

Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci
Filozofická fakulta
Katedra bohemistiky

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE



INTERPRETATION OF TALES FROM TWO POCKETS BY KAREL ČAPEK
INTERPRETACE ČAPKOVÝCH POVÍDEK Z PRVNÍ A DRUHÉ KAPY

Autor: **Zisu Li**

Vedoucí práce: **Mgr. Richard Změlík, Ph.D.**

Olomouc

2024

Declaration

I hereby declare that I have written this Bachelor's Thesis, "Interpretation of Tales from Two Pockets by Karel Čapek", by myself under the supervision of Mgr. Richard Změlík, Ph.D., and all the resources and literature are properly cited.

22.4.2024 v Olomouci

Podpis

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Mgr. Richard Změlík, Ph.D. for his help, guidance, advice and patience during the whole process of writing the thesis. I also would like to thank my family and friends for their support.

Table of content

1	Introduction	5
2	Theoretical part of the thesis	8
2.1	Theory of the literary characters	8
2.2	Literary characters in detective genre	11
2.3	The definition of detective novels.....	12
2.4	Introduction of the book " <i>Tales from Two Pockets</i> "	13
2.5	Theory of Composition	15
3	Practical part of the thesis.....	17
3.1	The police characters in the novel.....	17
3.1.1	The Detective Characters in the Novel	21
3.2	The Criminal Characters in the Novel	23
3.3	The female characters in the novel.....	26
3.4	The characters which solve the cases by coincidences	29
4	Conclusion.....	33
	Annotation	36
	Bibliography :	37

1 Introduction

Characterization occupies a central position in a vast array of literary works, and plays an indispensable role in shaping narratives and enriching stories. Especially in detective novels, which are full of intrigue and mystery, characterization is of greater significance as a channel for plot development and as a reflection of thematic undercurrents.

The novel *Tales from Two Pockets* written by famous Czech writer Karel Čapek is a fascinating collection of stories that delve into the complex working of society, morality, and justice through the perspectives of various characters. In this collection of distinctive narratives, Čapek explored the multifaceted characters of the police, the criminals, the detectives, the female characters, and the coincidental crime solvers. Each character type serves as a conduit for exploring the underlying themes and social issues prevalent in early twentieth-century society.

The primary goal of this thesis is to explain the characterization process in Karel Čapek's *Tales of Two Pockets*, with a special focus on the non-traditional perspectives of the author, the hallmarks which are so unique for Čapek's writing and analyzing certain identifying marks in the characters of this detective novel. I will aim to lay the academic background of character analysis, focusing specifically on the genre of detective fiction.

In the theoretical part, I will focus on this through a comprehensive study of literary characters. For this task I am going to draw help mainly from the works of E.M. Forster and Daniela Hodrová. E.M. Forster, in his seminal work *Aspects of the Novel* delineates characters into two primary categories: flat and round. Flat characters are those who lack depth and complexity, serving specific functions within the narrative, while round characters possess multifaceted personalities, evolving and growing throughout the story. As this distinction seems to be rather incomplete, I will also integrate the view of Daniela Hodrová on the matter of literary characters.

Daniela Hodrová, in her exploration of literary characters in *Na Okraji Chaosu* expands upon Forster's framework by introducing the concept of "character-as-definition" and "character-as-hypothesis". Typical characters represent archetypal figures, embodying universal traits and characteristics, while individual types exhibit unique qualities that distinguish them from their counterparts. Through this lens, we analyze detective characters

as both representatives of a genre and as distinct individuals navigating the complexities of their fictional worlds.

Central to our investigation is the examination of detective characters and the characteristics inherent in detective novels. Detectives, as quintessential figures within the genre, possess a unique set of traits and skills that enable them to navigate the intricate webs of mystery and intrigue. From keen observational prowess to deductive reasoning and moral fortitude, these characters serve as beacons of justice and agents of truth in the face of uncertainty and chaos. Although this is not exactly what we can observe in Čapek's take on the detective genre. The differences and unique characterization style of Čapek will receive a special attention later in the Practical Part of the thesis.

In synthesizing the theoretical insights of Forster and Hodrová with the thematic nuances of detective fiction, this thesis aims to illuminate the complexities of character portrayal and narrative construction specific to Čapek. By delving into the psyche of detectives and the worlds they inhabit, we unravel the mysteries that lie at the intersection of literature, identity, and human experience through the eyes of this great writer and philosopher. The theoretical part will be supplemented by an introduction to the novel as a whole concept to deeper understand the circumstances of its origin.

Building upon the frameworks of E.M. Forster and Daniela Hodrová, we now turn our attention to the practical application of these theoretical insights through an examination of specific character types within the novel *Tales of Two Pockets*.

Central to our analysis are the character archetypes commonly found in detective fiction – the police force, the detectives and the criminals. I also decided to add two other groups that are standing out and those are the women and the coincidental solvers of the crime or mystery.

These characters, each with their unique traits and motivations, contribute to the unfolding drama and suspense of the narrative, propelling readers on a thrilling journey of discovery and intrigue.

Through close textual analysis and thematic exploration, we seek to uncover the underlying dynamics that govern the interactions and relationships between these characters. By examining their actions, dialogue, and psychological depths, we illuminate the

complexities of human nature and the moral dilemmas inherent in the pursuit of truth and justice as seen by Čapek.

Furthermore, our analysis extends beyond mere character portrayal to encompass the thematic significance of these roles within the broader context of *Tales of Two Pockets*. We explore how the characters' interactions reflect larger societal issues and moral quandaries, shedding light on themes of corruption, redemption, and the eternal struggle between good and evil.

Ultimately, through the integration of theoretical frameworks and practical analysis, this thesis endeavors to offer a comprehensive understanding of character dynamics within the *Tales of Two Pockets*.

2 Theoretical part of the thesis

In the theoretical part, I offer the introduction of the theory of the literary characters, literary characters in detective genre, the introduction of the detective novels, the introduction of *Tales from Two Pockets* and the theory of composition.

2.1 Theory of the literary characters

From an aesthetic point of view, I can categorize four strategies for building literary characters:

1. Idealization - i.e. portraying characters according to an idealized life, e.g., portraying a person who is exceptional and without negative traits.

2. Caricature - i.e. the opposite of idealization, where the aim is to distort ordinary reality in a comedic way.

3. Typecasting - i.e. the subordination of the image of a person to excessive frequency of occurrence

4. Individualization - i.e., distinguishing a person through unique individual traits within a selected pattern or mode. (Peterka, p. 144-148).

What exactly is a literary character and how to define that? This is a question that has been an object of literary theorists for decades, centuries even. For the purpose of this thesis, I will try to set out a summary of characterization methods on several levels. The following work from literary theorists will serve as a starting point for the theory of characterization: *The Aspects of a Novel* by E.M. Forster and *Na okraji chaosu* by Daniela Hodrová. In this chapter I am going to explore the different perspectives on the process of characterization, which will be applied on the short stories of Karel Čapek in the latter chapters of the thesis.

In the thematic context, a character is expressed through motifs, which also called as characters. Characterization includes external appearance (physiognomy, clothing), speech (spoken), behavior, internal (inner monologue, unspoken thoughts, reflections), comments of the narrator, and opinions of other characters. Furthermore, the application of these expressive techniques is not uniform. In general, characterization is divided into external and internal, direct and indirect.

