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**Translating Humour in Selected Terry Pratchett's  
Novels**

*Překlad humoru ve vybraných románech Terryho  
Pratchetta*

Bachelor's thesis

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“I hereby declare that thesis ‘Translating Humour in Selected Terry Pratchett’s Novels’ is my own unaided work and all direct or indirect sources used are acknowledged as references.”

In Prostějov on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021



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Vladimír Ganzar

I would like to express gratitude and appreciation to my loving wife Adriana Ganzarová, who supported me over the course of studies and writing this thesis. She was literally my Sybil Ramkin.

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## **Abstract**

This bachelor's thesis aims to cover the theoretical basis of research regarding humour and techniques used to produce it, and to include the essential theory of translation, translation procedures and translation methods in the first part of the thesis with respect to needs of the second part in which two novels by Terry Pratchett are introduced: *The Colour of Magic* and *Guards! Guards!* Selected extracts from both original and translation copies of the novels are further subjected to analysis using the gained theoretical framework with the purpose of identifying the core of humour included in the extracts, evaluating the translation by Jan Kantůrek and possibly providing an alternative solution in cases where humour got lost in the translation process.

## Introduction

Terry Pratchett was a creative genius and a true magician when it comes to producing humour. Author of this thesis have read a vast number of his novels, at first in Czech Translation, later in the original. With better knowledge of languages and with the increasing age the complexity of humour has started to unravel. Some of it was straightforward but for some, one had to dig deeper. During the reading time the questions have started to emerge. Why is this funny? Why do we laugh? What is humour? Due to reading in two languages the author also spotted the differences between the translation and the original. Sometimes a line was not that much entraining in Czech, sometimes it was not funny at all. There were also rare times when translation felt better. We have read various articles praising Czech translation of Terry Pratchett books and we have gotten curious whether the translation was really that good and whether if something got lost in it. And if so, was this loss inevitable? Could it be done better? Thus, even more questions have arisen. How to recognize good translation? How free a translator is in his endeavour to capture the soul of the original? Where are the boundaries? What tools does a translator have?

The questions above formed into the topic of this bachelor's thesis: Translation of Humour in selected Terry Pratchett's novels. The aim of the thesis is twofold. First, to cover the theoretical basis of research regarding humour and techniques used to produce it, and to cover the essential theory of translation, translation procedures and translation methods. The contemporary research regarding humour and translation is quite affluent but unfortunately very fragmented. An integration of fundamental theory in one place is done in the first part of the thesis with respect to needs of the practical part. Also, Terry Pratchett and Jan Kantůrek, the sole translator of Terry Pratchett's works in Czech Republic, get to be introduced here. Second, with the help of knowledge gained in the theoretical part, to analyse both original and translated versions of extracts selected by author of the thesis from two Terry Pratchett's novels: *The Colour of Magic* and *Guards! Guards!*, to recognize the core of humour in the provided extracts, to evaluate the state of translation and to possibly propose an alternative solution in cases where humour got lost in the translation process. The analysis creates the content of the practical part along with introductory chapters presenting the fantasy genre, the Discworld and each novel separately.

# THEORETICAL PART

## 1. Introducing Terry Pratchett

Terry Pratchett is a favourite author for a vast number of people, otherwise his novels would not repeatedly make bestsellers. An affection of the author of the presented thesis for Terry Pratchett's works stands as a primary incentive for writing it. We find it appropriate to present Terry Pratchett and his literary work right at the beginning as it will help to understand specifics of the author, the world he created, and the works selected for examination of translation of humour by a sole translator of his works in Czech Republic – Jan Kantůrek.

Terry Pratchett was born in 1948 in England. He published his first story *Business rivals* at the age of thirteen in the school magazine, which was a year later published commercially as *The Hades Business*. When he was seventeen, Pratchett left school and started to work at the local newspaper - The Bucks Free Press. There he was writing weekly children column, crafting short stories for kids to entertain them. While making an interview with Peter Bander van Duren for the newspaper, Pratchett mentioned he was working on a book. Bander Van Duren passed Pratchett's manuscript to Colin Smythe, who became Pratchett's publisher, later his agent, and a friend. The manuscript at hand was *The Carpet People*, Pratchett's first novel, published in 1971. In 1979 Pratchett took up a job of press officer for the Central Electricity Generating Board. In 1983 *The Colour of Magic* was published by Smythe. It was the first novel taking place in Discworld, a flat planet balanced on the backs of four elephants which in turn stand on the back of a giant turtle. The Discworld became incredibly successful comic fantasy series counting forty-one books in total. As the Discworld series turned out to be more and more popular, Pratchett eventually gave up his job and became a full-time writer. In 1996 The Times reported Pratchett the bestselling author in the United Kingdom at that time. During his writing carrier he was granted many awards and honours. The prize he valued the most was Carnegie Medal from 2002 (an award annually granted for book aimed at kids or young adults). In 2009 Pratchett was knighted by the Queen for services to literature. In 2007 he was diagnosed with a rare form of Alzheimer's disease. He kept writing and publishing books until his demise in 2015, when he died peacefully at his home. For the duration of his life, he finished fifty-nine books and co-authored thirty more. Ninety million copies of his books in thirty-eight languages were sold. His work evolved into twenty-two stage adaptations, eight television series, about

twenty BBC adaptations and readings, two musicals, four graphic novels and four television documentaries.<sup>1</sup>

Terry Pratchett's works are perfect subjects for a translation of humour study, for from reading Pratchett's books it is apparent that humour takes the central part in it. The Discworld series is considered comic fantasy as a genre. What that means is essentially fun first, fantasy second. This genre offers original and interesting environment for producing humour with the same qualities. When Pratchett was asked whether Discworld novels are humour or fantasy, he replied that bit of both; according to Pratchett, "humour is like a colour. Before you apply a colour, you must have something that you want coloured."<sup>2</sup> Pratchett's vessel for producing great humour was Discworld, through which he satirized our own world.<sup>3</sup> For him humour was a good way how to pass thoughts to people on the subconscious level. When people focus on laughter, they do not realize that ideas are simultaneously settling in their minds.<sup>4</sup> Terry Pratchett books have entertained people all over the world and without any doubt his writing genius and wit have left the Earth a merrier place.

## 2. Introducing Jan Kantůrek

As mentioned above, Jan Kantůrek was an exclusive translator of Terry Pratchett's works in the Czech Republic. He was born in the same year as Pratchett in Zlín and died three years after him. Most of his life he lived in Prague. In years 1975 – 1990 he worked as a technical editor for Artia publishing house, in years 1990 – 1992 as a head of sales in Aventinum publishing house and since then he worked as a freelance translator. Kantůrek translated over a hundred of titles, although he is most known for his translation of Pratchett's works and books about Barbar Conan by R. E. Howard. He gained Academy of Sci-fi, Fantasy and Horror Prize

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<sup>1</sup>A concise biography available at official Terry Pratchett website: *Sir Terry Pratchett – The Life and Works of Sir Terry Pratchett OBE* [online]. terrypratchettbooks.com, 1995-2021 [cit. 28.05.2021]. Available at: <<https://www.terrypratchettbooks.com/about-sir-terry>>

More thorough biography by Colin Smythe: *Colin Smythe Limited* [online]. colinsmythe.co.uk, 2021 [cit. 28.05.2021]. Available at: <<https://colinsmythe.co.uk/terry-pratchett>>

<sup>2</sup>*Writing Magazine Christmas 1993 - Profile: Terry Pratchett: Fantasy or humour? - As Terry Pratchett sees it* [online]. lspace.org, 2021 [cit. 02.06.2021]. Available at: <<https://www.lspace.org/about-terry/interviews/writmag.html>>

<sup>3</sup>As said by managing director of Pratchett's publisher on his death: DAVIES, Caroline. Terry Pratchett dies after long illness, aged 66. *The Irish Times* [online]. 2021 [cit. 01.06.2021]. Available at: <<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/uk/terry-pratchett-dies-after-long-illness-aged-66-1.2137791>>

<sup>4</sup>ČEHLOVSKÁ, Magdalena. Vzpomínka na Terryho Pratchetta: Věřil, že humor lidem rozšiřuje obzory. *Hospodářské noviny* [online]. 30.04.2021 [cit. 01.06.2021]. Available at: <<https://archiv.ihned.cz/c1-998896-terry-pratchett-rozhovor>>

for being the best translator in 1995 – 1997, 1999, and in 2003 an award for long-time work in the field.<sup>5</sup>

Jan Kantůrek could be perceived as a controversial figure. It is a very well-known fact, that he could not speak English properly. Additionally, he himself claimed that he cannot translate and that he is afraid of the day when the truth comes up to light.<sup>6</sup> There is a story concerning his first meeting with Pratchett in Hamburg where Kantůrek asked for an interpreter to speak with him. At that time, he had already translated two or three books of his. Pratchett allegedly turned pale. However, when the translated book was read to an audience, people laughed at the same passages. This stood as proof to Pratchett that humour had been preserved.<sup>7</sup> Pratchett had Kantůrek's translation examined initially, and he was impressed that Kantůrek had translated character's names, a thing that is not done anywhere else. Later, Pratchett granted Kantůrek a great gift – he gave him permission to make creative adjustments as long as characters and story are preserved.<sup>8</sup> Kantůrek's translation of Pratchett is very popular among reading audience and Pratchett praised it as well – he claimed that his books are best translated in Czech Republic and Netherlands.<sup>9</sup> According to Pratchett Czech and English people share one common trait, playfulness with words, hence Czech translation is so good.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. What is Humour?

If we are to examine a translation of humour in selected Terry Pratchett novels, it might seem crucial to define humour, which is a rather difficult task as we will find out below. Even upon referring to the most rudimentary definition in Cambridge Dictionary, which describes humour as the ability to find things funny, the way in which people see that some things are

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<sup>5</sup>Jan Kantůrek [online]. spisovatele.cz, 1996-2021 [cit. 03.06.2021]. Available at: <<https://www.spisovatele.cz/jan-kanturek#cv>>

<sup>6</sup>KLIČNÍK, Richard. Zemřel Jan Kantůrek. Překladatel Zeměplochy již kráčí s velkou A'tuin. *Reflex* [online]. 22.03.2018 [cit. 03.06.2021]. Available at: <<https://www.reflex.cz/clanek/kultura/85929/zemrel-jan-kanturek-prekladatel-zemeplochy-jiz-kraci-s-velkou-a-tuin.html>>

<sup>7</sup>ŽÁČKOVÁ, Helena. Jan Kantůrek. *Reflex* [online]. 2010 [cit. 03.06.2021]. Available at: <<https://web.archive.org/web/20080815165044/http://reflex.cz:80/Clanek528.html>>

<sup>8</sup>ZUNOVÁ, Andrea. Překladatel Jan Kantůrek: Terry Pratchett mi dal velký dar. *Novinky.cz* [online]. 24.05.2015 [cit. 03.06.2021]. Available at: <<https://www.novinky.cz/zena/styl/clanek/prekladatel-jan-kanturek-terry-pratchett-mi-dal-velky-dar-297137>>

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>DAVIDOVÁ, Adéla. Zemřel Jan Kantůrek. Českým čtenářům přinesl Pratchettovu Zeměplochu, Hellboye i barbara Conana. *iROZHLAS* [online]. 21.03.2018 [cit. 03.06.2021]. Available at: <[https://www.irozhlas.cz/kultura/literatura/jan-kanturek-umrti-terry-pratchett-zemeplocha-prekladatel\\_1803221941\\_dbr](https://www.irozhlas.cz/kultura/literatura/jan-kanturek-umrti-terry-pratchett-zemeplocha-prekladatel_1803221941_dbr)>

funny, or the quality of being funny<sup>11</sup>, we can perceive that humour is a complex and extremely subjective category. A simple joke may employ language skills, theory-of-mind, symbolism, abstract thinking, and social perception which could make humour arguably the most complex cognitive trait.<sup>12</sup> And telling jokes is just one of many ways of producing humour.

