THE COMIC TECHNIQUES OF DOUGLAS ADAMS AND TERRY PRATCHETT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED WORKS AND AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE ROLE OF COMEDY IN SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY

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DEDICATION

It is with deep gratitude that I dedicate this work to my husband, whose constant love, understanding and encouragement were always a source of inspiration.

I also wish to thank the following persons:

My promoter, Prof. F.R. Muller, whose knowledgeable and patient guidance resulted in my finally receiving this degree,

My family, whose support I could always count on,

And God, who gave me the strength to persevere and finish this dissertation.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

i

Frank J Machtovec (1988:71) suggests: "Maybe humour is refusing to take yourself or anyone else, too seriously."

Before starting a discussion on the nature of comedy or humour, one must clarify these terms: 'Comedy',according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is '1.(a) a light or amusing play or film, usually with a happy ending. 2 an amusing aspect of something; humour.' Of course 'comedy' does not apply only to plays or films, but also to other forms of literature.

The definition of 'humour' is stated as: '1. the quality of being amusing or comic; 2. the ability to appreciate things, situations or people that are comic; the ability to be amused.'

The advantage of using this sort of definition as a starting point is that it stresses the vital difference that comedy is concerned mostly with literature whereas humour covers a wider range.

Comedy is nevertheless also a wide field, so I have only chosen those aspects of comedy which are relevant to the novels and writers discussed in this

dissertation. These aspects, such as the different subjects used in comedy, the stylistic elements of comedy and the reason people laugh at comedy, will be discussed in the later chapters of this dissertation.

As the subject has been researched and re-evaluated many times, there are too many theories to permit a comprehensive discussion of the nature of comedy in this dissertation. The problem is that there are about as many opinions on the subject as there are researchers. Therefore I have chosen mostly theories on comedy explained in works by Leonard Feinberg (1967), James Sutherland (1967) and Frank J. Machtovec Ph.d. (1988). The theories of these critics seem to be particularly applicable to the works of the authors studied.

Like comedy, science fiction and fantasy are both very extensive fields for reasons which will be discussed elsewhere in this introduction.

ii

Pulp magazines, in the early twenties, were the kind of magazine in which SF found its start as a genre. This happened through the inclusion of stories of this genre among other action and adventure tales. Later science fiction began to be published in magazines dedicated specifically to the genre. This is why science fiction's emergence as a separate genre is usually dated as 1926. This is the year in which Hugo Gernsback began publishing the first magazine dedicated

especially to science fiction, Amazing Stories. Although this makes the genre very young compared to comedy and fantasy, much development has taken place in the genre. One aspect which complicates an academic consideration of the role of comedy in science fiction, and which is also the result of its relatively recent appearance in literary circles, is the prejudice met with among many critics, such as Edward James and Thomas M. Disch, as regards science fiction.

Edward James (1994:200) states:

> ' ... The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy ... which solved the problem of the popular dislike of sf by treating all its themes satirically, and which avoided any solution to human existence by destroying the whole planet in the first volume, to make way for an interstellar bypass or freeway.'

This statement not only is regrettably dismissive of Douglas Adams' novel and misses its point by far; it also shows misunderstanding of the general perception of SF. The expanding number of these works to be seen on the shelves of bookstores today is indicative of the increasing popularity of SF and fantasy. SF, therefore seems to be anything but 'generally disliked' by the reading public; in fact, its popularity is expanding rapidly in these uncertain modern times. Terry Pratchett (1994:281) has a more enlightened view:

> 'Back in the sixties and seventies "escapism" was frowned on - "escapist literature" was definitely a derogatory term. I think people have come round a bit now and know that

escaping is fine provided you're escaping to rather than from.'

Another rather dismissive view is voiced by Thomas M. Disch (Nicholls, 1978:142), ironist and writer of science fiction. In his view science fiction is written mostly for children, because some of its protagonists are children. This is not true of most SF - the many national and international awards for SF works today suggest that SF is more than mere children's tales.

The works examined here are also not mere children's tales; the detailed study of these novels later in this dissertation will attempt to demonstrate that their themes are particularly significant to adults, which should indicate that the novels are meant to be much more than children's adventure stories. Whereas children are present and do play an important role in Pratchett's Good Omens and Eric, as well as in Mostly Harmless by Adams, the themes of human existence explored in these novels have a definite meaning for adults. Therefore the statement made by Disch (Nicholls, 1978) to the effect that adults read SF only to gratify childhood pleasures is inaccurate. Disch concludes that the fact that there is a definite link between science fiction, fairy tales and legends proves its suitability largely for children; however, his attempt to use this as justification for not taking SF seriously, is not valid, since, like SF, legends and fairy tales are also often more than just children's tales and appeal to adults as well. The reason for this may be that even though all these forms of story telling

have to do with a departure from reality, they retain an element of reality that gives them appeal in the adult world: SF and Fantasy, when meant for adults, provide a comment on the world, much as comedy does. That the genre is meant mainly for children is disproved conclusively by Terry Pratchett's readership: According to Pratchett and Briggs (1994:281) the age groups among which he is most popular are 9-14, 18-25 and 35-45. Pratchett mostly writes fantasy, and his readers prove that it is for children as well as grown-ups from more or less all age groups. In Chapter 5 of this dissertation it is shown that Pratchett's novels fall mainly into a catagory of fantasy called 'science fantasy'. Whereas the very term 'science' should show its value for both the child's and the adult's world, Kingsley Amis (1963) claims that it has no value. With the detailed study of Pratchett's novels in Chapter 4,5 and 6 of this dissertation, I shall draw a different conclusion from that of Amis.

Also, Peter Nicholls in his introduction confirms the fact that SF has been in circulation and increasingly successful for long enough to be an essential subject for study. He calls the genre a 'measure of the times'. In many cases SF is a projection of the hopes and fears of human beings in terms of the future. Some of the popular themes in the novels of Adams and Pratchett are religion, sex and the destruction of the world as a result of technology. This reflects the uncertainty of modern man about the direction that society and world events will take in terms of these themes, as is only too evident in the diversity of science fiction novels available today. The themes of SF will be discussed in much more

detail later in this dissertation. The central idea in all works of SF is man in relation to change - how might the world change in the future and what may man's reaction to that change be? SF asks questions rather than provides answers to these questions and, as will become evident, Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett are no exceptions to this general rule.

Brian Aldiss (Wingrove, 1984:20) sees the fact that science fiction is studied and taught in schools and universities as an important change which may counter the commercialism of SF. He also mentions the growing volume of SF criticism. He sees this as a hopeful sign that exploitation of the genre will eventually be thwarted in order for SF to become full literature.

In Science Fiction (1972) Eike Barmeyer calls SF 'the technology of magic'. Through this suggestion, Barmeyer implies future possibilities in technological terms. There are no limits; technology may do anything at all, and some writers have made full use of this fact. Technology becomes a source of wonder - scientists become wizards and achieve the seemingly impossible through newly developed technology. Through the above reasoning I intend to show the validity of combining a relatively young genre and an older, but equally stigmatized genre, SF and fantasy, with comedy.

Fantasy, a mode of the past, is much more closely related to SF than may originally seem to be the case. It contains more magic than future technology. Despite being archaic, fantasy suffers the same stigma as SF. Kathryne Hume, in Fantasy and Mimesis (1984) defines fantasy as a 'deliberate departure from what is accepted as real and normal' (p. xii of the introduction). She also states that fantasy is an element which appears in many other genres, and seems opposed to the idea of fantasy as a genre in itself. However, Eric S. Rabkin (1976) distinguishes between the fantastic and fantasy, saying that the fantastic is too large to be contained in a single genre, but fantasy is the genre in which the fantastic predominates. Philip Pecorino (ed. Robert E. Meyers, 1983) says that the dividing line between SF and fantasy is the fact that SF must be related to science in a direct way, whereas fantasy is not. He calls both genres a type of prose which speculates about possibilities (1983:1).

Another and more narrow definition of fantasy states that this mode refers to the super-natural, or the ideal. It is composed of elements which cannot exist in the empirical world. Thus fantasy becomes a collision between the real and the ideal, the material and the spiritual. It has been called the 'real turned a 180 degrees around' by Eric S. Rabkin (1976:28). Fantasy is not a strict and clean parting with reality, however; there are things in the world of fantasy which are not necessarily impossible; they are merely strange, wonderful, marvellous or absurd, but perfectly possible. This fact makes it very difficult to distinguish between science fiction and fantasy; the question arises if one should really try

to make a distinction. In fact, it seems that SF, according to this and the above definitions, is merely a modern-day fantasy or myth; a myth which is not of the past, but from the future, although it must be said that there is a large market for works which are categorised as fantasies. In the old world there were fairies, witches, gods and ghosts, but these things fail regrettaby in the modern world, even though many people still take comfort from them. For people who are more scientifically oriented, but still need to fantasize, there is SF. The new god, science, makes up for the failures of the old in this genre where the hopes and fears of humans beings are incorporated. This is perhaps another justification for the opinion that science is not to be mocked - a justification, as will be seen, which is entirely ignored by Adams and Pratchett.

Of course SF is one of the genres in which fantasy plays a more than average role if one is to go by Hume's definition. SF is a departure from the real world through different created worlds, as already mentioned. Another departure from the real is things that happen in these worlds, such as eternal life - escape from mortality - through the magical advances of science.

The discussion of fantasy will be extended in chapter five.

iv

Comedy also is more closely related to fantasy than may have seemed the case before. Much comedy has to do with release from restraint; therefore it provides a valuable and harmless escape from the everyday tensions of the real

world. This may also contribute to its suitability for combination with a genre as filled with fantasy as SF, although in the recent past many SF writers have remained aloof from the mode perhaps because it seemed improper to laugh at something as awe-inspiring as science (Muller, 1970:146).

It is clear in the works of Adams and Pratchett that they have no reservations about mocking science and everything else. Adams writes comic science fiction to 'poke fun at nearly every one of the genre's popular conventions.' (Reilly, ed.Smith, 1986:2). Comedy is used by both these authors not only to mock a genre of literature, but also to make almost everything people take seriously laughable. However, as will be shown, this is not the only pupose of the authors' work. The most common devices used by Adams and Pratchett are comedy of character and comic style, which will be dealt with in later chapters. A chapter on laughter is also included. Although it does not go without saying that laughter accompanies all comedy, this is mostly the case with the comedy of the authors examined here. The purpose of their literature is twofold: firstly Adams and Pratchett intend to make the reader laugh, their second, and deeper intention is to make the reader think about his situation and that of the world he is living in.

v

Terry Pratchett has written many novels, all of which cannot be discussed fully here. I have chosen five from the list. Four of these have been chosen

because of the large role that comedy of character plays in the work of Pratchett. This is discussed more fully in Chapter V of this dissertation. Because characters are so important in the works of Terry Pratchett, I have based the reason for most of my selection on the characters in the novels. Novels that represent the most prominent or most interesting characters in the Discworld have been chosen.

Witches Abroad and Lords and Ladies have been chosen because the main characters, the witches, are the most prominent in the Discworld. Another reason for this selection is also that Lords and Ladies is the follow-up of Witches Abroad.

In Reaper Man Death, another character on the Discworld, plays a major role and is given some additional and more human characteristics.

The wizards, closely related to, but much misunderstood by the witches, are major characters in Eric. One wizard in particular, Rincewind, plays the main part here, together with a young demonologist. These characters are all elements of fantasy that Pratchett has used in his novels. All the wizards and other characters of the Unseen University are interesting to examine, as will be seen in Chapter V.

Good Omens, the only non-Discworld novel that is examined was written in conjunction with Neil Gaiman. It is interesting to compare this novel with the other Pratchett novels and in comparing it with Adams' trilogy, to keep in mind

that Gaiman also wrote a critcal work on the work of Adams.

In this dissertation it is my intention, through exploring and comparing the comic techniques of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett, to show how comedy has a valid role in SF/fantasy and how these genres themselves have merit in the academic world.

CHAPTER I

THE SUBJECT OF COMEDY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss what most writers of comedy choose to mock. This chapter will also show how Adams and Pratchett choose subjects to mock in their novels. The various subjects in the works of these authors suggest that SF and fantasy as genres have a much wider potential than is assumed by many authors and critics[1].