External characterization can be expressed through clothing, gestures and facial expressions, also can provide a subtle contouring of the character's personality. Internal

characterization has the purpose to bring out the essence of personality. Direct characterization can be entirely replaced by the indirect characterization. Direct characterization is a clear evaluation based on the character's qualities. The evaluation of characters usually is expressed by the narrator, another character in the literary work or the characters themselves. Indirect characterization, also called as situational characterization, is subtly present throughout the narration. Character's traits are deduced from the actions or speeches in a given situation.

The important part of direct characterization is the proper name of the character, which provide the function as identification. It can express nationality, social status of the protagonist, historical or literary background or the meaning of the work. Proper names are divided into: neutral proper names, phonetically expressive proper names (onomatopoeic, diminutive, comic), speaking or symbolic proper names, known as portentous proper names, diminutive proper names (anonymity, common, abbreviation), historical proper names, and allusive proper names. The structuralists define character purely as a fictional element that exists only in and through the text as a set of recurrent motifs. Tzvetan Todorov calls these textual entities "a mass of signs" that is bound together by a proper name.

In literary typology, characters can be distinguished as follows:

- According to their relationships to the reality, characters can be divided into historical/historically real and fictional. Historical characters are related to characters known from the past or even the present. they mainly appear in historical, biographical, important novels (i.e. novels about the real public figures) and historical dramas. In practical, there can naturally be a blending of both theoretical modalities. Some heroes are related with the historical prototypes, but their historical elements are more or less obscured in the literary image, merging with the heroes of myths and fairytales. Folk memory and imagination can be an influence here, while in some other occasions can be deliberate authorial fiction.

- According to the type of fiction, characters are divided into natural and fantastic (or supernatural or anthropomorphized). Supernatural characters tend to be based on anthropomorphisation of natural phenomena, objects, animals, embodying miraculous abilities, often with grotesque distortion.

- According to the importance in the development of the plot and the formation of meaning, characters are divided into main and secondary(episodic). In theater and film, they

are assigned as “major” and “minor” roles. The main character is also called as protagonist or hero. The term “hero” was originally associated with heroic character traits, but in modern literature, it is used exclusively without the evaluative attributes. The hero (or, to avoid the misunderstanding, the protagonist) of a work is often refers to an anti-hero which describing a person who has a sharp contrast with the idealized contemporary models - as passive, non-heroic, unexceptional or an outsider and etc.

- According to the moral evaluation within the presented world, characters can be positive or negative. Good and evil are more often portrayed in artistic literature as complex aspects of life attitudes or inner discord, which is presented by controversial, morally ambiguous character. (Hodrová, p.135)

A similar division distinguishes between constant and developmental characters. Action-oriented, adventurous and comedic literature, especially in picaresque novels, prefers constant characters who wander through the whole world and encounter various social environment as unchanging figures. In contrast, in literature influenced by psychological introspection since the 18th century, developmental characters predominate, often demonstrating the organic formation of human experience and the overcoming of initial attitudes and naive beliefs.

With the gradual expansion of more individualistic characters in the modern age, the so called ‘mimetic’ or ‘psychological’ movement arose. Literary characters started to be seen (and portrayed) as complex individuals with a rich world of inner thoughts, desires, ambitions and emotions.

Forster perceive the general characterization as a dichotomy of “flat” and “round” characters. Flat characters are constructed around single idea, by simple type features without psychological nuances and usually also without development. According to Foster that brings out two major advantages:

“One great advantage of flat characters is that they are easily recognized whenever they come in – recognized by the reader’s emotional eye, not by the visual eye, which merely notes the recurrence of a proper name. [...] A second advantage is that they are easily remembered by the reader afterwards. They remain in his mind as unalterable for the reason that they were not changed by circumstances [...].” (Forster p.105-106).

That is exactly the reason why these characters – models are often materializations of

archetypes and can influence the subconscious. They are typical in fairy tales, satire, grotesques and popular literature. In contrast, round characters depict a richly individualized inner life and resist stereotypes. As Forster states, 'they cannot be summed up in a single phrase' and 'it is capable of surprising in a convincing way' (Forster p.118).

This analysis, however, seems to be rather inadequate. Therefore, I decided to complete the categorization with the view of Daniela Hodrová. She works with the terms 'character-as-definition' and 'character-as-hypothesis' which to some extent overlap with Forster's mentioned concepts, however, they are defined in much more detail and looked at from several possible perspectives. Based on the method of characterization, Hodrová divides the characters into two basic types: 'character-as-definition' which is described by narrator through actions, sporadically also with thoughts, in both - direct and indirect characteristics and 'character-as-hypothesis' in which case the indirect (reduced) characteristic is used and is depicted mainly by behavior and actions (Hodrová , p.562).

The obvious absence of character traits is caused by the priority of the character's function. More detailed psychological analysis and internal characteristics are very unusual in detective genre. The function is essential in narration, composition and in the text itself, and it is most distinct when the character does not possess prolific features. In detective genre, the focus is first and foremost on the function of the character, so there is no need for the deep characterization, which makes the characters even more distinctive in their function. *"That is why it is particularly distinctive in fairy tales, picaresque, adventure, or detective novels."*¹ (Hodrová, p.537).

2.2 Literary characters in detective genre

It is usual that literary characters in detective genre tend to be rather flat. This flatness of the characters is given by the fact, that the author cannot give away too much information considering the process of narration.

Another reason is the stress put on the priority of the function of the characters. We can observe this process especially in the so-called debased genres (which the detectives' stories

¹ „Proto je zřetelná v pohádce, v pikareskním románu, v románu dobrodružném, detektivním.“

are generally perceived as), where many of the characters are poorly described not only because the unimportant role, they play in the narrative but also to help build the character type – often with one or two major features or character traits. That is either by internal or external characteristics. This is a typical example of what Hodrová calls the *character as definition*. The extreme version of this characterization is often used in detective genre, where the character is used to be simplified to the point of function carrier. “*The character, not entirely lacking traits, but possessing standard traits given a priori by the genre itself, function here as a unifying procedure.*” (Hodrová, p.537).² Later she adds that the reason is mostly because the behavior and reactions of such a character are easier to predict even for a less competent reader. That is because these characters resort of model - or abstracted social constructs. The author then tries to cover the fictional character in the general statements derived from the real life, but these utterances further support the flat nature of those characters rather than developing it (ibid., p.551).

The only exception regarding the flatness of the characters in detective genre is the role of the protagonist – the detective, and sometimes also his companion (the helper). However, even these characters are mostly reduced to the *character as a definition* type. That is given because in the case of detective genre, the narrator usually provides only external characterization of the detective. And even when the internal characterization is used it tends to be just as shallow as in the case of other characters in the story.

2.3 The definition of detective novels

The detective novel is a genre that has captivated readers for centuries. It is characterized by its focus on crime-solving, the use of deductive reasoning, and the central figure of the detective. However, defining what exactly constitutes a detective novel can be challenging due to the various sub-genres and evolving conventions within the genre. Furthermore, detective novels typically follow a specific structure that keeps readers engaged and guessing until the very end.

One defining feature of detective novels is their reliance on deductive reasoning. The detective uses logical thinking to connect seemingly unrelated pieces of information and

² „Postava nikoli sice bez vlastností, ale s vlastnostmi standardními, žánrem předem danými tu funguje jako scelující postup.“

arrive at a solution. This process engages readers in an intellectual puzzle-solving experience. Another crucial element is the character of the detective themselves. They are often portrayed as intelligent, observant individuals with unique quirks or abilities that aid them in their investigations. Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot are prime examples of iconic detectives who have become synonymous with the genre.