Humour is inherent with human species. There is not any culture to which humour is unfamiliar and based on the available evidence, the minimum figure for the age of humour was proposed, stating thirty-five thousand years.<sup>13</sup> Since the invention of the written word numerous great minds have taken interest in humour as a subject, including figures as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Decartes, Kant, Bergson, Freud and many more.<sup>14</sup> Apart from the excellent thinkers above, who attempted to explain the humour, humour itself also became the tool for many splendid writers from Plautus, Moliere, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Swift, Twain<sup>15</sup>, to Terry Pratchett himself. And yet, to this day, there is not a single definition of humour which would be all encompassing and universally accepted, and there, most likely, will never be one. After thousands of years studying humour, we still do not completely understand why something is considered funny and what humour is.<sup>16</sup> Humour researchers were not able to reach agreement on how to divide the category of humour or to define humour in the most general sense. It was proposed several times, that humour can't be defined.<sup>17</sup>

That does not mean, of course, that there were not ones who did not try to. One could easily get lost in numerous theories regarding humour, as the attempts of defining humour permeate through various scientific disciplines – philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics and more. However, there are three theories though that are prevailing and continually appearing – superiority theory, incongruity theory, and relief theory.<sup>18</sup>

Superiority (or also called hostility) theory indicates that people laugh at other people because they feel superior or somehow triumphant over them.<sup>19</sup> This theory is illustrated by

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<sup>11</sup>Cambridge Dictionary. *Cambridge University Press* [online]. 2022 [cit. 02.02.2022]. Available at: <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/humour>>

<sup>12</sup>POLIMENI, Joseph, JEFFREY, P. R. The First Joke: Exploring the Evolutionary Origins of Humor. *Evolutionary psychology*. 2006, vol. 4, p. 348.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>ATTARDO, Salvatore. *Linguistic Theories of Humor*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994, p. 14-57, see also BERGER, Artur Asa. *An Anatomy of Humor*. Routledge, 2017, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>BERGER: *An Anatomy of Humor...*, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>ATTARDO: *Linguistic Theories of Humor...*, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup>BUIJZEN, Moniek, VALKENBURG, Patti M. Developing a Typology of Humor in Audiovisual Media. *Media Psychology*. 2004, vol. 6, p. 148.

Also MEYER, John C. Humour as a Double Edged Sword. *Communication theory*. 2000, vol. 10 p. 310.

<sup>19</sup>MEYER: Humour as a Double Edged Sword, p. 314.

laughing at ignorant actions of others.<sup>20</sup> It is the oldest theory of all, stemming from Ancient Greek opinions over humour, whose attitude towards laughter at that time was of “*suspicion, wariness, and condemnation*”, especially if it was at excess.<sup>21</sup> Thomas Hobbes strongly expressed the idea, that laughter arises from a feeling of superiority of the laughing person towards the some object, which is commonly referred as “*butt of the joke*”.<sup>22</sup> The most influential proponent of the theory, Bergson, considered humour as a social corrective used by society to correct deviant behaviour.<sup>23</sup> Two important effects result from this theory: those, who disobey the rules of society, are censured by laughter, and those, who laugh at ridiculed ones feel to be a part of a greater group; thus humour serves as a glue keeping the society together.<sup>24</sup>

Possibly the most important theory of all is the theory of incongruity, which claim that there is a distinction between what one expects and what one gets.<sup>25</sup> People laugh at things that are surprising, unexpected, or odd, under the condition those things are nonthreatening.<sup>26</sup> If an accepted order of things is violated, or difference is noted, this difference, neither too disturbing nor too ordinary, evokes humour in the mind of recipient.<sup>27</sup> Surprise is a key element in this theory.<sup>28</sup> It also involve the intellect, because one needs to recognize an incongruity before one can laugh at one.<sup>29</sup> It deals with smile and wit rather than incidental laughter.<sup>30</sup> Some of devices of this theory being homonyms, synonyms, an unconventional use of language, hyperboles, exaggeration, punning, irony, ambiguity, unexpected turns, drawing strange resemblances or dissimilarities, comparisons and metaphors.<sup>31</sup>

Relief (also known as release) theory works with the premise that people experience humour because it reduces stress in a certain way; humour originates from a release of nervous energy,<sup>32</sup> or it releases one from the inhibitions, conventions, and laws.<sup>33</sup> Classical authors built the connection between health and humour already, arguing that laughter can provide pleasure

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> ATTARDO: *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humour* ... p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> ATTARDO: *Linguistic Theories of Humor* ... , p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>24</sup> MEYER: *Humour as a Double Edged Sword*, p. 315.

<sup>25</sup> BERGER: *An Anatomy of Humor* ... , p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> MEYER: *Humour as a Double Edged Sword*, p. 313.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> BERGER: *An Anatomy of Humor* ... , p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> ATTARDO: *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humour* ... p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> MEYER: *Humour as a Double Edged Sword*, p. 312.

<sup>33</sup> ATTARDO: *Linguistic Theories of Humor* ... , p. 50.



and relaxation.<sup>34</sup> The strongest proponent of this theory was Freud.<sup>35</sup> The above mentioned theory is best represented by communicators, who often tell jokes at the beginning of their remarks to mitigate a hypothetically tense situation.<sup>36</sup> This theory also led to a point that there must be a specific frame of mind for humour.<sup>37</sup> This was established by Freud already who proposed that for a humorous laughter a generally cheerful mood, in which one is inclined to laugh, is necessary.<sup>38</sup> It is required to note that relief theory is rather theory of laughter, for releasing of tension suggests hysterical laughter as an outcome.<sup>39</sup>

At this point, it is imperative to put the term laughter under the scrutiny. In the theories above laughter is often mentioned and reader might get an impression that the relationship between humour and laughter is symmetrical – what is humorous makes one laugh, what makes one laugh is humorous.<sup>40</sup> This is not the case. Both terms are closely related, but not synonymous. Humour is a cognitive process which frequently leads to laughter. Laughter is a seizure-like activity which can be induced by humour but also by other stimuli, tickling for instance.<sup>41</sup> Possibility of use of laughter as a criterion of humour is problematic for five reasons below. First, laughter goes widely beyond humour. There are physiological causes of laughter, e. g. the aforementioned tickling or use of hallucinogens. Second, Laughter might have different meanings. For instance, in Africa, it might be the sign of embarrassment or bewilderment. Third, laughter is not directly proportionate to the intensity of humour. Everyone reacts differently; age, education or simply being accustomed to certain type of humour can affect intensity of laughter. Fourth, humour does not always induce laughter, often it induces smile. Fifth, laughter might be simulated and therefore it's meaning must be assessed first.<sup>42</sup>

There are many other theories regarding humour, the abovementioned ones being only the most widely recognized. They convey the fundamental facts which aid to shape at least a satisfactory conception of what humour is. We took a restrictive approach when writing this chapter since the category of humour is a very broad subject that could be studied from various aspects with consideration for peculiarities of diverse scientific fields. There is no doubt there

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<sup>34</sup> ATTARDO, Salvatore. *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humour*. New York: Routledge, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> ATTARDO: *Linguistic Theories of Humor...*, p. 50.

<sup>36</sup> MEYER: Humour as a Double Edged Sword, p. 312.

<sup>37</sup> ATTARDO: *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humour...* p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> ATTARDO: *Linguistic Theories of Humor...*, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> POLIMENI: The First Joke: Exploring the Evolutionary Origins of Humor... p. 347.

<sup>42</sup> All five reasons cited from ATTARDO: *Linguistic Theories of Humor...*, p. 11-12.

are more elaborate and recent theories of humour<sup>43</sup>, however they would serve no further purpose for the aim of this thesis, as they do not shed more light to the problematics, only pose more questions. We do not consider one theory superior to another. The multitude of humour theories often built on top of each other and share similarities and neither theory is without its problems. To conclude, we presume that most of us instinctively know what humour is and why we appreciate it. Almost every person can most likely recollect funny situations from their life which brought them joy, that being possibly the most important characteristic of humour; it gives us pleasure, even if it sometimes does so in complicated ways.<sup>44</sup> Before transitioning to the more practical chapter, let's wrap up with a (hopefully) funny quote: "Humour can be dissected as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind."<sup>45</sup>

#### **4. Techniques of Humour**

At this chapter we are about to move from the abstract theory of humour to practical examples. Below is a table of humorous techniques put together by Asu Berger. He mentions it was made by content analysis of all kinds of humour in various media and these terms ought to be comprehensive and mutually exclusive. He clearly states he was not able to find any other technique to add to the list.<sup>46</sup> These techniques should be able to help us to identify humorous devices used by Terry Pratchett, to analyse, why they are funny, what is the core of these techniques and then, in the practical part, to review whether the humorous passage at hand was translated properly, meaning whether the translation successfully conveyed the humour and preserved the fundamentals of a good translation. The aim of this chapter is to bring the Platonic ideas of what the humour is down to earth in the Aristotelian dissecting manner.

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<sup>43</sup>Especially general theory of verbal humour (GTVH) presented in ATTARDO, Salvatore, RASKIN, Victor. Script theory revis(it)ed: joke similarity and joke representation model. *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research*. 1991, vol. 4, p. 293-347.

<sup>44</sup>BERGER: *An Anatomy of Humor...*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup>WHITE, E. B. *A Subtreasury of American Humor*. New York: 1941, p. xvii.

<sup>46</sup>BERGER: *An Anatomy of Humor...*, p. 18.

<b>Language</b>	<b>Logic</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Action</b>
Allusion	Absurdity	Before/After	Chase
Bombast	Accident	Burlesque	Slapstick
Definition	Analogy	Caricature	Speed
Exaggeration	Catalogue	Eccentricity	Time
Facetiousness	Coincidence	Embarrassment	
Insults	Disappointment	Exposure	
Infantilism	Ignorance	Grotesque	
Irony	Mistakes	Imitation	
Misunderstanding	Repetition	Impersonation	
Over literalness	Reversal	Mimicry	
Puns, Word Play	Rigidity	Parody	
Repartee	Theme/Variation	Scale	
Ridicule		Stereotype	
Sarcasm		Unmasking	
Satire			

According to Berger, the analysis of humour ought to involve breaking it down to its main elements – isolating various techniques used to generate humour and then rating those techniques – deciding which technique is basic and which secondary.<sup>47</sup> Berger further recognizes four basic categories under which techniques listed in the table above could be subsumed – language for verbal humour, logic if humour is ideational, identity for existential humour and action for physical or nonverbal humour.<sup>48</sup> Terry Pratchett used a wide range of these techniques, particularly satire, parody, absurdity, allusions and puns. It would not be feasible to explain all the techniques above at this part. First of all, Berger has already done that, second, not all of them were used by Terry Pratchett on regular basis and third, there simply was not space left to deal with some of them in the practical part of this thesis, as extent of the thesis is rather limited, and we are bound to take the selective approach in the practical part. We cannot span our attention to all possible variations of humour and translation procedures used to translate it. There is also one more dimension to decision of taking the

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

selective approach – not all abovementioned techniques are as interesting in relation to translation as others. For example, action-based techniques could be translated directly without dealing with arduous obstacles of not having language or cultural equivalent in the translated language. In comparison translation of puns or satire is quite another story. That is why we put focus only on techniques typical for Terry Pratchett's writing. Explanation of individual techniques that are correlated to Terry Pratchett's works are further explained below.