According to Carrigan (1981) the writer of comedy incorporates his own idea of normality into the comic work as he sees it in the world. This is also often true in SF and fantasy - the author's idea of what the world should be is sometimes very prominently used in the works of Pratchett and Adams. The idea of normality involves either characters, circumstances or indeed both in the comic work. Pratchett and Adams include both abnormal characters and unusual worlds in their works, for the most part. L.J. Potts (1948) defines the idea of norm as a standard of character and conduct. This standard is ever-present in the primary world. Generally accepted human values bring about a semblance of normality in the secondary worlds. The quality of the normal can also be brought about by sketching normal circumstances in which abnormal characters operate, or the other way around: strange circumstances with normal characters trying to cope with them. Adams and Pratchett handle the idea of normality

[1] The issue of the relationship between science fiction and fantasy will be dealt with more comprehensively in chapter five.

mostly through generally accepted human values. Apart from this they make their worlds strange through character and circumstance, but do include ordinary character types such as Arthur Dent and Magrat Garlick. In this respect both authors conform to one of the conventions of comic writing.

Good comedy, according to Adams (Gaiman, 1993:110), comes from the close observation of the world:

> 'The trick is to write about people. If you write about situations that people recognise then people will respond to it ... If you don't have the information then it isn't funny.'

Travel is recognised by most people and the hazards of this aspect of life are equally recognisable. In the typical Discworld novel, Witches Abroad, Terry Pratchett addresses travel hazards such as post cards, foreign food and foreign money. Nanny Ogg has trouble thinking of a message to put on her first post card home:

> 'Not for the first time in the history of the universe, someone for whom communication normally came as effortlessly as a dream was stuck for inspiration when faced with a few lines on the back of a card.' (P. 84)

The fact that the post cards never reach their destinations before the traveller does also occurs in the novel. The problem is termed 'traditional' by Pratchett.

The witches Granny Weatherwax and Magrat Garlic find it upsetting to realise

that they have eaten frog's legs - the traditional food in Genua, as a result of not understanding the words on the menu. Genua is a gentle mockery of all foreign countries, but mostly reminds one of France.

Another universal perception is foreign money, which, not being used in the traveller's own country, does not look valid, but rather like a species of Monopoly money. This is also the perception of the three travellers in the novel. This can be compared to the work of Adams with regard to the traveller Arthur Dent. Nothing at all is familiar to him and he feels displaced from all he knew before. The same sensation is experienced by Pratchett's characters, but since they are still on their own planet, it is experienced in a less intense way.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, which is mostly concerned with travel, is a trilogy, but consists of five parts. This is one of the jokes Douglas Adams includes in his work. To distinguish between the full trilogy and the first part of it, the first part will be referred to as The Guide. Adams uses as subjects for his comedy more things than can be discussed in a thesis of this length; thus only the major subjects have been chosen.

Subjects especially suited for comedy, says Feinberg (1967), and other critics mostly agree, are the grotesque, the devil and sex. Comedy is sometimes allied to fear. The fear of death or of the grotesque for example implies that the world is a hostile and sinister place; to laugh at these things which cause intense fear is the only way of escape.

In the minds of people in general, the devil has a negative connotation and is therefore unusual to associate with comedy. However, he is mentioned by J.Y.T. Greig (1923) as a subject especially suited for comedy. Greig justifies his view by attributing to Satan both repellent and attractive qualities. He can only be laughable when not completely terrifying; he also has to be slightly likeable. Pratchett portrays him in this way in both Eric and Good Omens.

In the last mentioned novel Pratchett portrays Satanists as a group of people who are not different from anyone else. They merely have a misconception of the truth. This is a technique he uses to make the idea of the devil less shocking for the reader. The enthusiastic Satanists use every 'evil' sign that they can find as part of their rituals, and some things they do are enough to shock even devils. However, real Satanism is ironically closer to conventional religion than is expected:

> 'Besides, some of the old-style Satanists tended, in fact, to be quite nice people. They mouthed the words and went through the motions, just like the people they thought of as their opposite numbers, and then went home and lived lives of mild unassuming mediocrity for the rest of the week with never an unusually evil thought in their heads.' (P. 48)

Pratchett addresses the question of evil. It is not a certainty what evil is. According to Pratchett's view in the novel Satanists are mostly not evil, and evil is

not the devil's doing. If evil occurs, it is man's doing. Pratchett continues with the view that despite this fact, man is mostly not evil either:

> 'They just get carried away by new ideas, like dressing up in jack boots and shooting people, or dressing up in white sheets and lynching people, or dressing up in tie-dye jeans and playing guitars at people.' (P. 32)

Both sexual desire and a strong resistance to it are represented by the devil. In Good Omens one of the main characters, Crowley, the devil, is presented in a likeable way. He visits Earth as the representative of Satan, here pictured as one of the powers only looking after its own interest, and Crowley, together with God's representative, Aziraphale, rather sees matters from man's perspective. Crowley is also more physically attractive than Aziraphale, in keeping with the idea that the devil is closely associated with sexual desire.

Pratchett comments on modern standards by showing that the above characters are also not certain of the nature of evil. People in the modern world seem to be sure that they are doing right, when it is often clear to equally uncertain observers that they are misguided. Crowley and Aziraphale are uncertain whether traffic wardens are an idea from Heaven or Hell. The answer is left for the reader to decide when the argument comes to a point where Crowley talks to Aziraphale about the Antichrist baby's nature:

> "'*Potentially* evil. Potentially good, too, I suppose. Just this

> huge powerful *potentiality*, waiting to be shaped," said Crowley. He shrugged. "Anyway, why're we talking about this good and evil? They're just names for sides. *We* know that.'" (P. 59)

Devils themselves also, according to Crowley, are not strictly evil. They are compared to the Earthly representative of evil, according to some, the tax inspector. He is unpopular, but necessary for the infrastructure. Angels are again not portrayed as completely good when they are said to enjoy the pain they have to deal out to the ungodly.

The fear of death is addressed by Pratchett in Witches Abroad in the form of the voodoo woman, Mrs. Gogol who turns the deceased into zombies. Granny Weatherwax, the witch, feels that people who just kill are less evil, because they do not give the dead work to do afterwards. In this way Pratchett portrays death in an almost inviting and pleasant manner, suggesting that one should rest after death. It is something to look forward to.

Sex in literature, including SF and fantasy, is more prominent now than it ever has been before. Most critics include this subject when speculating about the subject of comedy. Greig (1923), Machtovec (1988) and Corrigan (1981), for example mention it in their critical works. Sex is also an increasingly popular theme in science fiction and fantasy. Sex creates good narrative interest and causes pleasure, a fact that Adams and Pratchett make the most of. Using sex

as a source of laughter creates a vent to frustration of repressed sexual desire (Machtovec, 1988). Laughter is preceded by the reader's enjoyment of the situation. This has been so for a long time - in the Middle Ages women have been mocked frequently in literature. Adams and Pratchett treat sex as the most natural of human relationships; it is never made to seem absurd or stupid, but is shown as something light and enjoyable, a tribute to human existence. The authors follow the convention of including sex in their works of comedy in a fairly prominent way. The subject is often used in their work to bring about laughter and the easy style in which they address it gives the reader freedom to dispense with sexual repression and laugh at what he finds funny.

Sex is a favourite subject of the comic writer. Ford Prefect is said to play sex games to lose in The Guide. One particular such game involves the strongest alcoholic drink in the galaxy and the loser has to perform an 'obscenely biological forfeit' (p. 24 of The Guide). Ford is an alien who enjoys the obscene and drinking - something many readers will easily identify with. Prefect is less flashy than Zaphod Beeblebrox, but is equally easy to forgive for minor misbehaviours. He enjoys having fun in the same way that Beeblebrox does, although on a smaller scale.

The Guide does not contain many references to sex. They are slightly more frequent and explicit in the second part of the trilogy The Restaurant at the End of the Universe, and occur most frequently in So Long and Thanks for all the

Fish, the fourth part. In the last-mentioned, this is the case because Arthur Dent finds love. He meets a girl with whom he has strange and frequent sex. It is noteworthy that reference to and scenes of sex in Adams' trilogy are always rather suggested than explicitly sketched. These references to sex are never offensive, but sometimes causes laughter. Most of the action is left to the reader's imagination.

In The Restaurant at the End of the Universe, the second part of Adams' trilogy which concerns a restaurant at the end of time, sex is again used as a subject for comedy. Diners travel through time to reach it and are presented with the spectacular show of the universe ending. The host of this restaurant is described as a tall, thin man, who seems slightly spooky. The subject of sex is connected with the grotesque in this case, rather than enjoyment, when the reader is told about the host's hands:

> 'They lay lightly along the folds of the curtain and gave the impression that if he didn't watch them like a hawk they would crawl away of their own accord and do something unspeakable in a corner.' (P. 225)

Although the idea above is distasteful, it is also expressed in such a way as to be laughable.

A less grotesque reference to sex can be found in Ford's Guide, included with a section on the Universe. It mentions that there is a lot of sex in the

Universe because of the general lack of other things to do. Secondly, it states that most of the Guide is concerned with sex as well. This implies that sex is a good cure for boredom, and it is enjoyable enough to include in most of a guide for hitchhikers. There are two extreme ways in which sex can be regarded in modern society. Firstly there is the very serious, very moral way of looking at it and secondly there is the view depicted in Adams' work. The subject can be taken very lightly by the media, for example soap operas, where sex is regarded in the same light as breathing. A third view which regards sex as the genuine manifestation of love, which it was initially meant for, is rarely found. Adams achieves a comic effect through regarding this element of human nature as something laughable.

In Witches Abroad by Pratchett the most sexually inclined of the witches is Nanny Ogg, who turns the word 'cock' into a pun upon seeing Mrs. Gogol's cockerel:

> '"My word," she said, taken aback. "That's the biggest cock
> I've ever seen, and I've seen a few in my time."' (P. 174)

Her obsession with and enjoyment of sex is continued in her relationship with Casanunda the dwarf. Casanunda is allegedly the greatest lover on the Discworld. Nanny is also aroused by the idea of the length of the tongue of a man who is a frog by day and a man by night. She is the embodiment of sexual and carnal pleasure. Nanny Ogg does not restrain herself in any aspect of enjoying life. When Greebo, her cat is temporarily turned into a man, she is

impressed with how well he is equipped, since he is not wearing clothes in the event. Greebo is later on also a favourite among women, as he is among female cats when a feline.

Where Nanny Ogg is perhaps excessively sexual, Magrat is her opposite in terms of sex. She is timid and very restrained. Her closest encounter with sex is the Woman's Lib movement. She encourages the Prince's bride-to-be to emancipate herself:

> 'What you want to do is make a career of your own...You want to be your own woman. You want to emancipate yourself.' (P. 188)

What Magrat lacks in sexual experience and enjoyment, she makes up for in enthusiasm and open-mindedness. She is interested in martial arts and sexual equality. When she wears trousers on their journey it is much to Granny's shock and Nanny's amusement. Pratchett sketches two characters on opposite sides of sexual prowess. This contrast brings about laughter, as both characters are extreme in their views and actions.

Vice is also enjoyed mostly by those who enjoy sex. In the form of moral delinquency, drunkenness, thieving, lying, cowardice, hypocrisy and vanity, vice also is not taken very seriously by the comic writer, says Greig (1923). If the comic work reverts more to the satirical, the above vices may be made to seem more serious and be condemned by the author. However, when appearing less

aggressively in the subject, vice may be very laughable. Laughter in this case arises from the reader's love or liking of the individual committing the vice. Any bad habit can be forgiven when the person possessing it is liked.

This is the case with Zaphod Beeblebrox and Nanny Ogg. Ford Prefect also enjoys vice; especially drinking. The reader enjoys what he does in his drunken state. In The Restaurant at the End of the Universe Ford, visiting this restaurant with the rest of the main characters, meets an old friend and rock star, Hotblack Desiato, after drinking too much. The rock star makes no response to Ford's conversation and greetings, but Ford carries on nevertheless. He is too drunk to make proper sense of what is going on, for example that the rock star is actually dead and incapable of talking. He is also too drunk to walk in a straight line in Chapter 18 of Restaurant. The main reception foyer of the restaurant is empty, but Ford weaves his way through it regardless. Ford's vice is an example of the harmless kind; he also is a very likeable character and the reader enjoys laughing at his antics. Adams follows a convention of comedy through using drunkenness as a comic device.