While these characteristics provide a general framework for understanding detective novels, it is important to note that there are numerous sub-genres within this broader category. These include hard-boiled mysteries, cozy mysteries, police procedurals, and historical mysteries – each with its own distinct conventions and themes.

At its core, a detective novel revolves around a crime or mystery that needs to be solved. Typically, the story begins with an introduction to the crime, creating intrigue and suspense. The protagonist, usually a skilled detective or investigator, is introduced along with their unique set of skills and personal flaws. As the story progresses, clues are gradually revealed to both the reader and the detective, often involving physical evidence or testimonies. The middle section of detective novels is characterized by twists, turns, and red herrings, adding surprise and uncertainty. Finally, in classic detective novels, there is a climactic ending where all loose ends are tied up, and the detective unveils their deductions in a dramatic reveal scene, bringing resolution to both the mystery and any personal conflicts faced by the protagonist.

In conclusion, detective novels follow a specific composition that includes an introduction to a crime or mystery, the gradual revelation of clues leading to twists and turns in plot development, culminating in a climactic ending where all mysteries are solved. This structure has proven timeless in captivating readers' imaginations for decades.

2.4 Introduction of the book *Tales from Two Pockets*

Tales from Two Pockets is a collection of short stories written by the Czech author Karel Čapek. The book first published in 1929. However, the short stories were originally issued weekly in the newspaper and the author wrote these 47 stories for almost a year.

The first Čapek's attempt to create a detective story goes back a little further. It was the collection of short stories called *Boží muka* (known in English translation as *Crossroads*). Čapek himself acknowledges that it might not have been his best take on the detective genre: "*In addition, as my special legitimacy for this study, I state that I myself once tried to write*

a volume of detective novels; I meant it quite honestly, but in the end the book Crossroads came out. Alas, no one saw detective story in it. Apparently, I didn't do it well enough.” (Čapek 2018,p. 141).³

Tales from Two Pockets were not accepted by the professional circles either. It was perceived as a piece of debased literature, trivial literature even (Pešat 1989, 198-201). However, the author himself argued, the *Tales from Two Pockets* were not intended as a pure detective stories.

This book offers a diverse range of tales that explore various aspects of human nature, society, and the human condition. In these stories, Čapek fully demonstrated his wit and insight, and through his unique descriptive approach, made the entire book both enjoyable to read and thought-provoking at the sametime.

The name of the book, *Tales from Two Pockets*, is symbolic and represents the dual nature of human existence. It suggests that every individual carries within them two contrasting aspects: one pocket filled with joy and happiness, and the other with sorrow and despair. Through these tales, Čapek explored various themes such as love, loss, greed, and redemption.

The background behind the creation of this book lies in Čapek's own experiences and observations of the world around him. Living during a time of political turmoil and social change in Europe, he was deeply influenced by these events. His sharp wit and keen sense of humor allowed him to dissect societal norms and expose their absurdities. Also, *Tales from Two Pockets* reflects Čapek's belief in the power of storytelling as a means to provoke thought and inspire change. Through his characters' experiences and dilemmas, he challenges readers to question their own beliefs and values. At the end, the background behind writing *Tales from Two Pockets* stems from Karel Čapek's desire to shed light on the complexities of human nature and society. With its timeless themes and witty narratives, this book continues to captivate readers even today.

³ „Mimoto jako svouzvláštní legitimaci ktéto studii uvádím, že jsem se sám už kdysi pokusil napsat svazek detektivních novel; myslil jsem to docela poctivě, ale nakonec z toho vyšla knížka Boží muka. Pohříčkuníkdov ní neviděl detektivky. Patrně semi to dost nepovedlo.”

Karel Čapek wrote *Tales from Two Pockets* as a means of expressing his observations and commentary on the world around him. The stories in the book cover a wide range of themes, including the human experience, politics, society, and morality. Čapek used these tales to offer his unique perspectives and insights into these topics. Like many authors, he used his writing as a way to reflect on and engage with the issues of his time and to entertain and provoke thought in his readers. It is essential to understand why Čapek wrote this book to fully appreciate its significance. Firstly, *Tales from Two Pockets* can be seen as a reflection of the turbulent times in which it was written. The 1920s were marked by political unrest and social upheaval in Europe. Čapek used his stories to comment on these issues subtly, often employing satire and irony. By doing so, he aimed to provoke thought and encourage readers to question societal norms. Furthermore, Čapek's motivation for writing this book can also be attributed to his desire to explore the depths of human nature. Each story presents characters with unique traits and flaws that mirror real-life individuals. Through their experiences and interactions, Čapek delves into the complexities of human behavior, shedding light on both the good and bad aspects of humanity. Lastly, *Tales from Two Pockets* serves as a moral compass for readers. In many stories, Čapek poses ethical dilemmas that force characters (and readers) to confront their values and make difficult choices. By presenting these situations through storytelling, he encourages introspection and prompts readers to consider their own actions in similar circumstances. In conclusion, Karel Čapek wrote *Tales from Two Pockets* as a means of commenting on society's issues during the 1920s while exploring human nature and challenging readers' moral compasses. This collection remains relevant today due to its timeless themes and thought-provoking narratives that continue to captivate audiences worldwide.

2.5 Theory of Composition

The theory of the composition in storytelling is an essential aspect of literature. It encompasses the various elements and techniques employed by writers to structure their stories effectively, which refers to the structure and organisation of a narrative, including its plot, characters, setting, and themes. The composition of a story plays a crucial role in engaging readers and conveying the author's message efficiently.

One crucial element of composition is the plot, which refers to the sequence of events that unfold in a story. A strong plot typically includes an introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. This structure allows for tension and suspense to build gradually before reaching its peak and ultimately resolving the conflict.

Characters also contribute to the composition of a story. They are the driving force behind the plot and serve as vessels for conveying themes and ideas. Well-developed characters have distinct personalities, motivations, and conflicts that add depth to the narrative. Furthermore, setting plays an important role in establishing atmosphere and mood within a story. It helps create a sense of time and place that enhances readers' understanding and immersion in the narrative.

Lastly, the points of view and the themes are integral components in shaping the composition of a story. The points of view determine how readers perceive events within a story. Whether it is first-person or third-person narration influences how information is presented and can significantly impact readers' connection with characters. The themes also provide underlying messages or lessons that resonate with readers on various levels.

In conclusion, understanding the theory of the composition of a story is crucial for both writers and readers alike. By carefully crafting elements such as plot structure, character development, setting details, and thematic exploration, authors can create compelling narratives that captivate audiences while effectively conveying their intended messages or ideas. Moreover, they can also engage readers on multiple levels and leave them with an unforgettable experience.

3 Practical part of the thesis

In the practical part, I am going to analyze the characters more detailed with the combination of the novel *Tales from Two Pockets* by separating into police with detective characters, criminal characters, female characters and coincidental crime solvers.

3.1 The police characters in the novel

In the novel *Tales from Two Pockets* written by Karel Čapek, the character of the police is an integral part of the narrative, in terms of law enforcement, social order and morality. Through the portrayal of this character in different stories and scenes, Karel Čapek also explored the inherent complexity of policing in the early twentieth century after a series of tumultuous changes and the broader social implications of justice and authority.

One of the distinguishing feature of the police characters in the novel *Tales from Two Pockets* is their authoritative character in the story. As representatives of law and order, they wield significant power over other characters and the development of plot. This authority is often demonstrated through their actions, decisions and interactions with the communities they serve. Whether they are solving crimes, maintaining public safety, or upholding legal norms, police characters play a role in influencing the direction of the narrative.