Starting with satire for which are Terry Pratchett's works most famous for. Satire could be perceived as a resistant power attacking existing conditions. Generally, it is making fun at those in power (but it could be also used against those who criticize status quo). Satire charges against specific individuals, institutions, or happenings. Satire uses many other techniques of humour, such as ridicule, exaggeration, insult, or others.<sup>49</sup>

Parody aims at someone on the other hand – it is a form of verbal mimicking or imitating someone. Style and mannerisms of someone well-known are ridiculed. Often it is a well-known writer, or it could be a famous work, genre, or style of writing. It is most likely the most used technique, it's very effective and some theorists even claim that all humour originates from parody.<sup>50</sup>

Absurdity functions by making light of the logic and rationality. It doesn't have to appear silly; it could even take a philosophical position – if life is absurd, humour of absurdity might be seen as a means towards realism. There is an urge in our minds to impose sense of logic and order upon the world and if this fails, it leaves us puzzled and amused.<sup>51</sup>

Allusions are tied to social and political matters and situations containing a sexual dimension. They are connected to mistakes, errors, faux pas that become known – they are tied to information that people have. They tell us what we can legitimately poke fun at and suggest that we are all alike – we all do mistakes.<sup>52</sup>

These four techniques are used in abundance in Terry Pratchett works side by side with some of the other techniques not described at this part. Those will be pointed out later in the practical part and explained there. It is apparent that translation of those four techniques might be challenging particularly when the technique in use will refer to a concept that is not present in the translated text language (cultural reference etc.).

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid. p. 44.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid, p. 20

<sup>52</sup>Ibid, p. 21.

Let's make a quick stop at puns, or as Berger states: "Puns, Word Play, and Other Amalgamations." Everyone who read Terry Pratchett can clearly recognize that he was very creative when it comes to wordcraft. Some of his witty remarks might go unnoticed if the reader is not attentive enough. So, what exactly is this category? Puns, sometimes (incorrectly) thought as the lowest form of wit, are signifiers that stand for two signifieds. A signifier is a symbol, sound or image that represents an underlying concept or meaning, signified is that what is to be signified. We enjoy playing with language for it gives us pleasure and it likely goes back to Freud term of "economy of expenditure" - it is better to use one word that has two meanings.<sup>53</sup> It would be interesting in the practical part to see how Jan Kantůrek coped with the language creativity of Terry Pratchett.

It is also worth to note that a lot of the language play and various allusions came from creating names of Discworld's characters. We may touch upon the subject in the practical part only partially as it was the subject of a different thesis.

## 5. Translation Theory

The theory of translation is a very difficult and complex discipline which did not get to be comprehensively studied until the last century. There is no general valid definition or a correct attitude to translation. It changed over time and in accordance with the perspective of a given theorist. There are no absolutes or cast-iron rules, everything is more or less, and as such the translation should be the subject of discussion<sup>54</sup> (as it was in the past).

So, what is translation? British linguist J. C. Catford defines translation as follows: "The replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language."<sup>55</sup> Peter Newmark simply states that translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.<sup>56</sup> We can spot early on that both definitions mention text, alternatively textual material. That is because the process of oral translation is commonly known as interpretation, and it is considered a separate category in theory.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>54</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2003, p. 21.

<sup>55</sup>CATFORD, J. C. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 20.

<sup>56</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation...* p. 5.

<sup>57</sup>MUNDAY, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. London: Routledge, 2001, p. 8.

When it comes to translating, we may differ between intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation. Intralingual translation could be also understood as rewording; it is defined as an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language. Interlingual translation, also known as translation proper, is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems.<sup>58</sup> The division above is sometimes referred to as a translation in the wider sense. Interlingual translation is then referred to as a translation in the narrower sense<sup>59</sup>, the latter being the subject of further study.

Translation could also be classified based on its function as an artistic and non-artistic. The artistic translation is not only about transferring information but also about conveying aesthetic values of the original text. The non-artistic translation on the other hand is supposed to be precise, factually correct and the language style should be preserved.<sup>60</sup>

It could be said that translating was the subject of examination for literary-aesthetic theorists at first. Later in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century it began to be studied from the linguistic point of view. Both approaches then parallelly existed next to each other, conflicted at times, until they integrated in the current method reflecting mainly a pragmatic aspect,<sup>61</sup> which is about to be explained further down in the text.

Naturally, theoretic approaches to translation were evolving over the course of time, two elemental opposing tendencies crystalized though: word-for-word or literal translation and sense-for-sense or free translation, the distinction going way back to Cicero.<sup>62</sup> Literal translation used to be predominant; it's goal is to be as faithful as possible to original text. This approach however often leads to incomprehensible and unnatural result in targeted text. It originates from translation of the biblical texts to which precision of translation was partially motivated by reverence to the sacred text. Another reason for initial dominance of this method might have also been a low level of knowledge regarding differences between languages.<sup>63</sup> Sense-for-sense translation on the other hand aims at preserving information value of the original text and at the same time it tries not to fundamentally alter its style and function. In other words, it firstly respects rules and environment of the targeted text and it takes less into

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup>JEDLIČKA, Daniel. *Úvod to teorie a praxe překladu*. Opava: Slezská univerzita, 2019, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup>KNITTLOVÁ, Dagmar. *K teorii i praxi překladu*. Olomouc: Univerzita palackého v Olomouci, 2000, p. 5.

<sup>62</sup>MUNDAY, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies...* p. 26.

<sup>63</sup>JEDLIČKA, Daniel. *Úvod to teorie a praxe překladu...* p. 14-15.

account a specific language rendering of the source text. It's goal is to appear natural in the targeted text and it is considered a prevailing method.<sup>64</sup>

Leaving various theories aside, at this part we are about to list some of the translation challenges around which those theories revolved and formed. Said challenges are especially the concept of equivalence, translatability of the text and problematics of undertranslation and overtranslation.

The issue of equivalence is the central notion to the linguistic approach to translation. Equivalence is a broad and ambiguous term. If we are speaking of equivalence, we doesn't mean lexical equivalence but rather equivalence textual – meaning that the smallest translation unit is a word combination, for instance verb + noun or noun + adjective etc.<sup>65</sup> In the widest sense it could be defined as a relation between semantic or functional resemblance of the language unit of original text and corresponding language unit of targeted text.<sup>66</sup> There are several conceptions of equivalence in theory, both contradicting and overlapping. The basic principle of translation these days is functional approach to translation, which was first outlined by J. Catford (who did not use this term specifically), meaning that it is not important if we use identical or different stylistic devices when translating, they only need to fulfil the same function, and if it is achievable, in every aspect possible – semantic, denotational, referential, connotational, expressive, associative and pragmatic.<sup>67</sup> The main component of text is the semantic aspect represented by lexical units put into relation by grammatical system. Denotational aspect expresses the notional content of a word. Connotation aspect is given by cultural or emotional association of text and finally probably the most important aspect is pragmatic, determined as a relation between the language expression and the participants of the communicative act (the author of the text and the recipients).<sup>68</sup> Another widely known concept (or rather classification) of equivalence is one put up by Eugene Nida who noted differences between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence.<sup>69</sup> Formal equivalence means that language unit in the original text formally and functionally resembles language unit of the targeted text. Attempts for formal equivalence represent older theoretic approaches to

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>65</sup>KUFNEROVÁ, Zlata. *Překládání a čeština*. Jinočany: H & H, 1994, p. 13

<sup>66</sup>JEDLIČKA, Daniel. *Úvod to teorie a praxe překladau...* p. 16.

<sup>67</sup>KNITTLOVÁ, Dagmar. *Teorie překladau*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1995, p. 5, also KNITTLOVÁ, Dagmar, a kol. *Překlad a překládání*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2010, s. 7.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>WINDLE, Kevin, PYM, Anthony. European Thinking on Secular Translation. In: MALMKJAER, Kirsten, WINDLE, Kevin. *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 6.

translating and its typical result is word-for-word translation.<sup>70</sup> Dynamic equivalence primarily aims at preserving the effect or function of the original text.<sup>71</sup> What Nida calls dynamic equivalence, namely the need for equivalent reaction of the recipient, which means that translation ought to accommodate to needs of targeted language and its overall structure, context of the information and recipient, is according to Knittlová unfortunate naming and it is better explained by term already in usage: pragmatic aspect of translation.<sup>72</sup> Knittlová further explains, that pragmatic aspect differs based on the understanding of individual authors. The most comprehensive explanation according to her has been done by Leipzig theorists for whom the term pragmatics means the relationship between authors and recipients in communication and relationship between stylistic devices and authors. Stylistic devices can vary for the authors who differ by age, origin, social environment, degree of education etc. or because authors can find themselves in different situations, they might have various motives for communication, different recipients, they may use familiar or casual style or the most formal style etc. Pragmatism of the translation lies in fact that the recipient of the translation is different from the author and at the same time assumes preserving of pragmatics of the text. Pragmatic translation is a translation that is adapted to pragmatic rules of target text.<sup>73</sup> But how does it look in practice? A good example is the English word *hat* and its Czech translation *čepice*, *klobouk*. Czech translation has wider meaning. If we are to choose a functional equivalent, we need to take context into account (what type of hat the author means). If there is not context apparent in the original text then problem arises.<sup>74</sup> Specific type of problem is when the notion in the original text does not have equivalent in the target text, because it does not exist in the target text culture. Translator should then use the closest, generically similar and local alternatives.<sup>75</sup> One last note regarding equivalence in relation to artistic translation. As mentioned earlier, artistic translation must additionally carry-on artistic value from original text to target text, and that is done by using literary devices. Equivalence of literary devices is manageable when using figures of speech (metaphors, oxymorons, personification etc.), because human imagination, despite cultural differences, originates from the same principles, but difficulty occurs when using formal literary devices such as rhyme, assonance and alliteration. For example, English has strong tradition in alliteration (safe and sound, hale and

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<sup>70</sup>JEDLIČKA, Daniel. *Úvod to teorie a praxe překladu...* p. 16.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>KNITTLOVÁ, Dagmar. *Teorie překladu...* p. 5

<sup>73</sup>Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>74</sup>JEDLIČKA, Daniel. *Úvod to teorie a praxe překladu...* p. 17.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.



hearty), and after translation in different languages in which alliteration is not so strongly felt, might left recipient deprived of it.<sup>76</sup>

Another great challenge was that of translatability. The question the thinkers asked was: Can anything be translated? Historically, there are two opposing interpretations: the universalists view and the monadist view, which both derive from the contrasting opinion of the nature of language and meaning. Universalists think that translatability is ensured due to biological factors and cultural similarities. All people brains function in the same way so all people share the common rationality. On top of that all people inhabit the same physical world so people thus share the equivalent experience. Different languages might work differently on the surface, but all are able to communicate all the possible meanings. Universalists see the language as two-layered: ideas and meaning are covered in the deep layer and various linguistic structures work on its surface.<sup>77</sup> Monadists doesn't argue that translation is not possible at all, they only pose a question if fully adequate translation is achievable. According to them structural asymmetries between various languages prevent conceptual mapping from language to language because there is lack of analogues and the absence of a language-independent mapping tool. Example of said might be how colour spectrum is divided or how is kinship organized in different languages. It was even argued that logical categories of ancient Greeks were based on the features of their language. Each culture and language ought to be assessed on its own terms. This theory basically claims that absolute translation is not possible, only approximate renditions or explanatory paraphrasing is.<sup>78</sup> Another point of view was brought in second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Jacque Derida and by him coined term of deconstruction. Deconstruction rejects existence of shared core meaning language structures (universalism), but it does not see derivation of the translated text from original as a problem. Language is not a mere form baring meanings but an autonomous entity.<sup>79</sup> For Derida the issue of untranslatability was an asset and it also posed challenge, daring the translator to tackle the impossible and transgress the limits. Translation can show "a glimmer of pure language", it adds to and yet liberates something in the original.<sup>80</sup>

Last challenge to translation mentioned here (but not at all altogether) is problematics of undertranslation and overtranslation. Undertranslation is any shift (semantic, denotational,

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>BAKER, Mona, SALDANHA, Gabriela. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. Oxon: Routledge, p. 603.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid, p. 604.