Reminiscent of Ford's episode is the vice of Aziraphale and Crowley in Good Omens, placed in the main roles by Pratchett. The angel and the devil are favourite characters because of their understanding of the human condition. They, like Ford, enjoy indulging in alcohol occasionally. Finding out that the Antichrist has been placed on Earth sets them to drinking for three solid hours

before having the conversation of which the following is a part:

> "'The point is," said Crowley, "the point is. The point is." He tried to focus on Aziraphale. "The point *is*," he said, trying to think of a point. "The point I'm trying to make," he said, "is the dolphins. That's my point."
>
> "Kind of fish," said Aziraphale.
>
> "Nononono," said Crowley, shaking a finger.' (P. 54)

The reader reacts to both characters with love. Which side of religion they represent makes no difference. They love living on Earth, much as many people do and try to save the Earth from destruction by religious forces. Their vice is easily forgiven.

Hotblack Desiato, Ford's friend, is the leader of the loudest band in the Universe, Disaster Area. He is used by Adams to satirise the pop music industry. Disaster Area's music is the loudest noise of any kind (see Chapter 17 of Restaurant). In Chapter 21 the temperament of musicians is mocked when the lead singer locks himself in a bath room believing that he is a fish. The base player machine guns his bedroom and the drummer has found a small stone that would be his friend on a distant planet.

Institutions and people associated with them are sometimes known for certain vices which are more serious than the vice of Zaphod, for example. Therefore they are often satirisied. What sets satire apart from a lighter kind of

comedy is the fact that it includes serious personal and social criticism (Highet, 1962:233). Sutherland (1967) and Feinberg (1967) add to this the harsh view that the satirist aims to destroy the subject of his work without attempting to build it up again. He is not able to accept or tolerate; he protests (Potts , 1948). In the words of Feinberg (1967:256):

> 'often the satirist is telling us two truths: (1) there are many things wrong in the world and (2) nothing much is likely to be done about it.'

Douglas Adams uses the subject of men and institutions in many forms to both satirise and give a comic view of the world.

Philosophy is an institution which, due to man's love of speculation, has been in existence for a long time. When the hyper-intelligent pan-dimensional beings in Chapter 25 of The Guide decide to find out the answer to everything, the philosophers, sages and Luminaries become upset. The reason for this is that people will no longer need their speculative views if they know the answer to everything (or, life, the universe and everything, as stated by Adams.). The institution is in mortal danger, and its members protest by striking. This is a frequent occurrence in the modern world, and Adams gives an absurd view of it. Vroomfondel, one of the striking philosophers, demands one thing after another without being certain of what it is he wants. This is reminiscent of some political occurrences in the world, which are here reduced to absurdity by Adams. The

author uses satiric exaggeration - a philospher, who is supposed to be an expert in logical and disciplined thinking is not sure what he wants. Through this episode, Adams is also using a frequent theme in SF. Speculation about the future, or interspace travel, gives rise to various philosophical ideas. Adams is among many SF authors who discuss

> '...issues of moral and political philosophy. In every image of the future, questions of how human beings should live are overtly or covertly at stake.' (B.S., Gunn, 1988:348)

In the above incident, although it does not seem very serious, there is the underlying question of whether man should really be looking for an answer to everything. The outcome of the event seems to confirm this. The answer is a meaningless 42; the question is needed before it can make sense. Perhaps Adams also makes a point here about the answers generally found in life - there are no truly meaningful answers.

Pratchett reduces the business institution to laughter as well as subjecting it to serious criticism in Good Omens. This institution, like philosophy, has been in existence for a long time and therefore serves as a good subject for comedy. Matthew Hopkins, a witchfinder in Pratchett's novel, had a mind for business in the seventeenth century. In order to turn a profit, the number of witches he had to find had become immense. Because the village councils also had a mind for business this man was rapidly becoming unpopular with them and ironically ...

> '...he was himself hanged as a witch by an East Anglian

> village who had sensibly realised that they could cut their overheads by eliminating the middleman.' (P. 167)

Pratchett is here suggesting that the business institution is a harsh one, not caring about feelings or indeed lives, but only about profit and loss.

This institution is further mocked by Pratchett in the form of Crowley, the devil who has bought a computer. The company sells him a computer with the intelligence of a retarded ant. Pratchett shows the warranty in a footnote on page 240:

> '... if the machine 1) didn't work, 2) didn't do what the expensive advertisements said, 3) electrocuted the immediate neighbourhood, 4) and in fact failed entirely to be inside the expensive box when you opened it, this was expressly, absolutely, implicitly and in no event the fault or responsibility of the manufacturer, that the purchaser should consider himself lucky to be allowed to give his money to the manufacturer...'

Crowley is so impressed by this that he feels his partners in Hell could learn much from the way that business is conducted on Earth and he sends them the warranty with instructions to learn.

An institution equal to the above in terms of harshness, is the police, also reduced to absurdity by Adams. Arthur Dent, the main character in the

Hitchhiker trilogy in whose life a number of very improbable disasters occur, visits an alien planet, Magrathea, for the first time in Chapter 32. Here Arthur and his companions find two policemen, who claim to be sensitive while shooting at them. They also claim that this is something which they do not wish to do. The issue of needless police violence is severely and savagely satirised. The hypocrisy of the policemen is evident throughout the exchange and is especially so when they give the group a choice between a 'bit of beating-up' or the entire planet together with some others being blown up. When they are asked the reason for this by Trillian, their response is:

> 'Because there are some things you have to do even if you are an enlightened liberal cop who knows all about sensitivity and everything!' (p145)

The above contradiction satirises the hypocrisy of not only the police, but of most people.

In Good Omens Pratchett's portrayal of the army is reminiscent of the police in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. The soldier at the gate of the American Airbase is not aware that a faggot can be something other than a less than civilised term for a homosexual. He is therefore impressed by an organisation card that means nothing. When he hears that 'faggots' are burned by Anathema and Newt his response is:

> 'The guard's face broadened into a grin. And they'd told him England was soft. "Right on!" he said.' (P. 331)

The general lack of intelligence and compassion shown by most institutions is again pointed out by Pratchett. This discourages trust in them, as their own actions frequently do.

The press is closely related to the police and the army in terms of stupidity or ignorance. They are depicted by Adams as a heartless life-form. On page 41 of The Guide they have no interest in hearing Zaphod Beeblebrox, the new president, greeting his people. They have no interest in the human side of any story; they only wish to get the best quote or the best story which would further their career. Adams uses the term 'creatures of the press', which is meant literally, but could be applied to any human members of the press as well. The lengths to which most of them will go to get a good story can be termed almost sub-human.

Politics is also an institution which mostly serves its own interests. Zaphod Beeblebrox is here the perfect embodiment. Because of certain characteristics reminiscent of many political leaders of this world, Beeblebrox is a good candidate for president:

> 'Zaphod Beeblebrox, adventurer, ex-hippie, good timer (crook? Quite possibly), manic self-publicist, terribly bad at personal relationships, often thought to be completely out to lunch.' (p38)

Beeblebrox is good at presidency not because the job is to wield power, but to 'attract attention away from it' (p.39). Because of his general flash and extra surgically implanted limbs, as well as his capacity for having fun, this is easy to achieve. Adams makes a point here about politicians; their power lies not in their showmanship, but in the decisions made behind closed doors. In politics, what is seen is often not what should be believed.

Mr. L. Prosser is the servant of a political institution, the town council of Arthur Dent's home town. Arthur's home is to be bulldozed because of a bypass to be built through the area. This is a tragedy that has overtaken many people, one of the things that would not normally be subjected to comedy the way that Adams does it. Arthur's personal tragedy is mocked. The absurdity of the institution and its failure to understand the human factor is embodied in its servant. Prosser is a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, but...

> 'He was by no means a great warrior: in fact he was a nervous, worried man. Today he was particularly nervous and worried because something had gone seriously wrong with his job - which was to see that Arthur Dent's house got cleared out of the way before the day was out.' (P. 18)

What happens to Arthur Dent's home is the same thing that happens to his planet - the senseless destruction of something to give way to something unnecessary.

To both satirist and reader satire is a release of otherwise bottled-up

feelings. It is a moralistic pleasure, which comes from reducing corrupt forces to mockery, even if nothing can be done about corruption in the world. As in the above cases, all dogma concerning men and institutions raises scepticism in the satirist's mind (Feinberg 1967). Men (such as Beeblebrox and the Press) choose ethics and philosophy to justify their corrupt ways instead of trying to improve the standard of living. Adams' presentation of policemen and politicians is highly satirical. In the words of Heilman (1978:182):

> 'Three familiar ways of life - the political, the theatrical, the medical - provide exemplary comic materials.'

Satire is critical of man's falling short in some way. Pretence and hypocrisy are part of daily life and this hypocrisy is practised to a greater or lesser extent by all who like to believe what is consoling, that is, man is motivated by good instead of evil. This belief is not true and holds no merit for the satirist who sometimes enjoys focusing on man's weaker points.

In Pratchett's Good Omens politics is also mocked. Pratchett does this in terms of religion, the central theme of the novel. Aziraphale, the angel asks the Voice of God about the Great Plan for the world:

> 'He (Aziraphale) spoke politely and respectfully, but with the air of one who has just asked an unwelcome question at a political meeting and won't go away until he gets an answer.' (P. 352)

Pratchett mocks the hypocrisy of politicians. They frequently hide something and

become uncomfortable when asked about it by the press.

A political institution with much to hide is the British Royal Family. They also become the subject of Pratchett's humour. He shows the attitude of Mr. Young, the father of the Antichrist, towards the Royals on page 34 of Good Omens:

> 'Yes, you knew where you were with the Royals. The proper ones, of course, who pulled their weight in the he hand-waving and bridge-opening department. Not the ones who went to discos all night long and were sick all over the paparazzi.'

The British tendency to hold strong and fast to accepted values is under the spotlight. They feel that there is only one right way to do things, the same as many people over the world do. There are many set ideas about how the Royal Family should behave, which new and young members do not always adhere to. Pratchett satirises the tendency of people to find fault in others and their behaviour.

An institution closely related to politics is tax. This institution is subject to the same hypocrisy and blindness as politics, as Pratchett shows. Aziraphale is a good, honest angel and incapable of things that are strictly wrong. He therefore is unable to cheat on his tax returns. As a result of the extreme accuracy of Aziraphale's returns, the authorities have inspected him five times, suspecting that he is in fact cheating. The tax authorities do not trust the honest, but let the

wicked get away with cheating, revealing their hypocrisy. Although this hypocrisy does not seem revealed to themselves as much as to everyone else.

Greig's (1923) view is that subjects that are seldom found in comedy include great disasters, natural or otherwise, such as earth quakes or hunger, and real human pain brought on by these disasters. He implies that it is inappropriate for comedy to use such things as a subject for laughter. This is also the view of Swabey (Prinsloo, 1970). Adams and Pratchett do not pay much attention to such conventions in their novels, and human pain is sometimes very severe in their novels. Laughter, however, is used as an antidote for this pain.

Some of the less conventional subjects that Adams ridicules are the planet Earth, science, evolution and religion. Conventionally these are regarded very seriously by most readers.

