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[35] Meaning its having been established in previous instalments in which the same protagonist and narrator feature.

"… the most ignorant Person at a reasonable Charge … may write Books in Philosophy, Poetry, Politicks, Law, Mathematics and Theology; without the least Assistance from Genius or Study" (Swift 171), it is not unreasonable to suppose that Henry W. Sams' theory on satire of the second person is concomitant to the Swift's ironic statement. A similar case could be made for Pratchett's Unseen University, in which the wizards and scholars of Ankh-Morpork attempt to evade any sort of scholarship and have become particularly adept at evading responsibilities a wizard or learned individual in fantasy narratives usually have. This is a typical satiric subversion of a reader's expectations that the author uses to form a situation within the narrative through which ridicule is directed at, in this particular instance, intellectuals. Although both Pratchett and Swift both criticize ideological functions, religion and prominent individuals, there is one system in particular that they both gleefully attack with devastatingly sharp humorous remarks: the political system and the social classes.

Vimes is not a nobleman by birth, though he reluctantly becomes one by marrying the Lady Sybil. Because Vimes is a watchman, the novels in which he features are primarily police procedural in structure, where he must work alongside his subordinates to solve mysterious crimes. Samuel Vimes acts rationally in an irrational, because unnatural, world. In *Guards! Guards!*, Vimes, along with his future wife, recognizes that the dragon is physically impossible, that it can do things it ought not to be able to do. In *Men At Arms*, Vimes recognizes and resists the mental impulses projected onto him by the Gonne, not because he alone can nobly resist its devious calling but because he refuses to be cajoled, begged or forced into action by an authority he does not recognize as superior to himself or Vetinari. In *Feet of Clay* when Vetinari is incapacitated, Vimes actively works to foil the nobility's attempt to prop Nobby Nobbs as a figurehead through which they would once more rule. In *Jingo*, Vimes resigns from his post as Commander because he refuses to serve as part of Lord Rust's regime whose first action after Vetinari's resignation was to impose martial law. In *Fifth Elephant*, Vimes is sent to Uberwald to negotiate treaties and trade agreements with the deep dwarves coinciding with the coronation of the Low King. In *Thud!*, Vimes is desperately attempting to ensure that hostilities between Dwarves and Trolls does not get a chance to re-ignite on the eve of the Koom Valley anniversary.

Finally, in *Snuff*, Vimes takes his wife and young son on vacation outside the city, travelling to the countryside where Vimes felt "like a man banished" while harbouring hopes that "there was bound to be some horrible murder or dreadful theft in the city which for the *very important* purposes of morale" would cut his vacation short (Pratchett 7 *Snuff*; 7 *Snuff* italics original).

Perhaps less known, since he occurs in the critically reviled third voyage to Laputa among other places, is the Academy scientist whose intent to "reduce human Excrement to its original Food, by separating the several Parts, removing the Tincture which it receives from the Gall, making the Odour exhale, and scumming off the saliva. He had a weekly Allowance from the Society…" (Swift 167-168). Here, again, I am struck with the similarity between Swift and Pratchett. In the introductory pages of *Snuff*, the reader is informed that "faeces are considered to be food that has merely undergone a change of state", echoing Swift's mad faecal Academic. A. S. Byatt, in her review of *Snuff*, writes that "[t]here is a great deal of interest in bodily fluids, excretions and excrement" in the book (n.p.). Even though the comment is true, the description does not manage to convey the importance of its presence throughout the narrative. After the first three paragraphs of the book, there can be no doubt that excrement and vulgarity is a core concern in this instalment but, as with most of his novels, Pratchett is examining and exposing double standards of society by inserting the problems into an unnatural space and resolving them according to the interior logic of *Discworld*.