<sup>79</sup>JEDLIČKA, Daniel. *Úvod to teorie a praxe překladu...* p. 16.

<sup>80</sup>BAKER, Mona, SALDANHA, Gabriela. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies...* p. 605.

stylistic etc.) causing translated text to contain less information than original text, for instance substitution of word for a word with wider meaning (*ale – pivo*), replacing product name with general term (*botasky – trainers*) etc. Undertranslation does not have to mean that translation is poor. It is often done for the reason of ensuring better function of translation and to clarify it to the recipient.<sup>81</sup> Overtranslation means the exact opposite – it is a shift in target text causing it to contain more information than original text. For illustration it might take a form of adding expressions to proper names for the reason of explaining to the recipient (*Vltava – the River Vltava, Lancashire – hrabství Lancashire*). Overtranslation could be also corrections to the original text. Overtranslation could be compensated by explanatory notes, footnotes etc. but it might pose a problem for artistic translation; such means would not stand in poetry, as it might come across as disturbing to the recipient.<sup>82</sup>

## 6. Translation Procedures and Translation Methods

The theory in the previous chapter provided us with a sufficient framework for discerning whether the translation is of good or poor quality by introducing basic principles of translation on which we can further build. In this part we are going to fill our current theoretical structure with practical techniques a translator might use to get the job done. Knittlová references to seven fundamental procedures of translation used by translators when dealing with the lack of direct equivalent (categorization created by Vinay & Darbelnet).<sup>83</sup> These procedures are further defined and explained on examples.

The first procedure, borrowing, refers to a type of interlingual transfer in which the word of the source text is transferred to the translated text without any modification.<sup>84</sup> Many of the English words have been adopted this way. *Croissant, pretzel, tattoo* or *yogurt* are some of the good examples illustrating this technique.

Another translation procedure, a special type of borrowing, is called Calque. It is basically a word-for-word translation, a process in which the individual elements of source language are translated literally to produce a translated language equivalent<sup>85</sup>, e.g., *masterpiece – mistrovské dílo, skyscraper – mrakodrap* or *superman – übermensch*.

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<sup>81</sup>JEDLIČKA, Daniel. *Úvod to teorie a praxe překladu...* p. 18.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>KNITTLOVÁ, Dagmar. *Teorie překladu...* p. 5, also MUNDAY, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies...* p. 75.

<sup>84</sup>SHUTTLEWORTH, Mark, COWIE, Moira. *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Oxon: Routledge, 1997, p. 175.

<sup>85</sup>SHUTTLEWORTH, Mark, COWIE, Moira. *Dictionary of Translation Studies...* p. 18.

Next term - literal translation – is a metaphrase, a word-for-word translation. It was described in detail above. The notion was formalized by Nida as the formal equivalence, whereas Vinay & Darbelnet classify it as a type of direct translation.<sup>86</sup> It is possible only between the similar languages and often doesn't preserve the full meaning of the original text. An example could be translation of *kindergarten* as *children garden*.

The three translation procedures above are considered a direct translation by Vinay & Darbelnet. If direct translation is not possible, the oblique translation should come in place and it covers the next four procedures:<sup>87</sup>

Transposition is a necessary grammatical alteration caused by a different language system - change of one part of speech for another, e.g. noun for verb, without changing the sense.<sup>88</sup> An example could be *to gain control* – *ovládnout* or *full of thatched cottages* – *s doškovými střechami*.

Modulation is the change of the point of view, used mainly in the case when the grammatically correct translation would sound unnatural.<sup>89</sup> For instance: *it is not difficult* - *je to snadné* or *brown paper* – *balící papír*.

Equivalence, also called idiomatic translation, uses different stylistic and structural means, which are different from the original text, to describe the same situation; it is especially useful when translation idioms and proverbs.<sup>90</sup> E.g., *my sweetheart* - *zlatičko*, *feel under the weather* – *cítit se pod psa* etc.

The last translation procedure by Vinay & Darbelnet categorization is adaptation which involves altering the cultural reference in case that equivalent doesn't exist in the targeted text culture.<sup>91</sup> For example *cricket* could be replaced from English in a French translation as *Tour de France* as a reference for popular sport.<sup>92</sup>

To make things more confusing, while researching works of various translation theorists, one can go over myriad of terms describing the same thing and even worse, over the same term which every author uses in a different meaning. For example what Newmark calls transference is borrowing by Vinay & Darbelnet. Similarly, he uses term cultural equivalent for adaptation, trough-translation for calque or term shift for transposition.

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid. p. 96.

<sup>87</sup>MUNDAY, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies...* p. 75-76.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid. p. 76.

<sup>89</sup>SHUTTLEWORTH, Mark, COWIE, Moira. *Dictionary of Translation Studies...* p. 108.

<sup>90</sup>MUNDAY, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies...* p. 77.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>SHUTTLEWORTH, Mark, COWIE, Moira. *Dictionary of Translation Studies...* p. 4.

Newmark further presents a few other translation procedures, which we consider useful to explain at this part.

Naturalisation succeeds borrowing and adapts the word of the original text to the normal pronunciation and then to normal word-form of the source text, for example Edinburgh to Edimbourg or tchaterism to tchaterisme in French.<sup>93</sup>

Functional equivalent is a procedure applied to cultural words which neutralizes or generalizes the source language word and sometimes adds a particular, e. g. *Sejm* – Polish *parliament*.<sup>94</sup> This technique might be suitable for legal translation.

Synonymy means that synonym word is used if there is no direct equivalent between source text and translated text, and the word is not important enough for componential analysis, *persone gentille* – *kind person for instance*.<sup>95</sup>

Newmark mentions a few other translation procedures that we do not mention here and there are many other translation procedures used by other authors which we are not able to accommodate in this thesis. Moreover, we do not find it necessary because examples above cover the basics perfectly and will be more than sufficient for the purpose of analysis conducted in the practical part, where they will be used rather sparingly. Reason for that is that the techniques above are used when there is not direct equivalent in the target language, so they are rather useful for smaller units of language and are not applicable for translating larger bodies of text. Aim of the thesis is to evaluate translation of humour in selected novels, so we are going to look at the translation from the bigger picture. Instances where humour depends on a single word or sentence are few. Knowledge of translation procedures get to be useful when one particular technique of humour is used – word play – which is quite often in Terry Pratchett books. In other cases translation of larger bodies of text will need to be assessed and judging whether the principles of good translation were followed will be more important. Such principles were outlined in the previous chapter and we will further develop on these by providing translation methods below.

Newmark puts a difference between translation procedures and translation methods. He understands translation procedures as techniques used only for translation of sentences and the smaller units of language, which is, in our opinion, in line with Vinay & Darbelnet's categorization, whereas he uses term translation methods in relation to whole texts.<sup>96</sup> These

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<sup>93</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation...* p. 82.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid, p. 83.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid, p. 81.

methods are word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation and communicative translation.

Word-for-word translation preserves word order of source language and words are translated out of context in their most common meanings. It can be used to understand mechanics of source language or in pretranslation process when translating difficult texts.<sup>97</sup>

In contrast to word-for-word translation literal translation converts the source language grammatical constructions to nearest equivalents, but lexical words are still translated out of context. If used in pretranslation process it can indicate issues to be solved.<sup>98</sup> We can see that Newmark differentiates between word-for-word and literal translation in his translation methods whereas other authors, when speaking about translation in the most general sense, make no difference between these. That is something to be aware of.

Faithful translation tries to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the source text while being constrained by grammatical structures of the target text. Cultural words are transferred and grammatical and lexical deviations from the source language norms are preserved. This method aims to be completely faithful to intentions and the text-realisation of the source language author.<sup>99</sup>

Semantic translation builds on faithful translation process but it further takes aesthetic value of the source language text into account by sometimes compromising on precise meaning to make sure that assonance, word-play or repetition is not absent in the translated text and the beautiful and natural sound is preserved. When translating less important cultural words a translator may replace these with culturally neutral or functional terms but not by cultural equivalents. He may also make small concessions to the reader. Semantic translation allow a translator to be more flexible, creative and allows him to use his intuitive empathy whereas faithful translation is more dogmatic and uncompromising.<sup>100</sup>

Another method, adaptation, used mainly in translation of plays and poetry, usually preserves the themes, characters and plots while converting the source language culture to target language and the text is rewritten. This method often led to poor adaptations, but it could take a precise opposite effect as well. It is considered as the freest form of translation.<sup>101</sup>

Free translation is a reproduction of the source text without manner or without using its original form. It is a paraphrase, usually longer than original, and Newmark doesn't consider it

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid. p. 46.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

translation at all.<sup>102</sup> It is what we have already explained in the previous chapter under the term intralingual translation.

Idiomatic translation also reproduces the meaning of the source language but has a tendency to prefer colloquialisms and idioms which do not exist in the original.<sup>103</sup>

Finally, there is communicative translation. It endeavours to render the exact contextual meaning of the source text in a way that makes content and language readily acceptable and comprehensible to the reader.<sup>104</sup> Communicative translation attempts to generate the same effect on its reader as the reader of the source text have. It accommodates its reader with such translation which should not present any difficulties or obscurities, and which will transfer foreign elements into the cultural space and language of the reader in generous amount. Generally, it tends to be smoother, simpler, more direct, more conventional, conforming and with penchant for undertranslation. It uses more generic terms in difficult passages.<sup>105</sup> It is also more idiomatic.<sup>106</sup>

According to Newmark, only semantic and communicative translation achieve two main aims of translation, accuracy and economy.<sup>107</sup> Newmark considers these two methods as his main contribution to general translation theory.<sup>108</sup> The main difference is that semantic translation is written at the author's linguistic level and is suitable for expressive texts, communicative translation is written at the reader's level and is more suitable for informative and vocative texts.<sup>109</sup> It is hard to decide, whether semantic or communicative translation is more appropriate for translation of Terry Pratchett's works. From our point of view communicative translation might provide more flexibility when dealing with Terry Pratchett's distinctive writing style. Newmark's description of vocative function as calling to the reader to act, think or feel in way intended, in this case to laugh, preferably, supports this hypothesis as well as his claim that popular fiction, whose purpose is to sell and entertain, is an example of vocative text.<sup>110</sup> However, Newmark clearly states that few texts are purely expressive, informative and vocative. Most texts use all three functions.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore semantic and

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid, p. 47.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981, p. 39.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid, p. 44.

<sup>107</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation...* p. 47.

<sup>108</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *Approaches to Translation...* p. 62.