For example, in *The Blue Chrysanthemum* the gardener states:

“You know, a prince is an important person, however you look at it. He called in detectives, put blue chrysanthemums in their hands, and promised them I-don’t-know-what if they could show him where they grew. Detectives, mister, are educated people; they read newspapers and the like; besides, they know every trick and stick and they have enormous influence.” (Čapek, p. 23)

While we can read the acknowledgment and respect towards the police force, it is clear on the other hand, that the police is also quick to help even in the private matter, as soon as they are promised a reward.

Similarly, in the *Stolen Document 139/VII, Sect. C*, Čapek portrays an excellent job of Inspector Pistora, who singlehandedly and very quickly solve the case of the stolen document – mostly thanks to his vast experience with the local criminals. Nevertheless, he later accepts a sort of bribery. After they discussed Pistora’s methods leading to solve the case, Colonel

Hampl slide a fifty-crowns banknote into the inspector's hands "for the trouble" to which Pistora replies: "Now, there's no need for that." (Čapek, p. 78), and quickly shoves the money in his pocket.

Police characters often encounter ethical difficulties and moral discrimination in the course of their duties. Facing these challenges, they must engage in behaviors that allow them to navigate these complex situations, while at the same time these challenges are also testing their personal beliefs, professional integrity, and commitment to justice. Karel Čapek skillfully explore the contradictions of human nature between only adhering to every single letter of the law and upholding higher ethical standards in his stories. This also intends to urge the readers to think about the the inherent complexity of policing in the context of a morally ambiguous society.

For example, in the story of *Mr. Jeník's Case*, Mr. Jeník knew the policemen very well and they allowed him the opportunity to walk with them in the woods, only because Mr. Jeník carried with him boxes of sardines, salami, cognac and other goodies, which came in very handy. Eventually this turns up to be a good move, because it is mainly thanks to Mr. Jeník's approach, that the police find the body and is able to close the case.

In *The Crime at the Post Office*, sergeant Brejcha seemingly doesn't do his duty as he decides to solve the crime and pass the judgement himself without reporting the case appropriately. In the end of the story though, the readers discover that sergeant Brejcha had not only solved the case but also had shown humanity toward the culprits and humility in the light of the greater scheme of life.

"I'm only a policeman, mister, but I'm telling you from my own experience: Whether there's some kind of allknowing, all-powerful God, I don't know; even if there is, 207 it's no use to us. But I tell you, Somebody has to be greater and more just than we are. That's the certain truth, mister. We can only punish, but there has to be a somebody, somewhere, who can forgive. I tell you, mister, truth and the highest justice are just as strange as love." (Čapek, p.199)

In addition to facing challenges from ethical and moral perspectives, police characters in Čapek's depiction also often confront issues of corruption and bureaucratic entanglements. Some characters are to some extent depicted by Čapek as being susceptible to bribery, abusing power or colluding with criminals. Through the portrayal of such characters'

personalities, the hazards of unchecked authority are highlighted. Another group of characters are depicted as wishing to solve problems but are hindered by rigid organizational structures or the red tape of bureaucracy. The portrayal of these characters' personalities also underscores the inherent challenges of effecting meaningful changes or actions within the existing system.

Furthermore, the portrayal of police characters in *Tales from Two Pockets* has also become a vehicle for broader social commentary. By depicting their interactions with ordinary citizens, handling of criminal cases and reactions to social unrest, the character type of police officers reflects and refracts universal attitudes and norms. Čapek portrays all the characters as humans in the first place. Police characters as well as the criminals (more about that in further chapter) are not a black-white characters who are inherently good or bad. What is so typical for Čapek is, that all of the characters are portrayed with special nuance to show both sides of their personality. The police officers very often sympathize with the criminals (*The Man Who Looked Just a Bit Suspicious*, *The Record*, *The Crime on the Farm*, *Released on Parole* and others) and have some sort of internal rank of the law offenders.

We can find a similar approach to that of Mr. Pistora mentioned earlier in the *The Death of Baron Gandara*. The police often display a stubborn focus on precedent, which is mainly a sign of convenience and certainty that the police are following a proven key:

“What they do is roundup all the notorious bad guys that are running around loose, and then it's, all right, boys, let's hear what kind of alibi you have this time. And when somebody hasn't got one, he's it. What the police don't like is dealing with unknown entities. I'd say they make a point of hauling in well-known or notorious big-time criminals. Once they get somebody like that in their hands, they get his vital statistics and take his fingerprints, and then he's their man; from that time on, they can turn to him in confidence whenever something happens. They can go to him as an old acquaintance, the same way a mangoes to his barber or his tobacconist.” (Čapek, p. 273).

That is closely connected to another rather curious police trait – the matter of “good or bad criminals”. It is a recurrent theme that murderers are perceived as more decent human beings than fraudsters. The prison warden in *Released on Parole* states this after they release Mr. Zaruba, convicted of the murder of his wife: *“I'll tell you, Formanek, these murderers tend to be pretty decent folks. The worst of the lot are the embezzlers; nothing in jail's ever*

good enough for them. But my heart goes out to Zaruba.” (Čapek, s. 193). In the *Tales from the Other Pocket*, we can find the similar thinking in *The Old Jailbird’s Tale*. The police in Palermo arrested the killer, who confessed to the crime but would not name the victim. Later, everyone locked in the cell where he hanged himself miraculously reformed. And again, the categorization of the criminals is the same:

“Of course, it took different periods of time for different kinds of crimes: for a misdemeanor it would be overnight, for a felony two or three days, and for a capital crime it would take maybe three weeks before the prisoner was converted. The ones who held out the longest were safecrackers, embezzlers and, on the whole, anybody else who made off with really big money; I’m telling you, big money hardens the heart more than anything else, somehow, or at least it clogs up the conscience.” (Čapek, p. 215).

Čapek used the depiction of their experiences to critique systemic injustice, social inequality and encroachment on civil liberties, which aims to make readers reflect on the impact of law enforcement behavior on societal cohesion and individual freedom. Čapek lived in the times of the First Czechoslovak Republic that was marked by the rise of industry and business owners, that came hand to hand with embezzlers and safecrackers, so in this particular characterization we can also see the personal experience Čapek drawn from the real life.

Even though the police always consider to be the role of authoritative, Čapek humanizes the characters of the police in *Tales from Two Pockets* by exploring their inner world, vulnerabilities and personal struggles. Whether it's struggling with doubt, confronting personal evil or navigating interpersonal relationships with ease, the characters that represent the police are portrayed in such a complex way that they cannot be simply categorized. At the same time, by giving depth and humanity to the police characters, it also demonstrates Čapek's support for readers to sympathize with those who bear the heavy responsibility of upholding the law congregation in an imperfect social environment.

In the end, Čapek criticized all aspects of law enforcement behaviors and the society's attitudes towards authority of the time through the use of satire, sarcasm and humor. Through the perspective of police, he exposed and demonstrated the absurdity of human behavior, institutional governance and the pursuit of justice. Whether in the storyline, the commentary, or the depiction of the ironic twists of fate, Čapek invited readers to examine entitlement,

morality and social justice.

In conclusion, the character of the police in *Tales from Two Pockets* has contributed to the richness and complexity of the narrative in various ways. As the embodiment of authority, morality, and social norms, they serve as a bridge to explore fundamental issues about justice, rights and the human living conditions. By describing their diverse personalities, moral dilemmas and their dealings with others, Čapek offered a thought-provoking exploration of policing and its impact on the entire society.