Adams begins his trilogy in the following way:

> 'Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the western spiral arm of the galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun.' (P. 15)

Man's existence is portrayed as being small and senseless through this sketch of the Earth's sun, showing the alien point of view. The alien point of view furthermore is that man's existence is also extremely dull. Ford Prefect has been stranded on Earth for fifteen years when the reader first meets him. Adams reduces man's only habitat to insignificance through Ford's disgust and

unhappiness with it. Later the reader learns that his comprehensive entry to the Guide has been cut to the words 'Mostly harmless', which is all the editors of the Guide feel that aliens should know about the planet. Though some shock may result from this depiction of our planet, the reader also experiences pity for Ford and a certain thankfulness at not being in his predicament. The reader knows of no other place to live than Earth, whereas Ford has seen many more exciting places. Parts of the Earth are also depicted as dull through the viewpoint of an Earthling, Trillian. She thinks of Magrathea as squalid and compares it to a London Underground, which seems to her the most squalid place on Earth. Even Arthur Dent becomes disenchanted with the first alien planet he visits, because all there is to see on the surface is sand. Another point that counts against Earth is its poetry. The worst of all poetry comes from Earth, whereas the third worst is used to torture prisoners on Vogon ships. According to Adams people have died from hearing the second worst. These extremes are designed to give readers a very precise idea of exactly how bad the worst poetry must be. From Adams' depiction, the conclusion seems to be that Earth must be the worst place in the universe to live. This view of the world as portrayed by Adams is a very negative one, but at the same time very laughable. The reader is taught to identify rather with the alien point of view and to agree that Earth is uninteresting and squalid. Adams reduces all that is important to man to insignificance and makes man laugh at it.

Subjects also taken very seriously by Earthlings are science and technology.

These have consequently not often been used as subjects by comic writers. Science has become a sort of god to modern man and is treated with a certain reverence and respect, as a religion. This is a point made by Muller (1970:146). Adams irreverrentially implies that science and technology are responsible for problems rather than solutions. In the continual search for finer technology the opposite effect from the desired is more often than not achieved. An example is the radio described in Chapter 12 of The Guide. Technology has so far advanced that buttons, dials and touch sensitive controls have been out-moded by a simple wave of the hand in the direction of the radio. The problem created by this is total lack of movement is required if one wishes to listen to the same station for any length of time, since the slightest stir can result in the change of station.

Another example of machines complicating rather than simplifying man's life is the Nutri-Matic machine, which is designed to make tea. The tea should be the best-tasting to the particular drinker, since an analysis of his exact tastes is executed. However, the result is something 'almost entirely unlike tea', to use Adams' wording. This is another problem created by technology that could have been prevented.

Computers, according to Adams, fall into the same category as the above. The computer of the space ship, the 'Heart of Gold', has been programmed with the power of speech. This is a fact that is supposed to make the lives of its users

easier, saving them a lot of typing, programming and reading. However, Eddie (the computer) has an extremely irritating and cheerful voice, as well as disposition. The crew find him hard and sometimes impossible to cope with.

The scientist, inventor of all the above, is included in Douglas Adams' comedy of science. The creation of the 'Heart of Gold's' improbability drive is described in Chapter 10. The improbability drive is discovered accidentally by a student and the reaction of respectable physicists is not favourable. They show their human nature rather than their scientific prowess by assaulting the student who startled himself by making the discovery:

> 'It startled him even more when just after he was awarded the Galactic Institute's Prize for Extreme Cleverness he got lynched by a rampaging mob of respectable physicists who had finally realised that the one thing they really couldn't stand was a smartass.' (P. 70).

The hypocrisy of the scientists who are more interested in fame than true scientific progress, is reminiscent of that of the police, also satirised by Adams.

In The Guide Adams seems negatively inclined towards science - it is a burden to human kind. Problems are created instead of solutions, and in the attempts to solve the created problems, the problems accumulate. The process chain-reacts.

Science and the Universe are again mocked in The Restaurant at the End of

the Universe. Science and logic are amusingly combined in Chapter 1: as a result of having fifty arms each, the small blue creatures of the Jatravartids are the only race in history to have developed aerosol deodorant before inventing the wheel.

The fact that Science often causes more problems than it solves becomes clear again when Arthur thinks about forms of transport in Chapter 22 of Restaurant. He has just finished travelling through 'matter transference beams', a Star Trek type travelling which involves disassembling the traveller's atoms and putting them back together again. The result of this is a very bad hangover. Arthur muses about transport on Earth:

> '... the problem had been with cars. The disadvantages involved in pulling lots of black sticky slime from out of the ground where it had been safely hidden out of harm's way, turning it into tar to cover the land with , smoke to fill the air with and pouring the rest into the sea, all seemed to outweigh the advantages of being able to get more quickly from one place to another - particularly when the place you arrived at had probably become, as a result of this, very similar to the place you had left, i.e. covered with tar, full of smoke and short of fish.' (P. 257)

The environment is a serious issue. Adams here satirises what man is doing to the Earth through developing new technology in order to travel faster. He makes

the reader more aware of the problem.

Science is referred to by Pratchett in Witches Abroad. The author mentions the problem of scientists who have become interested in the chaos of the universe rather than explaining things in a logical and rational way. There are no more laws discovered that could fulfil this function. Instead there is the fact that ...

> '... instead of getting on with proper science scientists suddenly went around saying how impossible it was to know anything, and that there wasn't really anything you could call reality to know anything about, and how all this was tremendously exciting, and incidentally did you know there were possibly all these little universes all over the place but no-one can see them because they are all curved in on themselves?' (p. 7-8)

Science is treated with reverence as a god would be treated with reverence by people. It follows that God would equally or even less frequently be subjected to comedy, which is often a demeaning form of literature. Adams, however, refers occasionally to religion and God himself. One such reference worth pointing out is the case of the Babel fish. This fish lives in the ear and makes all languages instantly understandable to the carrier. In The Guide an argument between God and man involving the Babel fish ensues. Man is supposed to

prove the non-existence of God. God's argument is that if his existence is proved faith would be denied without which he would not exist. Upon this Man argues that a wonder such as the Babel fish could not have evolved by accident and proves thereby that God does exist. Through God's own argument he 'vanishes in a puff of logic.' (p52).

Although seemingly disrespectful to God, or even blasphemous, the above rather proves the absurdity of man and theological discussion than that of God. Ironically after this incident man goes on to prove that black is white and is killed in the process. Adams compares the stupidity of proving that God does not exist with that of proving black white. His intention is to make readers laugh at man rather than at God.

A further reference to religion is found in Chapter 25. The computer Deep Thought, the biggest in the universe prophesies about Earth in messianic tones:

> '... there must one day come a computer whose merest operational parameters I am not worthy to calculate, but which it will be my fate eventually to design.' (P. 121)

This is reminiscent of the words of John the Baptist in the Gospel of John, Chapter 1 verse 27, predicting the coming of Christ, greater than he, whose sandal laces he was not worthy to loosen. This, again, may seem like blasphemy, but amid absurdity, Adams still succeeds in making man, rather than God, look foolish. All foolish acts are man's. Deep Thought predicts the future,

but it is man who wants to know the answer to everything and tries to prove that which needs no proof. When the day of the answer comes, it is man who exaggerates the event to an absurd party and, as many times before, man is disappointed with the answer.

Evolution can be regarded as an aspect of religion, since it has been locked in argument with religion and many believe that evolution has happened at the hands of God (as seen with the Babel fish above). Therefore Adams' reference to the 'forces of evolution' can be interpreted as a godly or religious force. These forces, upon first seeing the Vogons, the ugliest alien race, had simply...

> 'turned aside in disgust and written them off as an ugly and unfortunate mistake.' (p43)

Adams involves God in mockery, but it is man who ends up as the subject of laughter.

Pratchett has made religion the subject of his novel in Good Omens, written in conjunction with Neil Gaiman. The end of the world in terms of religion has been used as a theme in many science fiction works, but few authors have dared to laugh at it. Pratchett ignores this convention and makes religion the central theme in a comedy of science. Pratchett's theme is worked out in the form of a fight between good and evil, and thus combines an unusual subject (religion) with a favourite subject of comedy (the devil). Crowley sends reports to Hell and Aziraphale reports to Heaven. They meet after the first sin of Adam and Eve,

discussing what has happened. Aziraphale defends his side when Crowley cannot understand how the knowledge of good and evil can be bad:

> "'It must *be* bad," reasoned Aziraphale, in the slightly concerned tones of one who can't see it either, and is worrying about it, "otherwise *you* wouldn't have been involved.'" (P. 9)

The above knowledge seems to have gone awry, since man no longer seems clear on what good and evil are. For example, religious hypocrisy is practised by many who believe in good. One of the human characters in Pratchett's novel, Marvin O. Bagman, is an example of unknowing religious hypocrisy. He is a television evangelist and writes songs with titles such as 'Happy Mister Jesus' and 'Jesus, Can I Come And Stay At Your Place?'. The album containing the songs goes by the title of 'Jesus is my Buddy'. In Pratchett's words, when Marvin got religion, he got ...

> '... the kind that involves having your own TV network and getting people to send you money.' (P. 267)

In the past his healing ceremonies involved actors, but he has renewed his techniques and at present only proclaims healings that he has supposedly brought about over TV signals. The fact that he really believes in what he is doing shows his ignorance; the reader, however, is fully aware of his hypocrisy, although it is relatively harmless. In the eyes of some, for example most readers, he is a wrongdoer, but he believes that he knows the difference between right

and wrong.

Newt Pulsifer, another human character in Good Omens, is equally hypocritical and equally ignorant of the fact. He is a witchfinder, who will not believe in anything before having spoken to it or him in person, but he does believe that he has the knowledge of good and evil. Mr. R.P. Tyler, believes the same thing while he writes letters to the newspaper complaining about the state of the world and finding everybody but himself at fault. These characters are not quite as harmless and much less likeable than the above Marvin. Pratchett devotes a footnote to Mr. Tyler:

> 'He did not have a television. Or as his wife put it, "Ronald wouldn't have one of those things in the house, would you, Ronald?" and he always agreed, although secretly he would have liked to have seen some of the smut and filth and violence that the National Viewers and Listeners Association complained of.' (P. 317)

This seems to be a forced hypocrisy on the part of Mr. Tyler, but is nevertheless ignorant, and in the manner of most hypocrites, he has little power to change his behaviour.

There are relatively few references to God and Satan, the inventors of the knowledge of good and evil themselves in Good Omens. When God is referred to, it occurs from the point of view of his creatures - angels, devils or humans,

who are all equally confused when it comes to his plan for the world. God's mysterious ways are strikingly compared with a poker game on page 17:

> '... He plays an ineffable game of His own devising, which might be compared, from the perspective of any of the other players, to being involved in an obscure and complex version of poker in a pitch-dark room, with blank cards, for infinite stakes, with a Dealer who won't tell you the rules, and who smiles all the time.'

God is also referred to in terms of the fact that He is unreachable. People would be surprised to receive a verbal answer when praying to him. Newt, the witchfinder, would like a few words with him before believing, knowing that it will probably not happen.

Satan is equally unreachable. When the world is about to come to an end in the novel, Satan's representative, Beelzebub, appears together with the Metatron, Voice of God, to ensure that the world does in fact come to an end. The entities do not appear themselves, and never make concrete personal contact with their creatures; they just send representatives, both of whom are furious when all does not go according to plan. When the world does not end, everybody but the representatives of God and Satan is joyous. Aziraphale and Crowley, and even the Antichrist child, Adam, wish to enjoy the world and its pleasures, rather than serve a supernatural, religious cause.

The central question in the novel is a religious one - the question of what is

right and wrong. Pratchett's answer to this is that nobody knows, even though Adam and Eve did eat from a tree that was supposed to provide this knowledge. The question is summarised in Crowley's view:

> '... why make people inquisitive, and then put some forbidden fruit where they can see it with a big neon finger flashing on and off saying "THIS IS IT"?' (p. 373)

God's Plan and creation are seen in a new light in this novel - Crowley's argument makes sense, it has to be conceded. However, the novel is also about man's inability to understand life and religion, and about his desperate attempt to make sense of it. Pratchett never makes blasphemous jokes or statements; his attitude is simply to wonder together with the reader. One might argue that disrespect is shown towards God through the character Marvin O. Bagman, but this character honestly means well and is not aware of any disrespect. Respect for God remains throughout the novel, even if everything does not work out according to Plan. The absurdity is not God, but man and supernatural servants from both the light and the dark side. This light-hearted view of religion is a relief from the serious perspective that is usually taken with regard to the subject. Everyone believes that his view is the correct one; it seldom is.