<sup>109</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation...* p. 47.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid, p. 41.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid, p. 42.

communicative translation are not exclusive and can be used interchangeably, and they cannot be absolutely distinguished one from the other.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>CHEN, Honping, QUIAN Xu. An Analysis of Communicative Translation and Semantic Translation by Peter Newmark. *Himalayan Journals* [online]. 2022 [cit. 02.12.2022]. Available at: <[https://himjournals.com/articles/579\\_An\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Communicative\\_Translation\\_and\\_Semantic\\_Translation\\_by\\_Peter\\_Newmark/](https://himjournals.com/articles/579_An_Analysis_of_Communicative_Translation_and_Semantic_Translation_by_Peter_Newmark/)>

# PRACTICAL PART

## 7. A Foreword to the Practical Part

In this part of the thesis, we are about to look closely at two works of Terry Pratchett and their translated counterparts in Czech language. For the practical part we chose *The Colour of Magic* since it is the first book in the Discworld series and thus a gateway to Terry Pratchett's world for many readers. The second book of our choice is *Guards! Guards!* It is the first novel about the City Watch, an organization which represents police in the city of Ankh-Morpork, and the very popular subseries in the Discworld series.

This part will be divided into three chapters, one introducing the Discworld and other two each dealing with the respective book. Both books will get to be introduced and analysed. Afterwards we will venture to the core of the practical part of the thesis: a breakdown of humorous passages selected from the books. Both original text and Czech translation will be cited and compared after.

The extracts constituting the practical part were selected by the author of the thesis, taking into account an effort to provide a wide representation of humorous techniques used in those extracts and also to secure extracts which would pose interesting cases for translation. Other than that, the extracts were picked manually.

## 8. Fantasy and the Discworld

Before we proceed to selected books, we think it is important to introduce the fantasy genre, the Discworld and relationship between both.

History of fantasy genre goes far back in the past, but the modern fantasy was dictated by J. R. R. Tolkien and the success of his works, particularly *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, which are the typical example of the genre. Tolkien works inspired many successive authors; Terry Pratchett included no doubt. Fantasy literature was once a marginal category read by enthusiast but since Tolkien wrote his works it has gradually become more and more popular until it eventually reached the contemporary proportions. To back these assumptions with some data: according to Forbes, science fiction and fantasy book sales doubled since 2010.<sup>113</sup> In 2021 fantasy book sales grew by 45.3% in compared to 2020, the largest increase

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<sup>113</sup>ROWE, Adam. Science Fiction And Fantasy Book Sales Have Doubled Since 2010. *Forbes* [online]. 19.06.2018 [cit. 19.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamrowe1/2018/06/19/science-fiction-and-fantasy-book-sales-have-doubled-since-2010/?sh=5b2dc3072edf>>



among all genres aside from graphic novels.<sup>114</sup> This growth was possibly influenced by popular fantasy authors and especially other media, especially film industry and video games industry.

If we go by general definition, fantasy is a genre of speculative fiction involving magical elements, typically set in a fictional universe, and sometimes inspired by mythology and folklore. There are differences between various fantasy works but this definition covers the basics. Usually, there is a magic system with its practitioners such as wizards and/or witches, there are other races or mythical beings such as elves, dwarves, orcs, dryads etc. None of this have to be the case but, in most fantasy works, it is. The main fantasy feature mentioned by the definition is an extensive worldbuilding, a creation of fictional universe often with different rules of nature. The universe created by Terry Pratchett, the Discworld, falls under this definition, sort of...

Right in the prologue of *The Colour of Magic* a reader is introduced to the fact that the story takes place in the Discworld, a flat planet balanced on the backs of four elephants standing on the back of a giant turtle A'tuin, floating in the emptiness of space. There is magic in the Discworld too – without it, the Discworld would fall apart. There are also magic users, wizards and witches, who, along with cats, can see the colour of magic, Octarine. There is no shortage of mythological creatures and beings: elves, dwarves, trolls, orcs, werewolves, vampires, golems, dragons and more. There is a slight dissimilarity between The Discworld and the rest of the fantasy worlds though. Right from the start and throughout the books it is evident that Terry Pratchett frequently parodies other fantasy as well as classical works and uses the Discworld to create satirical parallels with cultural, political, and scientific issues, as we will see further in the text analysis.

## **9. The Colour of Magic**

### **9.1. The Colour of Magic Analysis**

*The Colour of Magic* consists of four stories listed in the contents of the book: *The Colour of Magic*, *The Sending of Eight*, *The Lure of the Wyrms* and *Close to the Edge*. They are all connected by two main characters: an eccentric Rincewind, a failed wizard with a gift for languages, knowing only a single spell and not knowing what it does, and a wealthy insurance salesman Twoflower, the first ever tourist to Ankh-Morpork, the largest city on the Discworld,

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<sup>114</sup>CURCIC, Dimitrije. Fantasy Book Sales Statistics [2022]. *WORDSRATED* [online]. 02.10.2022 [cit. 19.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://wordsrated.com/fantasy-book-sales-statistics/>>

who is followed with an overprotective luggage walking on hundreds of small feet. Both protagonists are brought together in the beginning of the book, Rincewind being firstly hired by Twoflower, and after his attempt to flee with the money for his hiring, forced by a city Patriarch to serve as a guide to Twoflower, who wants to explore Ankh-Morpork and see its heroes and wonders which Rincewind correctly assumes for cutthroats and dangers. The story is a ride from beginning to end, in which both main characters undertake the adventurous journey through the Discworld, passing one event after another such as a burning of Ankh-Morpork set on fire by an inn owner who misunderstood the insurance policy, fleeing from the burning city, meeting the troll put into their path by game of gods, awakening the demon Bel-Shamharoth and fleeing from his collapsing temple, visiting upside down mountain city of Wyrnberg, unsurprisingly getting into trouble here, fleeing again on the back of a dragon created by the power of imagination, getting to Kingdom of Krull at the edge of the flat Discworld where both protagonists are about to be sacrificed, fleeing yet again, boarding the spaceship aimed to determine the sex of the Great A`tuin and finishing with the Rincewind falling through the emptiness of space. The book ends in a cliff-hanger because it further continues in the next volume – *The Light Fantastic*.

There are many themes in *The Colour of Magic*. The main one is undoubtedly exploration. Rincewind and Twoflower sample through the Discworld and the reader experience it for the first time, the novel serving as an introduction to other novels exploring some of the mentioned locations in greater detail. It could be suggested that there is a connection between the Twoflower and the reader, both being tourists and enjoying the wonders of Discworld together.<sup>115</sup> Exploring the Discworld reader learns not only about its places but about its people as well. Pratchett introduces various societies of the Discworld, and it might seem at first that they have nothing in common with the real world but under the covering layer these people are dealing with the same issues as we do – economics, politics, gender etc. – creating so called fantasy counterpart culture.<sup>116</sup> Next theme emanating from the book is authors stance to supernatural elements. Such elements are supposed to make the fantasy world more appealing but in *The Colour of Magic* it doesn't make problems go away or make life any easier. Pratchett goes to great lengths to explain the magic in his universe giving it an almost scientific

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<sup>115</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – Exploration* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic/themes/exploration>>

<sup>116</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – Society and Class* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic/themes/society-and-class>>

quality.<sup>117</sup> This repeated theme is clearly a satire towards other fantasy universes and Pratchett's adherence to science could be strongly felt, especially in the character of Rincewind who wishes for science and reasoning, hoping that there is a rational and logical principle behind things.<sup>118</sup> Pratchett often satirizes classic fantasy concepts in the book. Through humour he challenges the fantasy genre and its tropes.<sup>119</sup> Last theme mentioned here is language and communication. Much of the comedy from *The Colour of Magic* comes from hilarity of definitions, body language, the ambiguity of language, and the unspoken aspects of spoken communication.<sup>120</sup> Language is the strong suit of Pratchett, as it was mentioned earlier.

The tone of the novel is dictated by humour. It is light, funny, hilarious, cheeky, sly, good-natured, and whimsical.<sup>121</sup> The book doesn't hold to narrating style of classical epic fantasy which often feels like historical textbook. Pratchett's writing style is informal, casual, and very modern.<sup>122</sup> It uses circa 1980's English including idioms, slang and colloquialism.<sup>123</sup> The narrator in the book is omniscient and is not limited to any character.

## 9.2. Analysis of Selected Humorous Extracts

### 9.2.1. Extract I.<sup>124</sup>

An alternative, favoured by those of a Její obměna, hýčkaná především religious persuasion, was that A'Tuin was příslušníky všech náboženských kultů, crawling from the Birthplace to the Time of říkala, že A'Tuin kráčí od Zrození k času Mating, as were all the stars in the sky which Páření, tak jako ostatně všechny hvězdy were, obviously, also carried by giant turtles. oblohy, pohybující se na zádech jiných želv.

<sup>117</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – The Supernatural* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic/themes/the-supernatural>>

<sup>118</sup>ASHER-PERRIN, Emmet. Terry Pratchett Book Club: The Colour of Magic, Part I. *Tor.com* [online]. 18.06.2020 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.tor.com/2020/06/18/terry-pratchett-book-club-the-colour-of-magic-part-i/>>

<sup>119</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – Introduction* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic>>

<sup>120</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – Language and Communication* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic/themes/language-and-communication>>

<sup>121</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – Tone* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic/analysis/tone>>

<sup>122</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – Writing Style* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic/analysis/writing-style>>

<sup>123</sup>Study Guide: *The Color of Magic – Language and Communication* [online]. Shmoop.com, 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/the-color-of-magic/themes/language-and-communication>>

<sup>124</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *The Colour of Magic*. Corgi Books, 1985, p. 12.

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Barva kouzel*. Praha: Talpress, 2008, p. 6.

When they arrived they would briefly and passionately mate, for the first and only time, and from that fiery union new turtles would be born to carry a new pattern of worlds. This was known as the Big Bang hypothesis.

Až se všechny sejdou, krátce a divoce se spáří, poprvé, jedinkrát a naposled. Z těchto spojení se zrodí nové želvy, které na svých bedrech ponesou jiné a mladé světy. Tahle teorie byla známá také pod jménem teorie Velkého třesku.

We do not have to read far through the novel to hit on a spectacular example of Pratchett's multi-layered humour. The extract above is right from the prologue of *The Colour of Magic* which introduces a silly universe, where all Discworld stories take place, to the reader. Here Pratchett proposes his variation on the theory about creation of the universe. It is an allusion on Hindu cosmogony myths (turtle bearing the world) and at the same time to modern cosmological model (the *Big Bang hypothesis*).<sup>125</sup> It is also a parody on ideology of scientism which tries to apply a scientific approach to all types of human development of the world, which in contrast to mythology-based allusion creates a humorous effect.<sup>126</sup> Also the concept of turtles heading to a one giant mating in relation with the term *Big Bang* triggers a dirty connotation. The translation of the original text ought not pose big trouble since there are already equivalents for all the words in Czech. We can see that translation by Kantůrek maintains the meaning and humour of the original text, although we notice that he translates some of the lines quite loosely. For example, in the sentence: “*as were all the stars in the sky which were, obviously, also carried by giant turtles*”, Kantůrek left the word *obviously* separated by commas, which he tried to replace by *jako ostatně*. It leads to a partial loss of emphasis. He translated *carried* as *pohybující se* and *giant* as *jiných*. This line could have been translated as: “*tak jako všechny hvězdy oblohy, zcela zřejmě, rovněž nesené na zádech obřích želv.*” Kantůrek's translation sounds a little bit more natural, though. He also left the word *fiery* from the translation, and he translated “*carry a new pattern of worlds*” as “*ponesou jiné a mladé světy.*” These alterations seem, in our opinion, unnecessary. The omission of *fiery* weakens the joke and collocation *pattern of worlds* produces a slightly different image, and as Newmark notes, in case that equivalent effect is secured, word-for-word translation is the best and only valid method of translation and use of unnecessary synonyms or paraphrasing is not justifiable.<sup>127</sup> *Teorie*

<sup>125</sup>NAIKO, Viktoriia, DAVYDOVA, Tetiana, CHAIKA, Oksana. Polysemantic allusion: Definition, structure and semantics (based on Pratchett's Discworld). *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*. 2021, 17(4), p. 1915.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

<sup>127</sup>NEWMARK, Peter. *Approaches to Translation...* p. 39.