The narrative that offers the most significant similarities in terms of reliability to *Gulliver's Travels* is, as mentioned above, *Night Watch* albeit with a crucial difference. It traces the formation of (young) Samuel Vimes as a character and how he is moulded by a temporally inconsistent presence with intimate knowledge of (historical) events just as Gulliver-as-narrator delineates Gulliver-as-protagonist's journey through the unnatural worlds. Because the narrator of the *Discworld* is heterodiegetic, combined with the reader being treated to two temporally different versions of Vimes, it is easy to forget that it is not (old) Vimes relating the story to the reader. Old Vimes has such intimate knowledge of events which he actively attempts to shape in his favour—if only to preserve the future where he was about to become a father—that the reader might easily mistake Vimes as

being the narrator when that is not the case. When old Vimes confronts Corporal Quirke regarding protocol of interdepartmental transfers of prisoners, the narrative shifts into old Vimes remembering how young Vimes was taught to act as a guardsman:

> *'Not worth worrying anyone if they look a decent sort,' Quirke said.*
>
> *And he'd said: 'How can we tell if they're a decent sort, corp?'*
>
> *'Well, see how much they can afford.'* […]
>
> *'But suppose he's nicked the money, corp?'*
>
> *'Suppose the moon was made of cheese? Would you like a slice?'* (Pratchett 130
>
> *NW* italics original)

Much like in *Gulliver's Travels*, memory of how things occurred shape the reader's experience of *Night Watch*. The crucial difference is that while both protagonists have managed to survive, or become temporally distant from the events that they experienced, Vimes has been re-inserted into them with the experience and knowledge he has gained over the years as a copper in Ankh-Morpork. In Vimes' case, the reader cannot be sure that his experiences and memories of events in the narrative are reliably correct because they are accessed through his own memories; the memories of a character whose experience of the events may have been altered over the passage of time and alcohol abuse. The events have been filtered through Vimes' memory and is then relayed to the reader by the narrator. Barring the alcohol abuse, this is how Gulliver-as-narrator relates his story to the reader. The perspective and understanding of the stories has become distorted through the respective narrators/protagonist's experiences. It is this distortion that renders a narrator unreliable. If there are added elements to the narrative, such as the unnatural space which affects the narrative, it is imperative to analyse if the narrator is reliably unreliable or unreliably unreliable.

Conclusion

This study has compared how two major English authors, separated by some three centuries, authored satiric narratives that foreground the fantastic and unnatural. It is fascinating to note that despite the temporal gap between the two, Swift and Pratchett found that they can criticize the power structures of government, class division, organized religion, xenophobia, racism and many more topics simply by setting the narrative within a fictitious world. These two settings, the non-transitional Disc and transitional spaces in which Gulliver finds himself, are fundamentally what makes the satire so effective. Gulliver's serious explanations to the tiny Lilliputians, giant Brobdingnagians or equine Houyhnhnms on how English society functions might have given the contemporaneous reader pause; it also allows the modern reader to realize that there are aspects of society that perhaps has not changed all that much over the years. Furthermore, it must be stated that it is because the narratives are set in fictitious worlds that the reader must choose how to interpret the narrative, choosing to naturalize or unnaturalize the reading which is discussed in the third chapter.

This study has also discussed various methods of reading the unnatural in a narrative. The reader should be aware, be it in the case of reading narratives that contain the unnatural in terms of space, temporality or characters, that there are different methods of interpreting the narrative. Crucial to an unnatural reading is the willing suspension of disbelief because the narratives contain aspects, elements or thematic devices that are impossible, implausible or illogical. This study has shown that these matters are foregrounded in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and select City Watch novels in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series. While the unnatural space is arguably more fantastic in the latter, both authors write of events that are fantastic/incredible/impossible which offers the reader the option of an unnatural reading. An unnatural reading thus allows, at various levels of interpretive discretion, the reader to ignore natural law/s of the real world should that be necessary. It should be pointed out that Nielsen's argument that unnaturalizing and naturalizing reading strategies stand in competition is understandable in the scope of literary fiction. In terms of fantasy fiction, as the narratives covered in this study must be

considered, the unnaturalizing reading strategy is the more viable option provided that the readers willingly suspend their disbelief. An unnaturalizing reading is a choice, as any other kind of reading is.