Aspects of the arts that are taken seriously are literature and also grammar. In chapter 4 of The Restaurant at the End of the Universe Adams mocks what people like to read. Some of the titles of best-sellers are given: 'Life Begins at Five Hundred and Fifty', 'Everything You Never Wanted to Know About Sex but

were Forced to Find Out', etc. The books found on best seller lists are often ridiculous and mostly unnecessary, although it is obvious that people like to read and write them. Adams is less satirical here - he uses light comedy to mock something usually taken seriously.

Structural linguistics is also subjected to light enjoyment in Chapter 24 of Restaurant. 'Gin and Tonic' is spelled in every different way possible here. The name of the drink is spelled differently in order to signify its diversity on different planets. Structural linguists disagree about why the word has been invented before the planets in question had any contact with each other. In the tradition of many disciplines, a lot of problems are caused between young and old structural linguists in this regard.

The aesthetic value of language also brings disagreement between old and new schools of thought, according to Adams. In Chapter 6 of Restaurant the use of the word 'for' in Ford's Guide in stead of 'of' results in tourists being eaten by monsters on the planet Traal (p. 178). The word is not changed because a qualified poet testifies that beauty is truth and truth beauty. The word 'for' is more aesthetically pleasing than 'of' and Life itself is accused of being neither beautiful nor true. Life and the sanctity thereof are obviously not taken very seriously by those who are not directly affected by the above disaster. This situation is often true in the world of today and is satirised by Adams. The sanctity of life is not taken seriously by anyone who is not directly involved in the

loss of it. People in charge of life-threatening situations often rather have their own safety and glory in mind than the safety of those in danger.

Satire is involved here, but with more success than in the cases of Small Gods and Mostly Harmless. It has been mentioned before that the reason for this is that the favourite character, Brutha in the first-mentioned novel by Pratchett is in danger of real harm. Pratchett criticises religion and what is sometimes done in the name of God severely. Another serious problem that Pratchett satirises in many of his novels is racism. In Witches Abroad he does not satirise as much as lightly mock members of mostly the older generation who find change hard to cope with. This is a situation especially found in South Africa today. Granny Weatherwax is the oldest of the three witches and has set ideas about everything. One of her ideas is ...

> '... if more trolls stopped wearing suits and walking upright, and went back to living under bridges and jumping out and eating people as nature intended, then the world would be a happier place.' (P. 51-52)

Racism itself is satirised:

> 'Racism was not a problem on the Discworld, because - what with trolls and dwarfs and so on - speciesism was more interesting. Black and white lived in perfect harmony and ganged up on green. (Footnote: p. 167)

The above indicates that racism is a universal issue and remains true to human

nature, wherever one travels.

In Mostly Harmless by Adams there is the sense of loss and regret which overlies the comic tone. The absence of Beeblebrox and the unfortunate ending of this novel also make it less enjoyable than the previous parts of the Hitchhiker trilogy. Other elements that may contribute to this fact are the real problems of Trillian with her career, her regret and her child, and the subsequent problems of Arthur, the father of the same child. The essence of the novel is not having fun; it gives the impression that life consists only of problems and when everything seems to be working out, it ends. The novel is more realistic, in this sense than the other four of the trilogy.

CHAPTER II

THE STYLE USED IN COMEDY

My aim in this chapter is to illustrate the variety of elements associated with comic technique that can be found in the works of Adams and Pratchett.

According to S. Leacock (1937), comedy is an artistic expression of the incongruities of life. This idea is also used by Prinsloo (1970:10) in his thesis. Hazlitt says that amusement is caused by the difference between what is and what should be. Incongruity, according to Prinsloo, is at the heart of comedy.

Leacock also observes that comedy can cause exaltation in the form of triumph over another person, or a situation knocked out of shape. Oddities of speech, such as wit or play on words can be seen as incongruity in language use – one of the stylistic elements favoured by Adams and Pratchett. This incongruity can lead to a creation of parody with regard to literary style. Some tools in language that Pratchett and Adams use to create the above effect are repetition, puns, expression and exaggeration. The third part of Adams' Hitchhiker trilogy, Life, the Universe and Everything, contains many examples of a play on words. For the purpose of this dissertation three categories have been distinquished – strange expressions, individual words used in an unusual way, and repetition of words with humorous effect.

The first category, expressions, occurs for example when Adams describes Arthur Dent's face when seeing Ford again for the first time after two years on

prehistoric Earth:

> 'Arthur's brain somersaulted.
>
> His jaw did press-ups.
>
> ...
>
> his eyes did cartwheels.'(p. 361)

His head is said to be 'working out'. Arthur's surprise is described in a way which reflects the strangeness of his situation.

When circumstances turn bad, Adams uses the expression 'home and vigorously towelling ourselves off', instead of the more normal 'home and dry', in order to give the reader an exact idea of how hopeless the situation is.

In describing another conversational effort between Arthur and Ford, Adams uses the image of a puppy:

> 'Arthur experienced that dull throbbing sensation just behind the temples which was a hallmark of so many of his conversations with Ford. His brain lurked like a frightened puppy in its kennel.'

In Chapter 12, where the lives of everyone in the universe are at stake, Slartibarfast's breathing is described as 'sepulchral', after which it intensifies to 'someone in Hades with bronchitis' (p.367). Again in Chapter 26 he ...

> '... furrowed his brow until you could grow some of the smaller root vegetables in it.' (p. 423)

Agrajag, being a strange character himself, is also described in strange terms. In Chapter 189 of Life, the Universe and Everything, the reader learns that each

of Agrajag's lives has been unwittingly cut short by Arthur each time that he (Agrajag) has tried to live it. This has given him enough reason to build a Cathedral of Hate, which is described as 'the product of a mind that was not merely twisted, but actually sprained.' (p. 391)

The unusual and apt use of individual words is incorporated by Adams when giving the live mattresses on Squornshellous Zeta their own unique vocabulary. In Chapter 9 Adams employs words such as 'flollop', 'globber', 'gloopy', 'vollue', 'flurr', glurry', 'gupp' etc. to describe the mattresses and their actions. Some of the words are explained as follows:

> 'The mattress globbered. This is the noise made by a live, swamp-dwelling mattress that is deeply moved by a story of personal tragedy.' (p. 346)

The above-mentioned Agrajag also has a set of adjectives which could be called unique. He describes his fruitless lives as 'Dent-ended' and calls Arthur a 'multiple-me-murderer'. Arthur in turn sees Agrajag, instead of half-crazed, as three-quarters-crazed'. Arthur's reaction to landing on the world where he meets Agrajag and not finding his companions there is described with repetition.

> 'He looked around for the others.
>
> They weren't there.
>
> He looked around for the others again.
>
> They still weren't there.
>
> He closed his eyes.
>
> He opened them.

He looked around for the others.

They obstinately persisted in their absence.' (p. 385)

Through repetition the above incident is made funny and also reflects humorously on Arthur's nature. This is a case where the reader laughs derisively, because Arthur seems a little silly. He does not seem to recognize the absence of his friends. However, his confusion is understandable, if somewhat exaggerated, since he fully expects them to be there. As the reader realises this, the reader's laughter may also hold some sympathy and he may also identify with Arthur's predicament. Something expected has not happened.

Play on words is used in the same way by Pratchett in Lords and Ladies. The name of Hodgesaargh is an example of the unusual use of words. The name of the above-mentioned palace falconer is actually Hodges, but due to the perils of his profession, he has come to scream frequently. Thus the explanation given by Pratchett:

'Strictly speaking, Hodgesaargh wasn't his real name. On the other hand, on the basis that someone's real name is the name they introduce themselves to you by, he was definitely Hodgesaargh.' (p. 122)

Magrat, who is the future bride of the king and thus the future mistress of Hodgesaargh, has been seen to develop through the novel in terms of strength. Pratchett uses an expression known well by Clint Eastwood fans to show Magrat's new strength of character when she tells the difficult and tough cook to

...

'Go ahead ... bake my quiche.' (p. 363)

This expression and a crossbow helps Magrat to make the cook see her point of view on healthy eating habits.

Pratchett also frequently uses repetition for the purpose of emphasis. He describes the long Gallery containing pictures of previous queens as follows:

> 'The thing about it, the thing that made it so noticeable, the first thing anyone noticed about it, was that it was very long.' (p. 120)

A visual image is given of the gallery in a very effective way. Equally effective is the description of paintings done by Nanny Ogg's grandchildren:

> '... paintings on the wall. They had been done by her youngest grandchildren in a dozen shades of mud, most of them of blobby stick figures with the word GRAN blobbily blobbed underneath in muddy blobby letters.'

Pratchett again visualises the image described.

In the novel Reaper Man Pratchett once again uses word play in a number of ways. When the wizards in the novel concerning death discuss vampirism and the reasons for it, they come upon the word 'hemoglobins'. As a result of their limited biological knowledge the word is humorously changed into 'hemogoblins', giving it the correct connotation for the subject of both the novel and the discussion. This limited biological knowledge of the wizards comes to light

further when the Senior Wrangler responds:

'I'm damn sure I've got no iron goblins in my blood.' (p.38)

Another word is used in an unusual way by the Patrician, proving him to be more versed in vebal skills than the wizards. He charges the citizens of the city $200 per capita tax, with a warning that 'decapita' can be arranged as a result of refusal to pay.

A pun is used by the spirit guide of Mrs. Cake, the medium of the city. He was very fond of drinking in his physical life and prefers to stay in the spirit, wine or beer world(p.177).

Pratchett uses the expression 'train of thought' in many of his novels. In Reaper Man he describes what happens when Windle Poons, in deep thought, is surprised by the wizards:

'...his train of thought ran over a cliff.' (p. 49)

Windle goes on to meet various living dead people in the novel when joining Reg Shoe's club for the dead and he is described as having to shake 'a number of variations on the theme of hand.' (p. 49)

Apart from the above stylistic element, three different kinds of comedy are distinguished by Leacock (1937). The first of these is the comedy of ideas, which sees its function as mostly to bring relief from pain and consolation for the short-comings of life. This kind of comedy mocks itself and teaches people to laugh at what they have thought of as tragedy. For example a quote from a letter by one of Adams' fans reads:

> 'I was terribly depressed and upset until I sat down and read you book. It's really shown me the way up again." (Gaiman, 1993:23)

Pratchett responds to this:

> 'I wrote it to do this for myself, and it's seemed to have the same effect on a lot of other people. I can't explain it. Perhaps I've inadvertently written a self-help book.' (Gaiman, 1993:23)

One of the techniques to bring about relief from pain in the comedy of ideas is exaggeration. The reader sympathises or laughs at the extreme plight of the character and forgets his own pain. An example is the dull horror experienced by Arthur when observing an advanced recording technique in Life, the Universe and Everything:

> 'The body of Arthur Dent span. The Universe shattered into a million glittering fragments around it, and each particular shard span silently through the void, reflecting on its silver surface some single searing holocaust of fire and destruction.
>
> And then the blackness behind the Universe exploded, and each particular piece of blackness was the furious smoke of hell.' (p. 350)

The same horror is experienced by Zaphod Beeblebrox when a robot shoots him in Chapter 11 of the novel; he is so surprised when they do this, that he fails to

fall down until they shoot him a second time. Another feeling of this kind occurs to the same character when he looks into his own soul after much drinking:

> 'It had been late one night – of course.
>
> It had been a difficult day – of course.
>
> There had been soulful music playing on the ship's sound system – of course.
>
> And he had, of course, been slightly drunk.
>
> In other words, all the usual conditions which bring on a bout of soul-searching had applied, but it had, nevertheless, clearly been an error.' (p. 356)

While enjoying Zaphod's misery, the reader is also able to identify with him as the repetition of the words 'of course' signify. Both enjoyment and identifying with someone in pain, bring relief to the reader.

In Lords and Ladies by Pratchett irony and exaggeration are used to bring about the comedy of ideas. Irony is used with regard to the Carter family on page 107. All the Carter daughters have been given the names of virtues, such as Hope Chastity etc. And all the sons received the names of vices, such as Bestiality, Anger etc. The irony exists in the fact that the children grow up to have personalities opposite from what their names suggest. Anger is a man of even temper, while Chastity enjoys a life of questionable values. Readers who have been burdened with unwanted names by their well-meaning parents, may experience a sort of relief from pain, when reading this.