*velkého třesku* is an example of recognized translation and even though the dirty connotation might be slightly reduced, there was no way to avoid it.

### 9.2.2. Extract II.<sup>128</sup>

„Yes“, he said, in an unnaturally high voice. „And then there’s meals, o’course. Uh. You understand, yes? Food. You eat. No?“ He made the appropriate motions.

„Fut?“ said the little man.

„Yes,“ said Boardman, beginning to sweat.

„Have a look in your little book, I should.“

...

„Food,“ said the stranger.

„Ano,“ prohlásil nepřirozeně pisklavým hlasem. „Jenže ještě je tady cena za stravu, že? Hm. Rozumíš? Jídlo. Potrava. Co?“ Při své řeči vykonával příslušnou pantomimu.

„Ponrava?“ tázavě pronesl mužik.

„No jasně,“ přikyvoval Broadman, který se začínal potit. „Podívej se do té tvý knížečky, já bych to na tvým místě udělal.“

...

„Potrrrava,“ rozzářil se cizinec.

In this extract we can see one of many cases of Pratchett using word play when replacing the word *food* [fu:d] by *foot* [fʊt]. Twoflower is legitimately confused as paying for foot obviously makes no sense. When translating Kantůrek used similarly sounding words *potrava/potrava* and even preserved repulsiveness of the second word of the original text – *foot* in corelation to *food* feels gross and the similar relation is between words *potrava* and *ponrava* (a type of worm). Kantůrek used sense-for-sense translation here, as word-for-word translation would make very little sense (*jídlo/noha*) and found similarly sounding and semantically comparable words. The function of the original text was not lost in translation, so we consider this translation as successful.

### 9.2.3. Extract III.<sup>129</sup>

“I don’t think I unnerstan’ this inn-sewer-ants,” he said firmly, idly watching the

“Řek bych, že tomu *poji-štěnic* absolutně nerozumim, hele,” oznamoval

<sup>128</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *The Colour of Magic*. Corgi Books, 1985, p. 29.

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Barva kouzel*. Praha: Talpress, 2008, p. 24.

<sup>129</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *The Colour of Magic*. Corgi Books, 1985, p. 55, p. 88.

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Barva kouzel*. Praha: Talpress, 2008, p. 53, p. 89.

world spin by. “Magic, now. Magic I unnerstan”.

Twoflower grinned. “Magic is one thing, and *reflected-sound-of-underground-spirits* is another,” he said.

“Wha’?”

“What?”

“That funny wor’ you used,” said Rincewind impatiently.

“*Reflected-sound-of-underground-spirits?*”

...

Perhaps there is something in this ‘*Reflected-sound-of-underground-spirits?*’ It was a cumbersome phrase. Rincewind tried to get his tongue round the thick syllables that were the word in Twoflower’s own language.

“*Ecolirix?*” he tried. “*Ecro-gnothics?* *Echo-gnomics?*”

svému společníkovi rozhodným tónem a nejistě pozoroval, jak se svět kolem něj točí.

“Hele magie, jako čáry – máry, tomu rozumim,” přihloupě se usmál.

Dvoukvítek se usmál. “Kouzla jsou jedna věc a odražený-zvuk-podzemních-*duchů* zase jiná,” prohlásil.

“Co?”

“Jaké co?”

“To srandovní slovo, co si řek?” naklonil se k němu Mrakoplaš netrpělivě.

“*Odražený-zvuk-podzemních-*duchů?**”

...

Možná, že na tom jeho odraženém-zvuku-jakoby-podzemních-*duchů* přece jen něco je. Byla to hrozná fráze. Mrakoplašův jazyk těžce zápasil se všemi podivně seskupenými hláskami, které tvořily to slovo v Dvoukvítkově rodném jazyce.

“*Ekolyrika?*” zkoušel to.

“*Ekognostika?*” taky ne. “*Ekonomika?*”

Another two examples of word play by Pratchett are present in the extract above, although this time much wittier. The first example is a simple mispronunciation of *insurance* as *inn-sewer-ants*. There is not any deeper meaning to this one, three unrelated words creating a complete gibberish with a funny connotation. We think that Kantůrek’s translation as *pojištěnic* makes sense and preserves the function of the original text by preserving mispronunciation of the word in question (*insurance* means *pojištění* in Czech), although replacing a noun in the first part of the word by a verb and using the connection of two words instead of three. In our opinion, this could have been only hardly avoided. Also, mispronunciation is only a part of the joke, as the word *insurance* is not only pronounced incorrectly, but also incorrectly comprehended as some sort of a bet, which leads to owner of the freshly insured inn setting the inn intentionally on fire to collect his prize.

Much more intricate instance of a pun is *reflected-sound-of-underground-spirits*. Even though it is not an exceptionally good pun it illustrates complexity of Pratchett's playfulness with words. Firstly being introduced in the first part of the extract it doesn't make any sense. Its meaning is revealed later in the book (second part of the extract), when Rincewind ponders over its sound, finally coming to the word *Echo-gnomics*, the humour of the pun being hidden in this formula: *echo = reflected sound, underground spirit = gnome* (a fantasy/mythic creature of little growth living underground), *echo-gnomics = economics*. In this case Kantůrek used literal translation for the *reflected-sound-of-underground-spirits*, translating it as *odražený-zvuk-podzemních-duchů* but quite weirdly took a different approach with the word *echo-gnomics* which he translated simply as *ekonomika*. In our opinion fun of the pun is lost in translation this way and it could have been easily managed by simply naturalizing the word *echo-gnomics*, translating it as *echo-gnomika*, since Czech language already knows both *echo* and *gnóm* words. By this way of translation the function of the original text was not preserved.

#### 9.2.4. Extract IV.<sup>130</sup>

The Watch were always careful not to intervene too soon in any brawl where the odds were not heavily stacked in their favour. The job carried a pension, and attracted a cautious, thoughtful kind of man.

Stráž je vždycky hrozně opatrná, aby se náhodou neobjevila příliš brzo na místě rvačky, ve které by vzhledem k počtu zúčastněných nemusela mít rozhodující slovo. Jejich místo totiž bylo pod penzí a do služby ve stráži vstupovali především opatrní a rozvážní lidé.

The humour in the extract above lies in the absurdity of imposing values such is caution and thoughtfulness to a social group of people which should present quite the opposite set of values. A reader expects that guards, who might represent police officers in the real world, should be the first to put their life at stake in order to protect other civilians and certain kind of valour and conviction is expected from them, not discretion and doing the job for the sake of good pension. The translation in this particular case should not prove very difficult. We can see that Kantůrek used modulation when translating the phrase “*to intervene too soon in any brawl where the odd were not heavily stacked in their favour*”, and we agree that word-for-word translation might sound quite unnatural in this case. We would only preserve the direct

<sup>130</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *The Colour of Magic*. Corgi Books, 1985, p. 50.

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Barva kouzel*. Praha: Talpress, 2008, p. 46.

translation of word *intervene* as *zasáhnout*, because it does not have the same effect as *objevit se* (*objevit se* does not imply that the Watch should also do something). He also used modulation in the phrase *carried a pension – být pod penzí*. We can also recognize transposition: *thoughtful kind of man – rozvážní lidé*. All and all the translation accomplished the equivalent effect and we consider it well done.

### 9.2.5. Extract V.<sup>131</sup>

RINCEWIND? Death said, in tones as deep and heavy as the slamming of leaden doors, far underground.

“Um,” said Rincewind, trying to back away from that eyeless stare.

BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE? (Boom, boom went crypt lids, in the worm-haunted fastnesses under old mountains...)

“Um, why not?” said Rincewind. “Anyway, I’m sure you’ve got lots to do, so if you’ll just-“

I WAS SURPRISED THAT YOU JOSTLED ME, RINCEWIND, FOR I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THEE THIS VERY NIGHT.

“Oh no, not-“

OF COURSE, WHAT’S SO BLOODY VEXING ABOUT THE WHOLE BUSINESS IS THAT I WAS EXPECTING TO MEET YOU IN PSEPHOHOLOLIS.

„But that’s five hundred miles away!“

YOU DON’T HAVE TO TELL ME. THE WHOLE SYSTEM’S GOT SCREWED UP AGAIN, I CAN SEE THAT. LOOK, THERE’S NO CHANCE OF YOU-?

*MRAKOPLAŠ? Řekl tónem, který připomínal zvuk olověných vrat, zavíraných hluboko pod zemí.*

*“Hm,” odpověděl Mrakoplaš a pokusil se pomalu ucouvnout před nehybným pohledem těch prázdných důlků.*

*CO TADY VLASTNĚ DĚLÁŠ? (Bumm, bumm, duněla vika hrodek v temnotě červy prolezlého nitra starých hor...)*

*“A kde bych měl jako bejt?” zeptal se Mrakoplaš. “Heleď, sem si jistej, že máš spoustu svý práce jinde, takže kdybys mě nechal projít...”*

*JSEM VELICE PŘEKVAPEN, ŽE NA TEBE NARÁŽÍM TADY, MRAKOPLAŠI, PŘESTOŽE S TEBOU PRÁVĚ DNES V NOCI MÁM MÍT SCHŮZKU.*

*“No to přeci, to ne...”*

*ALE ANO! TO, CO MNE NA TOM TAK UDIVUJE JE, ŽE JSEM SE S TEBOU MĚL SETKAT V PSEPHOHOLOLISU.*

*„No jo, ale dyť to je pět set mil vocud!“*

<sup>131</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *The Colour of Magic*. Corgi Books, 1985, p. 77.  
TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Barva kouzel*. Praha: Talpress, 2008, p. 77.



MNĚ TO POVÍDEJ! ZASE SE NA  
TOM VŠEM NĚCO POROUCHALO.  
PODÍVEJ SE, NECHTĚL BYS TŘEBA...?