3.1.1 The Detective Characters in the Novel

In Karel Čapek's novel *Tales from Two Pockets*, detective characters are an integral part of the story, embodying aspects of character diversity, justice and social observation. Although the stories are not always explicitly centered on detectives' characters, they often embody Čapek's exploration of themes such as the search for truth, morality, and humanity.

The detective characters Čapek depicted in the novel are usually very intelligent, possessing a keen sense of observation and sharp inference skills. Whether they are professional detectives or amateur investigators, they are sensitive observers of human behavior and are adept at solving cases, together with revealing the truth by assembling clues. At the sametime, because of their critical thinking and analytical skills, which was given to them by the figure of the detective, it has also set them apart from other characters in the narration.

Many detective characters in the novel are ethical and honorable , but they also need to face the problems about moral ambiguity and dilemmas. Even when faced with moral difficulties or social pressures, they are driven by a sense of justice and a determination to uphold the law. Their unwavering dedication to truth and fairness is their guiding principle throughout the investigation. Sometimes despite the facts at their hand.

Despite the confident and competent appearance of the detective characters in *Tales from Two Pockets*, each detective is a relatively different individual with his or her own character flaws, weaknesses, and motivations, all of which in some ways determine how they solve crimes. By meticulously depicting the detectives struggling under the heavy pressure of doubt, insecurity, and responsibility, Čapek added depth and complexity to the characterizations and makes the figure of the detective more relatable to the readers.

The only person who appears more than once in the stories is a young detective Dr. Mejzlik. Apart from him, detective role is taken by police officers, but also by a patrolman (*Stolen File 139/VII, Section C*), or a retired policeman (*The Man Who Looked Just a Bit Suspicious*). Outside the police force, we have detectives - gardeners (*The Blue Chrysanthemum, The Stolen Cactus*), a wife (*The Missing Letter*), a businessman with paper (*Mr. Janik's Cases*), a surgeon (*The Disappearance of an Actor*) and a conductor (*The Orchestra Conductor's Story*).

The detectives are therefore not prominent personalities, they are rather ordinary people who are confronted with an unexpected situation. Of course, it depends on which detective we are talking about. Dr. Mejzlik, Pistora, the patrolman, or the gendarme are living a classic day at work, solving a case as their duty. Detective characters who are not members of a police force stumble on their case by mistake and try to solve the problem as best they can. They use their own methods to do this, based on their "expertise" and life experience, e.g. the gardener in *The Stolen Cactus* uses the cactus growers' fear for their plants, or the conductor in *The Orchestra Conductor's Story* uses pitch and cadence in conversation.

As well as in all the other characters, Čapek utilized the detective characters in the novel to express his concerns about broader social issues. Through their investigations, the detectives revealed the complexities of human nature, societal norms, and justice in an ever-changing world. The mysteries they unravel often reveal underlying tensions, hypocrisies, and injustices in the society which they were living, thus provoking readers to reflect on broader social and moral issues.

Čapek often added elements of humor and satire to the interactions and observations of his detective characters in the novel. Their witty banter, dry humor, and sarcastic comments on absurd human behavior add to the upbeat atmosphere of the stories, while also providing insightful critiques of social norms and conventions. A classic example of such humorous situation is *The Case Involving the Baby*. A young Mrs. Landova lost a three-month-old baby girl in a stroller named Ruzenka. Inspector Bartosek did not know how to find the little girl, and he was quite honestly at his wits' end: "*My God, if it was stolen watches or stolen anything else that's reasonable, I'd know how to deal with it. But I don't have the least idea how to go about looking for a stolen baby!*" (Čapek, p. 254). Then a chance helped. His bitch gave birth to beautiful puppies and she was proud of them. So the commissioner sent policemen into

the streets to praise the the babies in their prams, and the mother who would not show her baby was the thief. Eventually, on this account, the woman who stole the little baby was found.

Although in popular culture , the detective characters stand individually in the reader's subjective image, Čapek's stories in the novel sometimes emphasize the importance of collaboration and teamwork in solving crimes. Detectives may work with other characters, such as police officers, journalists, or ordinary citizens and solving cases by gathering their resources and skills. In *The Experiment of Professor Rouss* it is the university professor who is helping to solve the case. In *The Poet* it is surprisingly the poet in the role of a vital witness who remembered the licence plate of a vehicle through a stream of consciousness and metaphorical objects. Lastly, in *The Fall of the House Voticky*, the roles are reversed. The archivist comes to the office of detective Mejzlik and demands help with the mysterious historical case.

In summary, the detective characters in *Tales from Two Pockets* are complex and morally upright characters. They experienced the intricacies of human behaviors and social norms in their pursuit of truth and justice. Through their investigations, they revealed the deeper truths of the world in which they live, shedding light on the darker side of society while bringing hope for redemption. It became a conduit for Čapek's sharp social commentary and philosophical inquiries. What is more, Čapek's treatment of detective characters and narratives in *Tales from Two Pockets* also reflected the evolution of the detective genre, moving beyond traditional tropes and clichés to explore deeper philosophical and moral themes. The stories retain the elements of mystery and suspense that characterize detective fiction, while also transcending its limitations to explore human psychology, morality, and society in a nuanced way.

3.2 The Criminal Characters in the Novel

In Karel Čapek's novel *Tales from Two Pockets*, criminal characters play diverse and engaging roles in the story, while their personalities are also varied. Čapek added depth and complexity to the narrative through his detailed characterizations as well. Because Čapek has a keen eye for social commentary and human nature, his criminals also epitomize various aspects of society, justice and morality of the time.

Criminal characters in the novel came from different backgrounds, ranging from petty thieves to over-zealous behavior; from crimes of passion to sophisticated crooks. By depicting the image of criminals from different backgrounds, Čapek not only helped to enrich the narrative of the story, but also assisted people gain insight into the social considerations that influence criminal behaviors.

Every single criminal figure has unique motivations and desires for his or her behaviors. Some may be motivated by financial desperation, a desire to lighten the burden of life, alleviate poverty or secure a better life for themselves. Those are motivations quite common for criminals. Others maybe motivated by greed, ambition or a desire for power and to have everything under his or her control. And sometimes the culprit has a simple reason with a poetic or ridiculous twist to it, quite often not even aware they are committing a crime, which is a sort of Čapek's personal brand - to elevate the crime with a wit and humour, but at the sametime, sour societal criticism.

Čapek used humor and satirical descriptive techniques in his portrayal of criminal characters. He used satirical depictions to criticize the social norms and traditions of that time. The depiction of the absurdity of some certain episodes and the characters' reactions to these episodes add a layer of wit and fun to the story, while also drawing readers into thinking about deeper themes.

The girl in *The Blue Chrysanthemum* surely does not intend to break the law, she is of a simple mind and sees the gift in a shape of blue chrysanthemum makes the gardener happy and curious about it, so she keep bringing - and technicaly stealing - the flowers, while trespassing as well.

In *The Record*, the attack was not even premeditated. The driving force were not shallow human desires. It was in fact simple exasperation over the injustice and sympathy with the poor boy being thrashed by Mr. Pudil only because such a boyish malice as stealing the cherries from the tree.

Perhaps one of the most curious driving forces for a criminal is love. In *The Crime at the Post Office* the young couple steals the money from the girl behind the postoffice counter because they long to be closer to each other, presuming it will not have such a serious consequences, as the girl comes form a rich family and does not need a job. However in this story, Čapek insinuates, one cannot foresee all the possible consequences of one's deeds. So

in the end, the couple will carry the punishment for the rest of their lives. In *The Stolen Cactus*, the culprit is stealing the cacti only because his devotion for succulents. Fatefully, the love for it is what kills him in the end.