Pratchett also uses exaggeration to bring about another kind of relief. A disaster that can easily strike a citizen of the Discworld is to be eaten by a troll. However, the fear of its happening is greater than the chance of its occuring, because:

> 'Trolls, a lifeform based on silicon rather than carbon, can't in fact digest people. But there's always someone ready to give it a try.' (p. 193)

The horror of being eaten by a monster is diluted by the absurdity of the idea and the minimization of the seriousness of the situation. It is treated as a joke.

In Reaper Man the comedy of ideas occurs when Windle Poons discloses to Death that he has found out who he is as a result of being dead. Death, not being human, can only react with sarcasm when confronted with the idea that Windle Poons has found out that he is Windle Poons.

> 'I CAN SEE WHERE THAT MUST HAVE COME AS A SHOCK.' (p. 284)

Here, as in the case with Zaphod Beeblebrox, soul searching is mocked. The issue is usually taken very seriously, but through the skilled writing of Adams and Pratchett, the reader is taught to laugh at this also.

The second kind of comedy distinguished by Leacock (1937) is the comedy of situation, which is dependant on the situation itself and not on character or wording. Disaster or discomfort that is odd or out of the ordinary is involved.

This comedy is the mingling of the tragic and fun, wisdom and foolishness.

The comedy of situation, like comedy of ideas, can also bring relief, since its purpose is to dilute disaster or horror. An example is again Agrajag in Adams' Life, the Universe and Everything. There is horror from both the viewpoint of Arthur and Agrajag. Agrajag's situation is exaggerated through the fact that, while having killed him time and again, Arthur Dent has also once swatted him as a fly with a bag made out of his own skin when he was a rabbit. He calls Arthur 'staggeringly tactless' as a result. The horror from Arthur's point of view is the fact that he did not know. The situation is not only horrifying, but also absurd. His horror is shared by the reader, yet also causes laughter because the situation is absurd. The horror and pain of both viewpoints are thus diminished through unlikelihood and absurdity.

Also absurd, but horrifying is the situation of the already mentioned alien Wowbagger, whose life is eternal as a result of an accident involving:

> '...an irrational particle accelerator, a liquid lunch and a pair of rubber bands. The precise details of the accident are not important because no one has ever managed to duplicate the exact circumstances under which it happened, and many people have ended up looking very silly, or dead or both, trying.' (p. 313)

The fact that Wowbagger does not want to live eternally, but has it thrust upon him, is horrifying. He experiences exreme boredom and discomfort as a result, and manufactures a technique for insulting every creature in the universe in

alphabetical order to relieve his situation. This absurd situation is relieving for the reader because, although boredom may be a familiar problem, it has not turned to horror. Both the situations above can be described as out of shape. The situation on the planet Krikkit can be described in the same terms:

> 'The place that could not countenance the existence of any other place, whose charming, delightful, intelligent inhabitants would howl with fear, savagery and murderous hate when confronted with anyone not their own.' (p. 425)

The above situation, though absurd in its extremity, also serves as a comment on the human race and people's intolerance of anything other than what they know, which inclines them to warfare.

An equally strange situation, without the horror, is the section in Ford's Guide on flying. It maintains that humans can fly without the help of machines. All that is required is to throw oneself at the ground and miss. Ford has tried many times and failed; Arthur does not try, but falls, and forgets to hit the earth because of a surprise just before he falls. He succeeds by accident, where many others have tried and failed.

Comedy of situation can also be found in Reaper Man by Pratchett. The whole novel could be included in this element of style, since the situation described is odd. Death is fired. As a result of this a death is created for each individual species – the death of trees is the sound of an axe; the death of rats is the skeleton of a rat, etc. Another consquence of this bizarre occurrence is that it

becomes impossible for humans to die since the new Death is complicated and still in the process of being brought about. This results in an overflow of life-force and all things strive towards life. An example of this is that the swear words of Ridcully, the wizard, turn into strange, exotic insects. The reader is made to laugh at the horror of it.

While there are many cases of comedy of situation and ideas in his novels, comedy of character is the one favoured by Pratchett. This kind of comedy, according to Leacock (1937), is dependant on the character in the work of literature. The incongruities in people are explored: odd character, dress, manner, accent, etc. These people break the dull routine of life in both life and literature. The harmless criminal, or 'comic rogue' (Leacock, 1937), often excites laughter. Prinsloo (1970:8) raises a rather negative point about this kind of comedy, when he repeats the opinion of Lascelles, that the comic character in most kinds of comedy is not particularly likeable. However, this is not the kind of character found in the works of Pratchett and Adams, since most of their creations are quite likeable. Another opinion is raised by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest, as discussed by Muller (1970:54). They feel that 'detailed characterisation has no place in science fiction.' This opinion is shown to be incorrect by both Adams and Pratchett, since most of their characters are described in detail and in depth. These characters also undergo considerable development through the novels. Adams says about comedy of character:

'My aim was to create apparently bizarre situations and then

> pursue the logic so much that it became real. So on the one hand, someone behaves in an interesting, and apparently outrageous way, and you think at first that it's funny. Then you realise that they mean it, and that, at least to my mind, begins to make it more gripping and terrifying."(Gaiman, 1993:51)

Adams creates many strange and humorous characters. His main character, Arthur Dent, is laughable because he is ordinary. The reader identifies with him and finds it easy to laugh at his complete chagrin at every strange event in his life.

Dent's opposite in terms of normality is Zaphod Beeblebrox. He is an interesting and entertaining character, since he has two heads, three arms and a personality to match. In Life, the Universe and Everything his personality as a child is described through a school situation. Ford Prefect, who sits behind Zaphod in Galactic History class does not learn any History, but does learn other interesting things, which Adams also terms 'stunning'. Zaphod's aim is to stay cool and nonchalant through everything. Despite Zaphod's believing extremely egomaniacal things about himself, the reader learns that most of these things are not true. For example he is a coward. In the beginning of Chapter 30 he thinks of himself as very brave when in fact all his actions are evidently the opposite:

> 'Zaphod Beeblebrox crawled bravely along a tunnel, like the hell of a guy he was. He was very confused, but continued

> crawling doggedly anyway because he was that brave.' (p. 431)

He does not have any choice except to go on crawling – to think of it as an act of bravery is hypocritical. This reinforces the idea that politicians are hypocritical, sometimes unwittingly so. Zaphod can be termed the comic rogue of the Hitchhiker trilogy. No-one comes to harm through his hypocrisy, and he is easily forgiven for his vice, since he is intensely likeable. In the fifth part of the trilogy, Mostly Harmless, Beeblebrox does not make an appearance, but is only mentioned in passing by Trillian. This fact has been met with disappointment by readers, because much of the fun of the trilogy is removed when Zaphod is not part of it. Zaphod is one of the interesting persons who break the dullness of life.

Equally interesting is Marvin, who has been nicknamed the 'paranoid android' in the trilogy. Marvin the robot is built to experience emotion. However, an error has occurred because the only emotion that he does experience is extreme boredom and depression, as a result of his infinite intelligence. Marvin is kidnapped from Squornshellous Zeta by the Krikkit robots and given a job coordinating the planet's military strategy. He is too intelligent for the job and inevitably becomes bored:

> 'Having solved all the major mathematical, physical, chemical, biological, sociological, philosophical etymological, meteorological and psychological problems of the Universe except his own, three times over, he was severely stuck for something to do, and had taken up composing short dolorous

ditties of no tone, or indeed tune.' (p.434)

Marvin is an odd character because he is not portrayed in the way robots are usually shown in SF. For example Stableford (Windgrove, 1984:26) gives his view of the subject:

> 'In contemporary SF robots are frequently portrayed as cute, childlike beings ... In more sophisticated work, ... they are enigmatic, requiring the human protagonists to ask how different people and androids really are.'

There are two portrayals of the robot implicit in Stableford's view. The robot as a cute childlike thing obviously does not apply in Adams' novel. Marvin is also not very enigmatic. It is clear that he is too intelligent to do anything useful and he is a manic depressive. The question of the true difference between people and androids that Stableford asks in the quotation above, may apply here, since depression is something frequently suffered by human beings. Marvin is not very different from a human being, because any person with his intelligence would suffer the same consequences. Emotion is something experienced by human beings, and not normally by robots in SF, but Marvin has been built to experience the human part of life as well. From the above quotation it seems reasonable to assume that SF creators choose their robots in order to suit the kind of work they are creating. Adams has created Marvin in order to suit the genre of his work – comic SF. His work is neither unsophisticated nor serious in most respects, thus the most frequently used element of SF, the robot, has been chosen in order to bring about the purpose of the trilogy – to cause laughter.

Ford Prefect is an equally strange character. He represents another of the favourite SF themes, aliens. Some characteristics set him apart from the human race without, however, causing much more than discomfort among people. In addition, despite the fact that he mistakes cars for the dominant life form on Earth and calls himself Ford Prefect as a result, even Arthur Dent, his best friend of fifteen years, does not suspect that he is anything other than a strange human being. An observation about his behaviour when he starts doing strange things at a cricket game at Lords in Life, the Universe and Everything emphasises the way he is:

> 'Ford was beginning to behave rather strangely, or rather not actually beginning to behave strangely but beginning to behave in a way which was strangely different from the other strange ways in which he more regularly behaved.' (p. 327)

In the same way as Zaphod Beeblebrox, Ford is an irresponsible coward, and would rather go to parties and dance with girls than save the universe. Since this is how the average reader would also feel about a similar situation, it is easy to identify with Ford's cowardice and irresponsibility. Although the same qualities in Zaphod Beeblebrox are much exaggerated, it can also strike a chord with readers in his case. The tendency to take the easy way out of difficult situations and the fact that all they seem to do is have fun, gives the reader a sense of enjoyment and even envy for, if not identification with these characters.

Arthur Dent is also a coward, and has never pretended to be anything else. He is the most ordinary of the characters in the Hitchhiker trilogy. The fact that

he finds himself in very strange circumstances with which he finds it hard to cope, provides the comic situation with regard to him. Since he is not a comic character, Adams rather uses the comedy of situation to make Arthur laughable. Arthur's ordinariness creates an incongruity with the circumstance in which he finds himself, often causing him to appear strange. At one point in Life, the Universe and Everything his experience becomes so unsettling that his ...

> '... consciousness approached his body as from a great distance, and reluctantly. It had had some bad times in there. Slowly, nervously, it entered and settled down into its accustomed position.' (p. 325)

An element which does make Arthur himself funny at times is his often limited intelligence. When Ford talks about the fact that they do not have a whelk's chance in a super-nova against the Krikkiters (Chapter 16, Life, the Universe and Everything), Arthur misses the point entirely by wanting to make sure what a whelk has to do with a super-nova. Arthur represents the normal in a strange universe and strange situations. On occasion he serves as a link with the real world.

Trillian is the other remaining Earthling after the destruction by Vogons. Her character is fully developed only in the fifth part of the trilogy, and not sufficiently strange or odd herself to be catagorised under comedy of character. She is very intelligent, but not on equal terms with Marvin. Her intelligence makes her less apt to make silly mistakes as Arthur does and she is too well adjusted to her circumstances to evoke sympathetic laughter as Arthur does.

In Lords and Ladies, the follow-up to Witches Abroad, Pratchett again uses the three witches as the main characters. The comedy in Pratchett's work depends largely on characterisation. He creates many strange characters in order to entertain his readers, and the three witches are among the favourites. Granny Weatherwax is described on page 21:

> 'The first one – let us call her the leader – flies sitting bolt upright, in defiance of air resistance, and seems to be winning. She has features that would generally be dscribed as striking, or even handsome, but she couldn't be called beautiful, at least by anyone who didn't want their nose to grow by three feet.'

Granny Weatherwax is a strong woman, with set ideas on everything and she is only old when it suits her purposes, for example on page 143, where she pretends to be old and helpless in order to trick the elves into coming near her, and then goes on to defeat them with her fists. She also, in the way of many old and strong ladies, puts her nose into everyone else's business, believing that they cannot survive without her interference. Reminded that the man she called stupid is in fact a King, she reverts to calling him a stupid King (p.163). Her views on reading and writing are also unique – she does not believe that she requires the skill: she believes that the word 'empathy' is spelled with an 'm'. Her opinion is given on the same subject when she has shared the consciousness of a swarm of bees. Education is not very important to her:

> 'That's what a univerzzity education doezz for you, ... You've

> only got to be sitting up and talking for five minutzz and they can work out you're alive.' (p. 360)

Her strength of will again becomes clear when she refuses to believe that she is lost; she is simply 'directionally challenged' (p. 253). She claims humility when it is obviously not true. Despite her faults, Granny Weatherwax possesses dignity and strength, which makes readers love and forgive her. Her characteristics contribute to her popularity, rather than diminish it.