It has been made clear that there are crucial differences in how the *Discworld*'s City Watch novels and *Gulliver's Travels* mark and use the unnatural space. There is textual evidence of the transitions from the natural to the unnatural within *Gulliver's Travels*, marked by the protagonist's circumstantial loss of control and disorientation, whereas in the *Discworld* there are multiple layers within the non-transitional unnatural space that is inhabited by markedly different life-forms (or, in one particular case, the absence-of-life-form: Death). The unnatural space is a combination of a fantastic setting that features the natural, unnatural, supernatural or preternatural and presents them as normative to the reader. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is different from the Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels discussed in this study in how the unnatural space is accessed by the protagonist. In *Gulliver's Travels*, one can actively mark the transition from natural to unnatural whereas the *Discworld* is non-transitional, meaning that the unnatural space is the norm within the narratives. This can be in the form of spatiotemporal ambiguity—as this study has shown with the paradoxical meeting and subsequent interaction between the same character in different stages of his life: (old) Vimes and (young) Vimes in *Night Watch*—or in the form of transitioning into several different spaces: the Lilliputian, Brobdingnagian, Laputan and Houyhnhnmland spaces, each with their distinctive indigenous species, social customs and traditions. The transition into the unnatural space in *Gulliver's Travels* is explained in this study as the protagonist's loss of control of his surroundings—i.e., a fierce storm that ruins the ship or a mutinous crew that confines Gulliver to a cabin—during which the natural and unnatural spaces briefly intertwine to allow Gulliver's transition. It is important to note that *Gulliver's Travels* is a transitional narrative whereas *Discworld* is non-transitional. The unnatural spaces of the *Discworld* are ever-present and need to be in consideration when reading, unlike Gulliver's return to the natural which stresses the need for an unnaturalizing reading by focusing on and identifying where the shifts to the unnatural occur.

Following the discussion of the narrators in their respective unnatural spaces, this study has discussed the reliability of the narrators, questioning whether either or both narrators are unreliable in the classic sense of withholding information or manipulating the reader (un)knowingly misinterpreting events or if they are more than that. This study then demonstrates that Lemuel Gulliver is reliably unreliable because he is consistently inconsistent in providing the reader with correct information but there is never a digression from the interior logic of the natural or unnatural spaces which he enters. The extent of Gulliver's unreliability as narrator can be ascribed to his deep, abiding mistrust and dislike of mankind after spending so much time in the unnatural space. The narrator of the *Discworld*, on the other hand, is unreliably unreliable due to being set fully within the unnatural spaces, subversion of natural logic within the unnatural space, unconventional use of conventionalized types of characters such as dragons or vampires, and finally, spatiotemporal ambiguity. While one of these aspects alone might be what marks a reliably unreliable narrator, it is the combination of all of these elements that construct a narrator whose unpredictability is only equalled by the unnatural spaces of the world in which he operates.

Gulliver-as-narrator and the unnamed narrator of the Discworld are similar in their tone. It is through their examinations and/or explanations of impossible or strange events within the narratives that the reader may interpret them as satiric or parody because the narrator's tone is attempting to convince the reader that talking horses or dogs do in fact exist and that the reader ought to believe the narrator because nothing is impossible within the unnatural space. However, Gulliver-as-protagonist is affected by his exposure to the unnatural space, particularly by the fourth voyage to Houyhnhnmland, in terms of his tolerance of human society and its values. Since the narrative is related by Gulliver-as-narrator from a considerable temporal distance from experiencing the earlier stages of the narrative, there rests considerable doubt on how accurate a description the reader can expect in terms of narratorial reliability not only in terms of the fantastic, the unnatural, or the fantastic, but rather simply due to the inevitable passage of time and how memory shifts and can deteriorate over the course of some 17 years. Similarly, on the point of memory in the *Night Watch*, one can question the veracity of those memories that Vimes relies on for

much of his spatiotemporal adventure to his own past. Whether one is dealing with an autodiegetic or heterodiegetic narrator that deals with an unnatural or natural world, one thing is clear: the reader should not consider memories a reliable source of information.

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