We could not leave out the very first appearance of one of the most popular characters in the Discworld series, Death, who is a personification of, well, death, and a parody of several other personifications of it.<sup>132</sup> Readers of Pratchett's works can recognize presence of Death in an instant for his lines are always written in capital letters without parenthesis. There are several aspects of humour in the quoted passage. The personification and manifestation of Death, splendid analogies expressing the tone of Death's voice and ultimately the absurdity of the situation that even something so final and inevitable as death can fail due to error in system. If we look into translation, humour of the Death's appearance and situation is kept, albeit we need to mark undertranslation by Kantůrek when he left *deep and heavy* from his translation in the second line of extract and also the word *slam* does not correspond to translation *zavíraných*. From our point of view, following translation might work out too: “Řekl tónem hlubokým a těžkým, jako když zabouchne olověná vrata hluboko pod zemí.” Also, translation “zase se na tom všem něco porouchalo” seems undertranslated as well and imprecise too for it does not preserve the function of the text. The allusion aims at non-functional systems and the translation entirely leaves this notion out. Aside from these remarks the translation is fairly good and functional. We can also spot the typical use of modulation in the sentence *You don't have to tell me – Mně to povídej!*

## 10. Guards! Guards!

### 10.1. Guards! Guards! Analysis

*Guards! Guards!* is the first novel about the City Watch, a well-liked subseries of Discworld novels introducing a set of popular characters, whose purpose, as it is stated in the dedication of the book, is to “rush into the room, attack the hero one at a time, and be slaughtered”. The City Watch is in a desolate state. Once a proud organisation is dwindling because Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, realizing that it is impossible to stamp out crime, decided to make it legal and regulate it instead. Thus, organizations such as Thieves Guild legally exist

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<sup>132</sup>*Death* [online]. Discworld Wiki, 2022 [cit. 04.12.2022]. Available at: <<https://discworld.fandom.com/wiki/Death>>

in the city and its leaders supervise that only a socially acceptable number of crimes is committed. City Watch has little meaning in such social organization. Initially, there are only three members of the City Watch: Captain Samuel Vimes, an idealist, a man with a high sense of duty and a pretty good detective, who after decades of trying to enforce law in the city run by pragmatism, has become cynical and drowns his sorrows in a bottle, his deputy Sergeant Fred Colon, who is in the business mostly for the paycheck and the desk work and Corporal “Nooby” Noobs, a smart guy with a strong sense of self-preservation, which is making him unwilling to throw himself at danger. Latest addition to this band is Lance-Constable Carrot Ironfoundersson, an archetype of lawful good hero, who is obsessed with regulation and adhering to it at all costs. His charismatic persona makes him get his way with people and his enthusiasm is so addictive that he is even able to encourage captain Vimes to action. At the same time a secret brotherhood plots to overthrow the Patrician of the city, Lord Vetinari, and install the puppet king in his stead. Using a stolen magic book, they summon a dragon to instil fear in the people of Ankh-Morpork, planning to put forth their heir to the throne, who will slay the dragon. The dragon eventually gets out of control, claim itself king of Ankh-Morpork and demands gold and virgin sacrifices from people of the city. Vimes and his crew are on the case from the beginning with the help of Sybil Ramkin, a dragon breeder who gave an underdeveloped dragon, Errol, to the Watch as a mascot. In the grand finale of the book the city is saved by the City Watch and its mascot Errol, whose eating habits altered his digestive system to allow him to produce backwards launched jet engine flame which knocks the dragon from the sky. Carrot then arrests the dragon, but Errol lets it escape, to be his mate – it turned out that the King is actually a Queen. Vimes who had previously found out, that the head of the secret brotherhood is Wonse, a former secretary of Patrician, went to confront him. Wonse tries to summon another dragon, Vimes tells Carrot to throw the book at him and Carrot uses such force that the villain is accidentally killed. In the end Patrician is reinstated as the leader of the city and members of the City Watch ask for their reward: a modest pay rise, a new kettle, and a dartboard.

There are two underlying themes in the novel: an all too familiar story of the hero who is supposed to slay the dragon and rescue the lady, and the more interesting one in our opinion: the story of unheroic police officers who prefer not to get into fight at all. The clash of those two themes poses a question why do people value certain cliches over the reality and what it says about our society? Pratchett is clearly all in favour of everyday people, outsiders, and he nicely illustrates it on a Carrot`s codpiece, because even the strongest hero can be defeated by

a well-aimed kick in the groin.<sup>133</sup> He proves a point that even the mightiest hero can't stand alone, and heroic qualities can't manage on their own. They need to have a strong base in pragmatism. In this Way Pratchett creates a study of a society and how it functions.<sup>134</sup> An archetype of an idealistic hero Carrot changes the members of the City Watch, but he himself is also changed by them. Pratchett's philosophy of collectivism strongly manifests itself in the novel: any major event involves collective rather than individual action. This being an exact reverse of philosophy of the story of the hero and the dragon.<sup>135</sup> From the broader perspective the novel also covers the theme of tyranny vs anarchy, exploring the ingredients which lead to one or another,<sup>136</sup> and what are people willing to put up with, namely what are people willing to do in face of fear or difficult circumstances.<sup>137</sup> It is evident that Pratchett mocks standardized clichés. Even his dragons aren't the perfect creatures from the fairy tales but are flawed with digestive system vulnerable to spontaneous chemical explosions.<sup>138</sup> Although he operates in a magical fantasy universe, he keeps it more down to earth and realistic than many other stories set in the real world of ours. Speaking of clichés, *City Watch* is also kind of a parody on the clichés revolving the British police, especially Carrot, who is a rendering of an idealized portrayal of the British police officer. Other representatives of the City Watch also correspond to the sort of people who regularly serve in the body of law enforcement (see description of the characters above).<sup>139</sup> An author of this thesis being at the time of writing it an officer in service can attest that.

Writing style and tone of *Guards! Guards!* is not that different from the style and tone of *The Colour of Magic*. However, there are some differences. Novel is made up of a series of short chapters which are narrated from different points of view. Narrator is still omniscient but uses the optics of various characters and never reveals all to the reader, adding a piece by piece together until the very end where all pieces fit perfectly together into a puzzle revealing a perfectly planned plot. Until *Guards! Guards!* Pratchett followed only two or three

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<sup>133</sup>MASLEN, Robert. Terry Pratchett, *Guards! Guards!* *epicureancure.com* [online]. 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.epicureancure.com/24/terry-pratchett-guards-guards/>>

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>ASHER-PERRIN, Emmet. Terry Pratchett Book Club: *Guards! Guards! Part IV*. *Tor.com* [online]. 12.03.2021 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.tor.com/2021/03/12/terry-pratchett-book-club-guards-guards-part-iv/>>

<sup>138</sup>MASLEN, Robert. Terry Pratchett, *Guards! Guards!* *epicureancure.com* [online]. 2022 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.epicureancure.com/24/terry-pratchett-guards-guards/>>

<sup>139</sup>ASHER-PERRIN, Emmet. Terry Pratchett Book Club: *Guards! Guards! Part I*. *Tor.com* [online]. 19.02.2021 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.tor.com/2021/02/19/terry-pratchett-book-club-guards-guards-part-i/>>

groups/characters but this time he used a bigger cast all having key sections in the story.<sup>140</sup> This kind of detective story narrative style seasoned with heaps of humour really fits into the setting of Ankh-Morpork, allowing Pratchett to explore all levels of society and to provide his distinctive social commentary.<sup>141</sup>

## 10.2. Analysis of Selected Humorous Extracts

### 10.2.1. Extract VI.<sup>142</sup>

He told me to find a place to stay and report to Sgt Colon at the Watch House tonight. He said, anyone wanting to join the guard needed their head examined.

Mr Varneshi did not mention this. Perhaps it is done for reasons of Hygiene.

...

So I have fallen on my Feet, as they say here but, I don't see how that is possible because, if you fall you fall off your feet, it is Common sense.

Řekl mi, abych si našel nějaké bydlení a dnes večer se přihlásil u seržanta Tračníka na strážnici. Potom ještě dodal, že každý, kdo chce nastoupit k Noční hlídce, potřebuje vyšetřit na hlavu.

O tom pan Voříšek nic neříkal. Možná že se to dělá z hygienických důvodů.

...

Tak jsem se postavil na vlastní nohy, jak se tady říká, ale nevím, jak to myslí, nedovedu si představit, jak bych se postavil na nohy někoho cizího.

The extract above is an excerpt from a letter written by Carrot addressed to his father. Humour in this sample is represented by Carrot's literalness. Humour of literalness is based on inability of character to understand a context and to interpret a request reasonably. Also, the character might be a moron who takes things overliterally. Alternatively, he just misunderstands and takes a figurative statement literally. Humour is produced by mechanicalness of behaviour.<sup>143</sup> We can notice literalness in two instances. First when Carrot doesn't get the hint

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<sup>140</sup>Terry Pratchett's *Discworld – Guards! Guards!* [online]. Runalongtheshelves.net, 17.05.2020 [cit. 28.11.2022]. Available at: <<https://www.runalongtheshelves.net/readalongs/2020/5/17/terry-pratchetts-discworld-guards-guards>>

<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Guards! Guards!* Corgi Books, 1990, p. 54

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Stráže! Stráže!* Talpress, 2007, p. 51-52.

<sup>143</sup>BERGER: *An Anatomy of Humor...*, p. 41.

of Captain Vimes that anyone who wants to join The Watch voluntarily is undoubtedly mentally ill and he thinks that physical examination of his head is needed. Second when he doesn't understand the meaning of idiom *fall to one's feet*, which means to be in a good condition or situation after having a bad or difficult experience. The translation of the part is skilfully done. The Translation of *need their head examined* as *potřebuje vyšetřit na hlavu* and not *potřebuje vyšetřit hlavu* intensifies the notion, that Vimes actually meant psychological evaluation and thus it further empowers Carrot's literalness. To fall on one's feet would be better expressed by *postavit se na nohy* instead of *postavit se na vlastní nohy*, because these two expressions have a slightly different meaning. First expression relates to English *fall to one's feet*, second means to become independent. However, using the second expression allowed Kantůrek to preserve the humour of Carrot's literalness by adding "*nedovedu si představit, jak bych se postavil na nohy někoho cizího*", and did not change the fundamental function of the source text. That is why we rate this translation positively and consider it successful at conveying the humour.

#### 10.2.2. Extract VII.<sup>144</sup>

„It's some sort of sling?“ said Carrot,  
after examining it polite silence.

Varneshi told him what it was.

„Codpiece like in fish?“ said Carrot,  
mystified.

„No, it's for the fighting,“ mumbled  
Varneshi.

„You should wear it all the time.  
Protects your vitals, like.“

Carrot tried it on.

„It's a bit small, Mr Varneshi.“

„That's because you don't wear it on  
your head, you see.“

„To je nějaký zvláštní prak?“ řekl  
Kartotka, když si ho nějakou dobu prohlížel.

Voříšek předmět pojmenoval.

„Poklopec, to myslíte jako past na  
ptáky?“

„Ne. To je do boje,“ zamumlal  
poněkud v rozpacích Voříšek. „Měl bys  
nosit neustále. Má ti to chránit to nejcennější,  
co máš.“

Kartotka si to vyzkoušel.

„Je to trochu malé, pane Voříšku.“

„Koukni, to bude tím, že to nepatří na  
hlavu, víš?“

Humour in this extract originates from the ambiguity of the word *codpiece*, allusion to genitals and embarrassment of the Carrot, one of the humour techniques mentioned by Berger we did not explain before. Humour from embarrassment stems from someone saying something

<sup>144</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Guards! Guards!* Corgi Books, 1990, p. 43.

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Strážé! Strážé!* Talpress, 2007, p. 41.

stupid or doing some kind of error and it involves person being made uncomfortably self-conscious, ashamed or confused.<sup>145</sup> Situation above describes how Carrot is given protection for his groin, not understanding Varneshi's hints regarding the purpose of codpiece and at the end trying the codpiece, worn by Varneshi's ancestors, on his head. We have to say that translation of this extract is just brilliant and maybe even better than original. Carrot, being told that the name of the item is codpiece, tries to guess its purpose from the name of it. Since a *cod* is a fish, he asks whether it relates to fish. Codpiece in Czech might be translated as *krytí*, but the description is *tuhý poklopec pánských kalhot*, so translation *poklopec* is in the relation to the function of the original text quite good already. But when Kantůrek goes further and translates “*Codpiece like in fish*” as “*Poklopec, to myslíte jako past na ptáky*”, the word *poklopec* actually resembles the word *sklopec*, which is a trap for various kinds of animals, birds included. And this is where the translation gets great – word *pták* alludes to a man genitals in Czech. Humour regarding codpiece, which should protect Carrot's vitals, is not only preserved but further developed. Rest of the translation is also good, albeit a bit free in Kantůrek's classical fashion.