Čapek has explored a lot about the attitudes and reactions of human nature in the face of morality through the characterization of criminals. While some criminals' actions may be illegal or immoral, the characters themselves may have redeeming qualities or sympathetic traits. Readers can have a better understanding of the story's content by facing such contrasts, while at the same time challenging the reader's perception of morality and justice.

Čapek uses the depiction of various criminal characters as an overview of the society in its desires and motivations. Through the portrayal of the characters, it reveals that there were problems of poverty, inequality, corruption and flaws in the justice system in the society at that time. And by depicting the criminals' interactions with other characters and their experiences in society, it also highlights wider social issues and injustices. Perhaps the most complex example is the story in *An Ordinary Murder*. Čapek does not explore the motivation or inner thoughts of the murderer, in fact, the reader does not know almost anything about him. Instead, he reveals the impact of the murder and the thoughts about the deeds and the punishment through the mouth of Mr. Hanak:

"I realized that I truly felt sorry for him, and that I would almost have been relieved if, somehow or other, he'd gotten off scot-free. Not that his face was sympathetic, rather the opposite; but I'd seen him at too close quarters — I'd seen those eyes, blinking in agony. Damn it all, I'm not some bleeding-heart sentimentalist. But at such close range he wasn't a murderer, he was just a man. Look, I don't understand it myself; and frankly, I don't know what I would have done if I'd been the judge. But the whole thing left me feeling as sorrowful as if it were my own soul that needed saving." (Čapek, p. 353).

In the novel, some of the criminal characters may face terrible consequences for their actions, while others may experience moments of redemption or transformation. Čapek explored the complexity of human nature and portrayed the characterization of criminals as complex individuals who can grow, change and redeem themselves even in the face of adversity. More than once the criminals are rather victims of the societal norms and the systematic injustice than someone who should be pursued and punished. As the perfect example serves Mr. Kugler in *The Last Judgement*. Kugler is a man who murdered nine

people, that is a matter of fact. However, as the God himself appears in the role of a witness, we learn more about Kugler's life and all the aspects of it that lead him to become a murderer. He has done a great many horrible things in his life, but he was also good in many aspects - which we do not know as the jury does not ask the God to provide them with all the good deeds. Despite all that, Kugler asks God why it is not him who judge in The Last Judgement and he replies: "*Because I know everything. If judges knew everything, absolutely everything, they couldn't judge, either: they would understand everything, and their hearts would ache. How could I possibly judge you? Judges know only about your crimes; but I know everything about you. Everything, Kugler. And that's why I cannot judge you.*" (Čapek, p. 159).

Overall, the crime characters in *Tales from Two Pockets* help readers relate to the collection's exploration of humanity, morality, and society. Through the criminal characters diverse backgrounds, motivations and interactions, they also offer compelling insights into the complexity of the human experience and the moral dilemmas that affect human lives.

3.3 The female characters in the novel

In Karel Čapek's *Tales from Two Pockets*, female characters play different and often nuanced roles throughout the whole short story collection. They may be wives, mothers, daughters, professionals, lovers, or even the main character. Čapek exemplified the diversity and complexity of women's experiences in society by depicting the wide range of roles and identities they hold, which allows Čapek to explore all aspects of women and challenge stereotypes. Although the characters in each story have their own unique personalities and motivations, there are some recurring themes and patterns in the portrayal of the female characters in the stories.

Many of the female characters in the story demonstrate their initiative and independence, actively shaping their own destinies and making decisions that affect the narrative. They are not passive bystanders in a passive position, but individuals with their own goals, aspirations and pursuits. Whether fulfilling social expectations or pursuing personal ambitions, these female characters assert their autonomy and challenge gender norms in the traditional sense. On the other hand, Čapek often portrays these women as a poor idealistic figures that pay dearly for whatever sort of bravery they are trying to assert.

Helenka, the girl from the post office in *The Crime at the Post Office* is described as a young woman, who tried to set herself apart from her family and take up a paid job not because she would need that (her father was a wealthy miller), but because she was ambitious and wanted to show that she is capable to take care about herself. However she ends up committing suicide because of the injustice that has been done to her by wrongly accusing her of an embezzlement. Similarly, the countess from *The Little Countess* stands up before a trial for espionage only because she pursued a noble idea about being an important spy-girl in order to become worthy of her chosen man.

Both of these women has a noble goal to attain in her lives and they are described as ambitious and determined. However, this trait is very quickly judged by other characters as silly and foolish, which suggests that such an effort is unnecessary and even a sort of "wrong choice". It seems Karel Čapek only depicts these woman characters to condemn them as foolish and consolidate the role of a women-mother.

In *The Crime at the Post Office*, the police officer investigating the case stresses the beauty of the girl and the decent nature of her family, while he diminishes the effort for independence in an instant, he described her as "*a good, kind girl, pretty as a picture*" and later he continues with "*[...]her daddy was the miller over on the other side of town, and she was only there at the postoffice because of some female urge to make her own living for herself. I knew her daddy well, mister; he was sort of a literary type and a Protestant, too; and let me tell you, mister, these Protestant religious scribblers around here, they never steal nothing.*" (Čapek, p. 159). The little countess is also looked down at by the men in that story in a condescending way: "*So the silly little countess fell in love with this professional hero and most likely wanted to win her knightly spurs in order to be worthy of him. In short, for love of him she faked being a spy and then gave herself away, all so she could look like a martyr for the glorious cause. Only a woman would do such a thing.*" (ibid, p. 271).

On the contrary, the women-mother figure is described as something admirable, right and utmost honorable. Čapek portrayed mature female figures as tenacious and resourceful when facing the adversities. They directly face obstacles and overcome difficulties, emerging inner strength and perseverance. No matter facing with personal difficulties, social injustices, or outside challenges, these women persist unremittingly and find ways to overcome their hardships. Also their resilience and determination are shown through the descriptions. They

simple do what they have to do and what they feel is their mission in the life. The mother in *The Selvin Case* does not hesitate to go and humiliate herself in front of the influential young poet Uden in order to help her son be cleared from the murder he (according to her) had not committed. She is sobbing and wailing and asking for help in despair: "I tell you, if you could have seen that broken-hearted, white-haired mother, you'd have realized what I realized at the time: that one of the worst agonies is to feel sympathy for someone when you're powerless to help." (ibid, p. 124).

In *The Telegram*, the mother is seemingly minor and not important character, she is described as "[...] a fine, deserving woman, a model mother hen, a meek homebody, a so-called doormat and so forth." (ibid, p. 338). But in the very simple story about the mysterious telegram message from their daughter, she is the primary agent of the narrative. When she suspects something is wrong with their daughter, she intends to get money from the bank and go save her daughter without hesitation. Finally, she is the one who suggests to show the telegram to Mr. Horvat who is known for deciphering things as a hobby which eventually leads to a simple solution.

Not all the women-mother characters actually have children, some of them are only depicted as this female caring principle, but they possess the same characteristics - the pragmatic, resourceful, obedient women and caring wives. The wife from *The Missing Letter* for example. She stays calm and pragmatic at all times and helps solving the case of the missing letter simply by being an obedient housewife who takes care of her husband.

In *Tales from Two Pockets*, Čapek depicted a range of emotions of the female characters, from joy and love to sadness and despair. While showing women's unique struggles with complex emotions and inner conflicts, also reflect the depth and richness of their inner lives. Through their emotional journeys, these women convey vulnerability, passion, compassion, and a variety of other human experiences and emotions that helps readers to empathize with their struggles and success.