Nanny Ogg is an equally lovable character who...

> '... is dumpy and bandy-legged with a face like an apple that's been left for too long and an expression of near-terminal good nature. She is playing a banjo and, until a better word comes to mind, singing.' (p. 21)

Morally speaking, Nanny Ogg is the opposite of the other two witches. She represents sexuality and the enjoyment of it in the novel. She is once accused by Granny Weatherwax of having the morals of a cat. When Nanny looks under the bed it is not because of fear, but to check if she is lucky enough to find a man there. Her relationships are known for their quantity rather than their quality, and has never been taken out for an intimate dinner before meeting Casanunda. She prides herself on being a bride three times, although this is only the 'official score' (p. 231). An interesting incongruity in her character occurs where her daughters-in-law are concerned. Although she generally has a sweet nature:

> 'Inquisitors would have thrown Nanny Ogg out of their ranks for being too nasty.' (p. 24)

She is a woman of extremes: the sight of her face makes whole lives seem uneventful and her toenails, when being cut, smash oil lamps. Nanny Ogg enjoys the vices of life and in this regard can be compared to Zaphod Beeblebrox of the Hitchhiker trilogy. She enjoys sex and drinking. The above quality, together with her fierce loyalty to the Ogg family, is part of what Pratchett terms her 'Oggishness'. She is exactly the opposite of her friend Granny Weatherwax, but they compliment each other in every way.

Pratchett's third witch, Magrat Garlick, is the youngest of the witches and not equal to them:

> 'The third, and definitely the last, broomstick rider is also the youngest. Unlike the other two, who dress like ravens, she wears bright, cheerful clothes which don't suit her now and probably didn't even suit her ten years ago. She travels with an air of vague good-natured hopefulness. There are flowers in her hair but they're wilting slightly, just like her.' (p. 21)

Magrat's character is sketched as young and inexperienced, as she sometimes becomes flustered in the company of the other two. She is the bride-to-be of King Verence, the King of Lancre. Like Granny Weatherwax, Magrat is a prude, but not because she has chosen to be so. Her prudery sprouts from ignorance and youth. Magrat's character is developed impressively when she finds out that Granny has schemed for her marriage to the King:

> 'She seemed to have spent her whole life trying to make herself small, trying to be polite, apologizing when people

> walked over her, trying to be good mannered. And what had happened? People had treated her as if she was small and polite and good mannered.' (p. 254)

Magrat, upon making the above discovery, acquires new strength, which she did not possess before, without changing the foundation of her character. Her characteristics are shown through the eyes of other characters in the novel: Greebo the cat sees her as a mouse in human form. When she puts on armour and gathers weapons she makes Shawn Ogg feel as if he is 'charged by sheep' (p. 280). When she becomes a queen Magrat is no longer a witch, but can still use her extensive knowledge of herbs and new strength of character to be a good queen.

Witches are normally associated with cats. Greebo is Nanny Ogg's cat. He is the wildest cat on the Discworld, as his expeditions prove – he is a terror to all wildlife in the area. In the mornings he 'affectionately tries to claw your eyeballs out' (p. 135). In the area of morals, Greebo is Nanny's equal. In the novel Greebo provides comic relief and can be placed in the role of comic rogue.

King Verence again can be seen as the poor, stupid, blundering man. He is also the future husband of Magrat. The reason for his weakness is that he has kingship 'thrust upon him', since what he is truly used to is being a court jester. Verence is nervous and not very bright. He is not well-suited to be King, but rather to be a jester, which is why it is good that the improved Magrat is his queen.

Granny Weatherwax has also had a romantic episode, although this is in the

past. The wizard Ridcully used to court her. Because of the life they have both chosen, they have grown apart. Ridcully is the Archchancellor at the Unseen University. His character can be seen as Granny's male counterpart in the novel. He has the same strong-willed personality that refuses to leave alone an idea that he enjoys. An example of this is his relationship with the Bursar, an excessively nervous man, whose life Ridcully enjoys making difficult.

Some of the other odd characters created for this Discworld novel are briefly discussed below. Casanunda can be said to be the male counterpart of Nanny, since he claims to be the world's second greatest lover. He provides Nanny with romantic entertainment and the reader with enjoyment. Shawn Ogg, the son of Nanny is the palace's only guard. Jason Ogg, another of Nanny's sons, is very strong, but not bright and referred to by his mother as just a big baby. At the Unseen University there is the librarian, who is changed into an urang utang by magic and refuses to be made human again. The wizards of the Unseen University all have different sets of views and strange, often demented, personalities.

All the above characters are extremely entertaining and lovable because of the fact that the reader recognises them easily as having some of his own personality traits. In this novel Pratchett combines the SF theme of parallel universes with comic techniques in order to create a successful and enjoyable work.

In Reaper Man Pratchett develops his character of Death more fully. He is

portrayed in the main role and is given the opportunity to experience life as a mortal when he is fired. Death is presented in the traditional style as a skeleton with a scythe. He is not very familiar with human affairs, because he does not deal with them in their life times. One aspect of the logic that Pratchett pursues is that sleep and dreams are unfamiliar concepts to Death and he sees sleep as a loss of precious time that he is continually aware of losing. He cannot understand the human capacity for being able to face the concept of death. Another aspect of human life that he is unfamiliar with is metaphors and sayings; when confronted with the phrase 'diamonds are a girl's best friend', he insists on buying friendly diamonds' for Renata. Death assumes the name of Bill Door when forced to do so. People are unable to see him as the skeleton that he really is and the protective filters in their brains show him as merely a very thin man. In all Pratchett's novels Death is familiarised, taking the fear out of the concept. Living creatures do not wish to die, but Pratchett's presentation of Death makes him and what he represents more acceptable to the reader. Some readers have even written to Pratchett to find out when Death's birthday is. Pratchett (1995:283) gives his reason for Death's reputation:

> 'I think people like him because he's got this pathetic lack of any sense of humour and is powerful and innocent and vulnerable all at the same time. It's true that he was a lot nastier in the first few books. By Reaper Man he's clearly going through some sort of mid-life crisis. Or mid-Death crisis.'

Indeed all the crises he goes through are sympathized with and understood by the reader. Reaper Man is a particularly good example of this since Death truly learns what it is to be human and mortal. He cannot handle time passing and the knowledge that it will run out for him as well. The certainty of death is , even for the well-adjusted human being, something that is difficult to accept. Death's situation is therefore easy to sympathise with.

Pratchett further pursues the logic of the situation by adding the fact that nothing and nobody can die until Death is replaced. The wizards again become involved. Windle Poons, the oldest wizard, who is supposed to die, does not. His spirit returns to his body after finding nowhere to go after having left. This results in the fact that he thinks more clearly, can control his bodily functions consciously and has super-human stregth. The wizards try all the traditional remedies to cure Windle's 'undeath', without success and Windle is forced to make peace with his condition. Pratchett treats this in the same way as racism: there is a club in the city for the un-dead, where they can go to meet their own kind. Reg Shoe, a member of the un-dead, is the leader and raises consciousness for this group, as Lupine, the 'wereman', explains:

> 'He goes down to the cemetery behind the Temple of Small Gods and shouts, ... He calls it consciousness raising but I don't reckon he's on to much of a certainty.' (p. 112)

Reg's group includes a bogeyman, a wereman, several zombies and two vampires.

Windle Poons's living associates, the wizards, are also developed further in the novel. The Bursar, who makes an appearance in Lords and Ladies, continues in his permanent state of nervousness. His condition is in fact worse than before:

> 'He didn't eat much, but lived on his nerves. He was certain he was anorectic, because every time he looked in the mirror he saw a fat man. It was the Archchancellor, standing behind him and shouting at him.' (p. 29)

When Windle smashes through the doors opposite him into the dining room, the Bursar bites through his wooden spoon. Ridcully obviously still shouts at him. He is not trying to be mean, it is simply in his nature. The rest of the wizards are also not quite certain what to make of him:

> 'He shouted at people. He tried to jolly them along. And he hardly ever wore proper robes.' (p. 34)

Ridcully is also termed an 'autocondimentor' by Pratchett, which means that he puts every spice possible on his food, regardless of its taste or nature. He has his own 'Wow-wow Sauce', made of a collection of fruit, vegetables and spices. His hat contains fishing flies, a pistol crossbow and brandy, suited to his outgoing life style. This is an exaggeration of the tradtional hat of the enthusiastic fisherman, very familiar to the reader, suggesting about his character that he enjoys doing everything in the extreme. Ridcully is not used to taking orders: his reaction when told to shut up because all his swear words are coming alive is to

obey out of shock.

Another of Pratchett's characters with her own set of beliefs and peculiarities is Mrs. Cake. Every religious institution fears her. This is a result of her tendency to join a certain religious group, take leadership in every activity and suddenly leave the institution to gather up the pieces after her departure. Like Ridcully, she is determined to do things her own way. Her determination is proved when she reaches and enters without harm the Lost Jewelled Temple of Doom of Offler the Crocodile God, reminiscent of Indiana Jones. The priests of Offler react in extreme horror to this feat. A priest on page 79 of Reaper Man compares her to the Dungeon Dimensions Creatures, because she is a hazard to all religious institutions. She also enjoys doing things in the extreme and is an exaggeration of the familiar type of church-going, elderly lady, who makes everybody's business her own, much the same as Granny Weatherwax does.

Pratchett enhances his comedy with other characters such as Ludmilla, werewolf daughter of Mrs Cake, the dyslexic cockerel on Renata Flitworth's farm, the wizards in general and the Dean who becomes very excited when faced with the collapse of the world and chronically exclaims 'yo'.

As seen above Pratchett and Adams both use characterisation very successfully in their SF and fantasy works. The characters are described in detail and some of them, for example Magrat Garlic, Death and Trillian undergo

remarkable development of character. This all contributes to the ideas and plots in the different works. This chapter demonstrates the excellence of the authors as they transcend the limitations of SF as usually conceived of by both readers and critics. Pratchett does this by the variety of characters through whom he invokes laughter, for example Death and Ridcully, among others. Adams' excellence stems from the way in which he uses language and words to make the reader laugh. Examples of this are exaggeration, repetition, play on words and expressions, although he also uses characterisation successfully, as seen in the case of especially Zaphod Beeblebrox.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF LAUGHTER

Wimsatt (Prinsloo, 1970:22) rejects researching theories of laughter in terms of the theory of comedy, because the researcher tends to be led astray from the true object of discussion, which is the mode of comedy itself. I believe what Wimsatt is implying is that comedy is a literary genre, whereas laughter is a psychological and highly subjective phenomenon. Another reason given for this observation is the fact that laughter focuses on the laugher rather than on the theory of comedy itself. However, Prinsloo (1970:23) is of the opinion that

> 'The role of laughter in comedy cannot ... be dismissed lightly, because a number of writers have concerned themselves with this theme, and in the process they have made contributions to the whole subject of comic theory which are of some value to the student seeking insight.'

Since comedy is closely associated with laughter, full insight into it can be accomplished only by researching this psychological phenomenon of laughter together with the theory of comedy. Prinsloo further justifies his research of laughter with the fact that comedy is much associated with this human phenomenon.

This is even more so in the case of the authors discussed in this dissertation. Their objective is primarily laughter, more than to create pieces of literary comedy. This is confirmed by Douglas Adams:

> 'I just wanted to do stuff I thought was funny. But on the other hand, whatever I find funny is going to be conditioned by what my concerns or preoccupations are. You may not set out to make a point, but points probably come across because they tend to be the things that preoccupy you, and therefore find a way into your writing.' (Gaiman, 1993:32,33)

Adams implies that different people would find different things funny. However, it is also true that humour in general has universal appeal, a point that Potts (1948:20) makes:

> 'It is true that we laugh spontaneously at only one or any happening that strikes us as eccentric - off the highway of normal human life.'