### 10.2.3. Extract VIII.<sup>146</sup>

„What was it you done?“ he said.	„A co jsi provedl?“
„I am sorry?“ said Carrot.	„Prosím?“
„You must of done something“. Said the guard.	„Musel jsi něco provést,“ trval na svém strážný.
„My father wrote a letter,“ said Carrot proudly. „I've been volunteered.“	„Můj otec napsal dopis,“ oznámil strážnému pyšně Karotka. „Jsem dobrovolník!“
„Bloody hellfire,“ said the guard.	„A do prdele...“ prohlásil strážný.

Comparably to extract IV we are confronted with the absurd situation following from the clash of values and reputation which such institution as the City Watch should, according to reader and Carrot, have and what it really has in the novel. Carrot is confused when he is asked what he had done, because he proudly thinks that he is about to join a distinguished police force and the guard knows otherwise. One would expect that good morals and clean criminal

<sup>145</sup>BERGER: *An Anatomy of Humor...*, p. 32.

<sup>146</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Guards! Guards!* Corgi Books, 1990, p. 45.

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Stráže! Stráže!* Talpress, 2007, p. 43.

record is needed for the job and not that it is a penalty for a wrongful deed. Translation of this part is done well and did not pose any trouble regarding humour translation. We can see that Kantůrek used adaptation correctly when translating *bloody hellfire*, a typical British swearword collocation. If translated directly as *krvavý pekelný oheň*, it would sound rather unnatural.

#### 10.2.4. Extract IX.<sup>147</sup>

„But there are hundreds of you in there,“ said Patrician calmly. „Thick as, you should excuse the expression, thieves.“

„Ale vás jsou tam přece celé stovky.“  
Prohlásil odměřeně Patricij. „Promiňte mi ten výraz, ale je vás tam jako psů.“

The joke of the line above depends on the correct translation of the pun involved. In the extract Patrician talks to the president of the Guild of Thieves, who came to raise a complaint for being arrested by Carrot of the City Watch, the situation being humorous based on its absurdity on its own. Patrician is rather surprised that a single man was able to pull off the arrest of the President, pointing to a fact that there are lots of thieves around the President of the Guild following with a punch line *thick as thieves*, which has the double meaning: first that the place is crowded with thieves and second in regard to *thick as thieves* idiomatic expression, meaning very close and secretive. This punch line is lost in Kantůrek’s translation. The translation *je vás tam jako psů* might be correct in respect to thieves count, but humour of the line is not preserved. Kantůrek used adaptation in this case but unfortunately it is not very functional. If we look at the origin of the idiomatic expression, *thick as thieves* comes from the French *s’entendre comme larron en foire*, directly translated as *like thieves at a fair*.<sup>148</sup> We believe that translation “*Promiňte mi ten výraz, jak zlodějů na trhu,*” preserves the humour of the pun at least partially and it produces the similar effect. Although to be fair there is probably not a perfect way to translate the line. The translation accompanied by the explanation in the footnotes might be the proper solution.

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<sup>147</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Guards! Guards!* Corgi Books, 1990, p. 56.

TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Strážě! Strážě!* Talpress, 2007, p. 54.

<sup>148</sup>OSMOND, Candace. *As Thick As Thieves – Meaning & Origin.* *grammarist.com* [online]. 2022 [cit. 05.12.2022]. Available at: <<https://grammarist.com/usage/as-thick-as-thieves/>>

### 10.2.5. Extract X.<sup>149</sup>

Over the door a motto in the ancient tongue of the city was now almost eroded by time and grime and lichen, but could just be made out: FABRICATI DIEM, PVNC

It translated – according to Sergeant Colon, who had served in foreign parts and considered himself an expert on languages – as „To Protect and to Serve“.

Nade dveřmi bylo možno přečíst vybledlé motto, které napůl zarost mech a lišejník. Bylo v prastarém jazyce a znělo: FABRICATI DIEM, PVNC

To podle seržanta Tračníka, který sloužil v cizích zemích a považoval se za znalce jazyků, znamenalo „Chránit a sloužit“.

Another example of the pun in Pratchett’s Discworld, this time for the old-school thriller movies enthusiasts. The Latin inscription, a motto of the City Watch, in its full length is "*Fabricati Diem, Pvncti Agvnt Celeriter*" which stands for "*Make the Day, the Moments Pass Quickly*". The shortened inscription could be interpreted in a different way though as "*Make my day, punk*." The line is a reference to *Dirty Harry*, 1971 movie starring Clint Eastwood, who doesn’t use the whole punchline in the movie, but two; "*make my day*" in one scene and "*Do you feel lucky, punk?*" in other. This cultural reference is not most likely recognized by many readers and to readers of the Czech translation it is lost entirely, because *punk* was translated as *hajzle* in the czech voice acting of *Dirty Harry* and it is up for discussion whether to translate "PVNC" as "HJZL" or something similar, since that would compromise the full length of Latine sentence. We think that Kantůrek decision to not translate the Latine line at all is the right decision. We can’t even object against the translation of the motto "*To Protect and to Serve*" as "*Chránit a sloužit*". "*To protect and To Serve*" is the motto of Los Angeles Police Department from 1963, subsequently adopted by many other police forces over the world. Translation "*Chránit a sloužit*" sounds a bit off nowadays because Police of the Czech Republic uses motto "*Pomáhat a chránit*" since 2008 and it already took hold in Czechia. By utilizing adaptation and using the set phrase, would, in our opinion, make a better translation. However, Kantůrek translated the book in 1983, in the time, when the motto "*Pomáhat a chránit*" did not exist.

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<sup>149</sup>OT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Guards! Guards!* Corgi Books, 1990, p. 66.  
TT: PRATCHETT, Terry. *Stráže! Stráže!* Talpress, 2007, p. 64.



## Conclusion

We established two primary aims for this bachelor's thesis. First: to cover the theoretical basis of research regarding humour and techniques used to produce it, and to include the essential theory of translation, translation procedures and translation methods with respect to needs of the practical part. Second: to introduce two novels by Terry Pratchett, *The Colour of Magic* and *Guards! Guards!*, and to subject selected extracts from both original and translation copies of the novels to analysis, using gained theoretical knowledge, with the purpose of identifying the core of humour included in the extracts, evaluating the translation by Jan Kantůrek and possibly providing an alternative solution in cases where humour got lost in the translation process.

In the beginning of the theoretical part of this thesis, we introduced Terry Pratchett and Jan Kantůrek, the sole translator of Terry Pratchett's literary works to Czech language. Then we concluded the research related to the notion of humour, which led towards the finding that there is no all-encompassing definition of humour, but rather multiple humour theories. We pointed out the main ones upon which we further elaborated. We also examined the relationship between humour and laughter. This helped us to understand what function of humour is and how to recognize it. After that the system of techniques of humour was presented with the explanation of the most common humorous techniques used in Terry Pratchett's works. It helped us immensely in the practical part when identifying the essence of humour in selected extracts. Since we strived to evaluate the translation of humorous excerpts by Jan Kantůrek in the practical part, it was necessary to lay out the essentials of the translation theory. We attempted to do it in the separate chapter in which we got familiar with basic theories of translation and translation challenges around which those theories formed. Thus, we got acquainted with the basic principles of good translation. The last thing missing were the tools in the hands of translator: translation procedures and translation methods. These were explored in further detail. Author of the thesis is naturally aware that the interpreted theory barely scratched the surface of contemporary knowledge but given the width of the topic and needs of the practical part, the explanation provided should prove satisfactory.

In the second part of the thesis, before proceeding to translation analysis of selected extracts, the fantasy genre, the Discworld and each novel were closely studied to render a fertile background which helped us to better understand the novels, their universe, characters, storylines and the specifics of Terry Pratchett's humour. Upon this strong foundation we conducted the translation analysis of extracts selected by the author of the thesis based on the

wide range of humour techniques involved and opportunities of interesting translation cases covered.

The analysis of humour in selected extracts proved to be intriguing. The aims stipulated for the analysis were adhered to during the analysis of every single extract. After the finished analysis the general conclusions can be made. Unsurprisingly, the most used humorous techniques by Terry Pratchett were allusions, absurdity, parody, satire, word play and puns, as we pointed out in the corresponding chapter. In regard to translation by Jan Kantůrek we consider the translation well made in most of the cases. It maintains the light and humorous tone and mood of Terry Pratchett's writing. It also mostly preserves the humour and in one case, in our opinion, it made it even better. Of course, even the examples of not very successful translation were found in the extracts. These cases, expectedly, relate to translation of wordplay, puns and idiomatic expressions. At some of those we tried to suggest a viable alternative solution, but to be fair, preservation of multi-layered humour in such instances is hardly possible. Here and there we also provided our commentary at some areas of translation where we felt that Jak Kantůrek's translation was too interfering. We noticed that Jan Kantůrek tended to translate in quite a free manner, which isn't unexpected when it comes to translation of literature of fiction. Use of communicative translation outweighed other translation methods. Occasionally Jan Kantůrek had the inclination to undertranslation and use of unnecessary synonyms or paraphrasing even at cases where equivalent effect was secured by word-for-word translation, which is not a justifiable approach to translation.

Findings stated above could be, obviously, stretched only on the selected extracts which were analysed in the thesis. The extracts were selected manually by the author, who is conscious of the fact, that to make general asserts in relation to whole novels, the proper content analysis would have to be made. Such analysis was far beyond the scope of this bachelor's thesis and might be the ground for further study.

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## Anotace

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Název práce:	Překlad humoru ve vybraných románech Terryho Pratchetta
Název práce v angličtině:	Translating Humour in Selected Terry Pratchett's Novels
Anotace práce:	Cílem této bakalářské práce je pokrýt teoretické základy výzkumu ve vztahu k humoru a technikám užitým k jeho tvorbě, a dále zahrnout nezbytnou teorii překladu, překladatelských postupů a překladatelských metod v první části práce s přihlédnutím k potřebám části druhé, ve které jsou představeny dva romány Terryho Pratchetta: <i>Barva kouzel a Stráže! Stráže!</i> Vybrané úryvky jak z původních děl, tak z jejich překladů jsou následně podrobeny analýze, za použití získaného teoretického rámce, s účelem rozeznat podstatu humoru ze zkoumaných úryvků, zhodnotit překlad Jana Kantůrka a případně poskytnout alternativní řešení v případech, kdy byl humor ztracen v překladatelském procesu.
Klíčová slova:	Překlad, humor, překlad humoru, literární překlad, analýza překladu, fantasy literatura, Terry Pratchett
Anotace práce v angličtině:	This bachelor's thesis aims to cover the theoretical basis of research regarding humour and techniques used to produce it, and to include the essential theory of translation, translation procedures and translation methods in the first part of the thesis with respect to needs of the second part in which two novels by Terry Pratchett are introduced: <i>The Colour of Magic</i>

	and <i>Guards! Guards!</i> Selected extracts from both original and translation copies of the novels are further subjected to analysis using the gained theoretical framework with the purpose of identifying the core of humour included in the extracts, evaluating the translation by Jan Kantůrek and possibly providing an alternative solution in cases where humour got lost in the translation process.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Translation, humour, translation of humour, literary translation, translation analysis, fantasy literature, Terry Pratchett
Přílohy vázané v práci:	-
Rozsah práce:	52
Jazyk práce:	Angličtina