That leads us to another prototype of a female character, which is a sort of Čapek's version of femme fatale. The woman who is self-centered, does not care about not only her family but nobody else in fact than themselves. As if this kind of description directly opposes the women-mothers. We have a good wives and mothers and the bad egoistic females, such as the woman who murdered her husband in *The Juror*, or the cheating wife in *Proof Positive*.

Čapek described these female characters by exploring the relationships they have experienced or have had, including romantic relationships, family bonds, friendships, and professional collaborations. These relationships are often central to the narrative, shaping the characters' experiences and driving the plot. Whether making connections in the midst of conflict or experiencing moments of intimacy and solidarity, women's interactions with other characters also demonstrate interpersonal connections and social dynamics.

Substantially, the female characters in *Tales from Two Pockets* made the contributions to the richness and diversity of the story. Čapek commented on gender roles, social expectations, and the status of women in early twentieth-century society through his nuanced portrayal of women's experiences, relationships, and social roles. Although he observes the women characters from various perspectives, he emphasizes the role of a woman as a caring, gentle and obedient character. Everything outside of that is looked down at or ends tragically. Čapek also used humor and ironic descriptive techniques in his portrayal of female characters as a way of mocking social conventions and absurdities. Whether through witty dialogs, comedic plots, or exaggerated character traits, he provided lighthearted but also insightful commentaries on gender and cultural norms. Through their various manifestations, Čapek has impressed the literary world by inviting readers to reflect on themes of identity, agency, resilience, and social change.

3.4 The characters which solve the cases by coincidences

In Karel Čapek's *Tales from Two Pockets* some characters solve cases through coincidences or cases that are resolved coincidentally by their own, which adds unpredictability and irony to the stories and deepens the narrative. These coincidences often serve as reflections on fate, opportunity, and the unpredictability of life.

Throughout the work, Čapek introduced characters who solve cases through coincidences. These characters are usually ordinary individuals thrust into unusual circumstances. They may not possess the skills or training of a typical detective or investigator, and most often, they stumble upon crucial clues or information entirely by chance. These discoveries are often unexpected, occurring in seemingly ordinary or random situations. For example, the character might accidentally overhear a conversation, find an item in an unlikely place, or encounter a person from the past who turns out to be crucial to

solving the case. Despite their lack of expertise, they demonstrate resourcefulness, sharp intuition, and a willingness to follow leads until the case is solved. Of course in Čapek's case it's not always traditional case, but rather "a case" in a broader sense of the word.

Most often Čapek uses the contradictory relationship of using a method and following the intuition or simply being lucky. The very first story in the novel is a perfect example. We meet young detective captain Dr. Mejzlik, who just solved his first case. Traditionally, we would read about the interesting parts of the case and different leads and suspects and eventually a successful catching of the culprit. Not in the case of Čapek.

As usual for this author, the story is based more or less on the inner world of the character, his train of thought and the simple, seemingly unimportant chain of events. Dr. Mejzlik is sad and frustrated even though he has just successfully closed a case. He is feeling that way because he thinks it was sheer luck and not the solid police work. The more we hear about his story though, the more complicated the role of luck and method looks. Čapek intentionally gives us more nuanced and detailed situations to think about.

It is true that a certain amount of luck and coincidence was necessary, however, as Dr. Mejzlik describes the chain of events, we can see more clearly, that he actually solved the case by solid police work. Firstly, he went to patrol the Dlazdena street, which is notorious as a neighbourhood full of petty criminals. Then he checks the register at the inn called The Three Maidens which appears as a single routine because all the familiar pickpockets and safecrackers are used to stay there. Consequently, he sees a man walking down the street who has a powder on his shoes even though it is raining and by experience and deduction, he realizes that it might very well be the powder that serves as the insulation in the safes.

" 'That was empirical deduction,' Mr. Dastych said with certainty. 'It was a brilliant inference based on experience. So what happened next?' 'Well, naturally I followed the man; he went into The Three Maidens, of course. And I telephoned for two plainclothesmen and we raided the place; we found Mr. Rosenbaum there along with his powder and his safecracking tools and twenty thousand from the Jewish Benevolent Association's safe. The rest of it doesn't matter. ' " (Čapek, p.17).

If Dr. Mejzlik did not have the experience concerning casfecrackers and if we did not use his masterfull deduction, he would have never solved the case, no matter how lucky.

On the other hand, in *The Blue Chrysanthemum*, the precious flower is not found by the methodologists and the police, but by a half-crazy girl who is able to think outside the box and go even where it is naturally forbidden. Her immediacy thus allows her to discover unrecognised beauties.

The police did not catch an internationally wanted criminal in *The Man Who Looked Just a Bit Suspicious* based on evidence, but because of a former police officer's bad feeling about a guest. But again, that dislike stemmed from a fearfulness of the thief and from keeping a terrible secret that he carried on his shoulders for three years.

In the short story *The Fortuneteller* the fortune-telling comes true to the last detail, even though the fortune teller is convicted of fraud and banished from the country. Therefore, even an unlikely prediction can be fulfilled because circumstances can change in a few years. This short story shows the dynamism and volatility of our lives, how in a certain time frame everything can change. Similar process is described in *The Clairvoyant*, where the mysterious Mr. Karadagh feels the handwriting of a criminal waiting to be convicted and draws a perfect personal characterization of him, which later serves as a help with conviction.

In both stories we see a mystical process of uncovering reality. At one point the universality of the statement in both stories is pointed out. Both of these cases are first questioned by rational elements, but then it turns out that they were correct. These ways of revealing reality have absolutely no rational explanations, and what's more, the second character even admits, she was faking the result:

"Not everyone complains," the old lady replied defensively. "You see, I predict things that people like to hear. That pleasure, sir, is well worth a shilling or two. And sometimes you actually hit it right on the button. 'Mrs. Myers,' this one woman said to me the other day, 'nobody, but nobody reads the cards and counsels me as well as you do.' She lives in St. John's Wood and is divorcing her husband." (Čapek, p. 28).

Is this just a sort of coincidences, or indeed are these ways of fate truly possible? Čapek leaves this interpretation open to the reader. Certainly it seems, the author does not rule out these irrational ways as possible.

Čapek subverted readers' expectations of traditional detective novels by featuring characters who solve crimes by coincidence. Rather than relying on logic, deduction, or meticulous investigation, these characters achieve success through pure luck or coincidental events. This subversion challenges the notion of an omniscient detective figure and emphasizes the role of chance in shaping the outcome of events. Moreover, the characters who solve crimes by coincidence highlight Čapek's exploration of themes such as fate, chance, and the interconnectedness of human life. Their fortuitous involvement in solving crimes highlights the randomness of fate, as well as better demonstrates how seemingly unrelated events work together to shape the trajectory of an individual's life.

The addition of the coincidental crime-solving characters adds complexity to the narrative structure of *Tales from Two Pockets*. Their unexpected interventions disrupt linear narrative conventions and inject an element of chaos into the plot. This narrative unpredictability immerses the reader and reinforces the notion that life, like fiction, is full of unexpected twists and turns. At the same time Čapek often used humor and satire to portray characters who solve crimes by coincidence. Their bumbling antics, together with serendipitous discoveries, create a cheerful atmosphere in the story and provide moments of comedic relief amidst tense and suspenseful investigation. These characters may find themselves in absurd or comedic situations, which also underscore the unpredictability of life and the inherent randomness of fate.

As already stated, the characters in *Tales from Two Pockets* who solve crimes through coincidence are vehicles for Čapek's exploration of the themes of fate, chance, and the absurdity of life. Their unexpected discoveries and seemingly unlikely heroics add depth, humor, and unpredictability to the stories, challenging the traditional way of writing detective fictions and offering a fresh perspective on the nature of mystery and investigation.

4 Conclusion

This thesis demonstrates the intricate interrelationships between character, plot and thematic elements in detective fiction through an exploration of characterization in Karel Čapek's *Tales from Two Pockets*.

In the Theoretical part I described the categorization of literary characters from several points of view, using the general typology of characters. I further elaborated on external and internal characterization as well as thematic context for the characters and the usage of proper names. By exploring the theoretical component and drawing on more specialized information from E.M. Foster and Daniela Hodrová, among others, I have delved into the multifaceted nature of literary characters, recognizing the role they play in reflecting human nature, social dynamics, and narrative techniques in the novel. The theoretical part of the thesis also laid the groundwork for the analysis of plot, character and theme in the practical part of the study. Moreover, I introduced the specifics of literary characters in detective genre, with that being the major theme of this thesis, completed by the definition of detective novels and explaining the specifics of Karel Čapek's practical take on detective genre and also his theoretical background to the topic mentioning also his theoretical essays.

I found out that the characters in Čapek's works tend to have relatively little psychological depth. We rarely look deeper into their innermost being, the reason for this being that for Čapek, the character is often first and foremost the bearer of certain ideas, beliefs, a certain view of the world. His works are much more philosophical than psychological.

Relatively often in Čapek's detective work we find characters inspired by real people. We can feel a bit of the influence of journalism here. In writing *Tales from Two Pockets*, he was often inspired by court reports and the stories from the conversations with strangers. After all, he admits this fact in his theoretical essays – *Marsyas* and *Holmesiana*, which I included in the work.

As a result of the character analysis, we found out, that Čapek explores a various typological character in the novel. He often sorts of mocks the role of the detective as he portrays a scale of ordinary people taking over that role. There is the gardener (*The Blue Chrysanthemum*, *The Stolen Cactus*), a wife (*The Missing Letter*), a businessman with paper

(*Mr. Janik's Cases*), a surgeon (*The Disappearance of an Actor*) and a conductor (*The Orchestra Conductor's Story*). Čapek often explores the human abilities to adapt to different roles. The 'common people detectives' started solving the crime or mystery simply because it appeared in their lives, and they took the chance and tried to do the job as best as they could. I also noticed that the occupations of Čapek's characters greatly influence their view of the world. The characters see the world through the lens of their profession. It is perhaps because the variety of occupational perspectives illustrates well the diversity and relativity of views of the world. It also shows work as one of the fundamental dimensions of human life.

Another non-traditional view of Čapek is his depiction of the criminals. Moreover, Čapek's criminals often possess redeeming qualities or moments of introspection, complicating the reader's perception of them. Through these nuanced portrayals, Čapek prompts readers to question their preconceptions about good and evil, forcing them to confront the humanity of even those who commit reprehensible acts. Each person has a certain truth, he wrote, but it is a partial truth. We can never know the truth in its entirety, because human knowledge is limited. Even a crime, when seen from another point of view, might not be perceived as a crime at all. And even if a criminal is caught, the whole truth may never be known. In Čapek's humanization of negative characters, there is an evident Christian principle in forgiveness of the guilty. Apart from the serious side of the matter, many of the stories are also written with a wry appreciation of all things human, and they are often rounded off with a humorous punchline.

Through the practical analysis of Čapek's characters, I have discovered that he skillfully created different characters in his novels, which serve as conduits for exploring the underlying themes and social issues of early twentieth-century society. From the authoritative portrayal of the police officer to the nuanced portrayal of criminals, detectives, and female characters, each characterization provides a unique perspective on morality, justice, and the current human condition. Also through my study of Čapek's approach to characterization, I have learned the subtleties of Čapek's portrayal of character development, from external expression to internal complexity. By exploring the motivations, backgrounds, and behaviors of his characters, Čapek provides readers with thought-provoking insights into social issues

such as poverty, inequality, and corruption, while challenging conventional views of morality and justice.

In conclusion, this bachelor's analysis of characterization in *Tales from Two Pockets* emphasizes the enduring significance and timeless appeal of literary characterization in detective fiction. By studying and analyzing the complexities of characterization, I gained a deeper understanding of human nature, social dynamics, and the art of narrative expression. Also, through Čapek's masterful narrative technique and his perspective from detective fiction, he presents readers with intricate morality, justice, and the human condition, leading them to ponder deeper philosophical and moral issues, which makes *Tales from Two Pockets* a timeless and thought-provoking work of literature.

Annotation

Author: Zisu Li
Title: Interpretation of Tales from Two Pockets by Karel Čapek
Thesis supervisor : Mgr. Richard Změlík, Ph.D.
Numbers of pages: 37
Numbers of appendices : 0
Keywords:

Karel Čapek, narrative techniques, detective novel, characters, description, personalities, Tales from two pockets, plot

Abstract

The bachelor thesis focusses on the short story *Tales from two pockets* from Karel Čapek and will perform standard analysis focusing mainly on characters. The work also includes the interpretation of individual stories. This work is based on the book *Tales from two pockets (Karel Čapek, translated by Norma Comrada 1994)* and *Narratology: an introduction (Wolf Schmid 2010)*. This work answers the questions, what the characters are like in this novel, how are the personalities of the characters described in the novel, method which Karel Čapek used for describing the characters and the intention and reason of Karel Čapek's description of the characters.

Abstrakt

Bakalářská práce zaměří na knihu *Povídky z první a druhé kapsy* od Karla Čapka a provede standardní analýzu zaměřenou především na analýzu postav. Součástí práce bude i výklad jednotlivých povídek. Tato práce vychází z knihy *Povídek z první a druhé kapsy (Karel Čapek, překlad Norma Comrada 1994)* a *Narratology: an introduction (Wolf Schmid 2010)*. Pokusí se zodpovědět otázky, jaké typy postav jsou v povídkách, jak jsou charakterizovány osobnosti postav v povídkách, jakou metodu Karel Čapek použil při popisu postav a jaký je záměr a důvod popisu postav Karlem Čapkem.

Bibliography :

Primary source:

Tales from two pockets (Karel Čapek, translated by Norma Comrada 1994)

Secondary sources:

ČAPEK, Karel. *Marsyas čili Na okraj literatury* [online]. 2. opr. vyd. Praha: Městská knihovna Praze, 2018 [cit. 2023-11-12]. ISBN 978-80-7532-977-6. Accessible through WWW: <https://web2.mlp.cz/koweb/00/04/34/55/20/marsyas.pdf>

FORSTER, E.M. *Aspect of the Novel*. Online. 1970. Accessible through WWW: <https://archive.org/details/aspects-of-novel-0000fors/page/108/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>. [cit. 2024-01-28].

Hodrová, Daniela. *Na okraji chaosu: poetika literárního díla 20. století*. Praha: Torst, 2001.

PEŠAT, Zdeněk. *Čapkovy povídky z kapsy, zejména z té druhé* [online]. In Jaroslavu Kolárovi k šedesátým narozeninám 1929-1989. Praha : [s.n.], 1989. [cit. 2023-11-12]. Accessible through WWW: <http://www.ucl.cas.cz/edicee/data/sborniky/strojopisne/JK60/18.pdf>.

PETERKA, JOSEF. *Teorie literatury pro učitele*. 1. vyd. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 2001, s. 144 - 148.