From both the above views it becomes clear that what is funny depends on the view of individual people. Humour, according to Corrigan (1981:122) is in the eye of the beholder. This view is confirmed by Potts (1948:45) and it follows that social background, gender, high or low culture and other human factors will determine what is laughed at. Prinsloo (1970:20) elaborates on this point by adding the idea that comedy reflects the attitudes and culture of a certain period,

a fact that is clear in both the works of Pratchett and Adams (see chapter I of this dissertation).

One of the functions of laughter is to transfer pain to pleasure. Machtovec (1988) gives an example in the form of human error. Through laughter, the pain caused by the error is turned into pleasure. Greig (1923) uses the example of the sexual and the obscene to illustrate this point. Laughter at the obscene is a result of relaxation of modesty. It is a reward for the 'pain' of keeping up modesty at other, serious times. The human need to let go of restrictions is fulfilled. Relief from the pain of innocence takes place when there is evidence of naivete of sex or sexuality. The more informed laugh gently and with love, as in the case of Magrat. When an indecent remark is made during a solemn, serious occasion, laughter lowers the tension of seriousness. Mactovec (1988) says about this that the serious is often used as a starting point for comedy and can be associated with a pain sensation. Laughter seems to be the result of a mixture between pleasure and pain.

The theme of oscillation between pleasure and pain occurs frequently in the works of Admas and Pratchett. An example is the overly tragic - tragic occurrences are exaggerated to become absurd. When the above mentioned authors address serious problems such as the race problem, the decline of the family and atomic war in this way, it seems that the only resort left is laughter. The approaches of Adams and Pratchett in this regard are very similar.

However, Adams' work is more closely related to reality and thus the situations and characters are easier to sympathise with. Pratchett, on the other hand, creates a strange world, inhabited by odd characters, which makes the gap between the world of the reader and that of the author wider, and thus the characters are less easy to sympathise with, and the reader's laughter is less sympathetic.

In the fifth part of the Hitchhiker trilogy, Mostly Harmless, the overly tragic occurs on a more personal level to Arthur. After having lost his home, his planet and all that has been known to him, Arthur goes on in Chapter 7 to lose his true love Fenny, whom he has met in the fourth part. This happens in an absurd hyperspace accident, which involves Fenny's just vanishing without a trace. There is the feeling that all possible tragedy has happened to Arthur and that nothing worse can happen, but as the reader learns, tragedy is piled upon tragedy, and even when Arthur finds a planet he can live on in peace, this is shattered by the arrival of Trillian. The novel moves towards its tragic climax with hardly a moment given to something positive happening to any of the characters. The reader responds with laughter, perhaps identifying with the fact that things at times seem to be the same in the real world.

Human error has been mentioned as a reason for laughter. Mistakes are part of human life and laughter as the result of them can be either sympathetic or derisive (Machtovec, 1988). When the laughter is sympathetic, the reader

identifies with human blunder and the blunderer is laughed with, instead of at. Human error can also cause triumphant laughter, where the reader laughs because of a feeling of pleasant superiority over the blunderer, according to Prinsloo (1970:30).

A case of sympathy with human error takes place in Mostly Harmless in the case of Tricia, Trillian's counterpart on one of the versions of Earth, who commits the error of not going into space with Zaphod and regrets it deeply. Ironically, Trillian feels the same way about her life in space - that leaving Earth was a mistake. When a space ship finally does visit Tricia and takes her to a distant planet, she is disappointed, because the Grebulons copy life on Earth exactly and on video it looks like a bad manufacture. When Tricia further makes the mistake of not taking her bag to an interview with a television station in New York, she fails at the interview. Wrong decisions at the wrong times seem to be the theme of Tricia's life. The reader is familiar with this aspect of life and identifies and sympathises with Tricia. Tricia's personality and air of sophistication also preclude derisive laughter; she is not a blundering fool, but she is human. Through sympathy with Tricia, the reader recognises something of himself in terms of decision making. The reader also recognises his own situation in life in terms of not always being able to predict the future consequenses of a decision.

In So Long and Thanks for All the Fish triumphant laughter occurs when Arthur is hitchhiking on Earth through the rain. A car pretends to stop and then drives away when Arthur makes his way towards it. The reader does not like this sort of behaviour. Therefore the reader experiences a feeling of superiority over the driver and laughs in triumph when he later learns that:

> 'As it chanced, the following day the driver of the Cortina went into hospital to have his appendix out, only due to a rather amusing mix up the surgeon removed his leg in error, and before the appendectomy could be reschedule, the appendicitis complicated into an entertainingly serious case of peritonitis and justice, in its way, was served.' (p. 471)

It seems an extreme retribution for the harm caused to Arthur, but the fact that a favourite character has been caused harm, prevents the reader from feeling any sympathy for the driver of the Cortina. The use of the word 'entertainingly' causes a negative attitude towards the driver. On the other hand, Adams is also making a comment on the attitude of medical personnel and their regard for their patients' illensses. The author is suggesting that the attitude of the personnel towards their patients is not one of taking their illness seriously.

Again less derisive, but still triumphant, is the laughter evoked by the company MOSPWOSO in Chapter 6 of Mostly Harmless. The abbreviation stands for The Maximegalon Institute of Slowly and Painfully Working Out the

Surprisingly Obvious. One of the ways in which the Institute does this is through an experiment with a robot which never manages to eat a sandwich. In this way the practical function of boredom is discovered. The institute continues to discover other emotions which exist already. There is a feeling of superiority on the part of the reader who is amused at the stupidity and senselessness of the activity. Time and money are wasted in an effort to find what is already there.

In Eric by Prachett a case of human stupidity occurs with regard to the primitive Tezumen tribe. They are, in contrast with the above institute, unable to discover what is already there. They use stones with holes in the middle for every conceivable purpose, except the obvious one, which is the wheel. This can be seen as a mockery of scientific development. Here the contrast between Adams' and Pratchett's writing becomes clear again. The reader's laughter at the Tezumen tribe is purely derisive. The Tezumen are an ancient tribe, not easy to identify with, and far removed from the reader's world of reality. The company MOSPWOSO, mentioned above in Adams' work is closer to the reader's own time and also a satirical look at what often happens in the world. The reader laughs in triumph, because he recognises a modern phenomenon.

In the same novel, Eric, Pratchett displays the ignorance of the wizards. A gentle triumph is experienced by the reader when the wizards are unable to understand what Death is saying:

> 'THE REASON YOU SUMMONED ME. THE ANSWER IS:
>
> IT IS RINCEWIND.

"But we haven't asked the question yet!"

NEVERTHELESS. THE ANSWER IS: IT IS RINCEWIND.

"Look, what we want to know is, what's causing this outbreak of ... oh.'"(p.15)

When reading the above, the reader laughs spontaneously. Laughter, according to Greig (1923) is an urge or instinctive behaviour. Laughter can therefore be preceded by a moment of pleasant surprise. The reader can also experience laughter at a moment of frustrated expectation or disappointment.

In Mostly Harmless the reader is surprised together with Arthur when Trillian unexpectedly turns up on the primitive planet Lamuella. Arthur is in the process of making sandwiches:

'A little salad, a little sauce, another slice of bread, another sandwich, another verse of "Yellow Submarine".

"Hello, Arthur."

The Sandwich Maker almost sliced his thumb off.' (p. 113)

The surprise of Trillian's appearance together with the unexpected moment of Arthur's nearly slicing his thumb off causes laughter.

Adams describes a more pleasant case of surprise in So Long and Thanks for All the Fish, also involving Arthur. He tells Fenny of an episode where a stranger starts eating biscuits from a packet that he has bought. Arthur ignores this and eats from the same packet until the biscuits are finished. The surprise

occurs when Arthur reveals that, after the stranger leaves, he (Arthur) lifts up his newspaper to find the packet of biscuits actually belonging to him underneath. The fact is completely unexpected and produces pleasure which results in laughter. This reveals human nature with regard to what is believed and what is reality. The difference between these concepts is what makes Arthur's situation funny. Another element is that Arthur is firmly convinced of his position, so his discovering that the situation is the total opposite of what was believed increases the intensity of the comic situation.

Adams includes the more serious case of Marvin in the same novel. Marvin is thirty-seven times older than the universe itself and as a result cannot be expected to be any more cheerful than he is sketched throughout the trilogy. There is surprise when he finally feels good about something. God's final message to the world is, 'We apologise for the inconvenience'. The message itself and Marvin's feeling of well-being just before he dies, causes laughter of both relief and surprise. As life on Earth is trivialised in the beginning of the trilogy, life in general is trivialised through this message. It is the kind of message usually given when people are subjected to waiting due to some sort of mechanical problem, or a similar small thing. The message could also allude to the way that the universe is put together - full of glitches that sometimes break down, and in this way it could be regarded as less trivial than may be thought at first glance. The reaction of the characters who read the message may also serve to give more meaning to the message than is originally thought. They feel

positive about it, and the fact that even Marvin feels good about it, indicates that the message has meaning for everyone who reads it.

Pratchett includes a moment of surprise concerning death as well, in Eric. Ponce da Quirm finds the fountain of youth, drinks from it and achieves success through growing younger. The element of surprise occurs when Eric is told about the reason for his death: he has not boiled the water before drinking it. The implication is that there is a lot of irony in life, which can have serious consequences - a very small thing can cause great disaster, if not taken into account.

Pratchett describes a more pleasant moment of surprise when the devil Quezovercoatl is ordered by his superior to manifest himself to his subjects:

> 'This was very embarrassing. He's enjoyed being the Tezumen god, he's been really impressed by their single-minded devotion to duty, he'd been very gratified by the incredible lifelike statue in the pyramid, and it really hurt to have to reveal that, in one important particular, it was incorrect.
>
> He was six inches high.' (p. 65)

This moment of surprise indicates the distorted vision people tend to have of religion.

At the end of So Long and Thanks for All the Fish Adams creates the last moment of surprise in the novel, in the form of frustrated expection:

> 'There was a point to this story, but it has temporarily escaped the chronicler's mind.'(p. 150)

Since this is the last of the trilogy the author intended writing, the reader could have expected a more grandiose ending, but is frustrated in the expectation. Adams makes up for the frustration by adding a fifth novel to the trilogy, which is called 'increasingly inaccurately named'. Adams again reflects on the seemingly vast pointlessness of life - it does not seem to matter.

Corrigan (1981) distinguishes two immediate pleasures of laughter. The first is recognition, which implies that objects and ideas from the reader's own period are recognised. The second is the application of comic material to human truths – those features which are true to human nature. Identification with characters on the part of the reader takes place. Sympathetic laughter is also included.

When problems such as pollution, racism, etc. are used as comic material in the same way by Pratchett and Adams, it is an example of the first pleasure of comedy taking place. It is a rather grim kind of pleasure, but still the idea that it is a universal problem gratifies the reader with the feeling of not being alone in pain.

Pratchett creates the first kind of pleasure in Eric when he comments on different kinds of leaders. Leadership is an important aspect of modern life. The distinction in the novel is between brave men and cowards (p. 83). Pratchett sketches brave men as those who would rush into the midst of battle without thinking. Cowards are more likely to think about the wisest strategy, because of a disinclination to die violently. Thus the irony is that brave people are stupid and the cowardly are wise, but the brave are those who are more likely to be followed.

In the same novel creators of the universe are discussed:

> 'It is also apparent that creators sometimes favour the Big Bang method of universe construction, and at other times use the more gentle methods of Continuous Creation. This follows studies by cosmotherapists which have revealed that the violence of the Big Bang can give a universe serious psychological problems when it gets older.' (Footnote, p. 107-8)

Creation is compared to the modern issues of childhood and psychology. Pratchett also comments on the needlessness of psychology in many cases and the overreaction of some parents to their children's problems.

Parenthood is also addressed by Adams in Mostly Harmless. Arthur finds it difficult to adjust to the fact that he has a teenage daughter, of whom he has known nothing:

> 'It wasn't easy being a father. He knew that no one had ever said it was going to be easy, but that wasn't the point because he'd never asked about being one in the first place.' (p. 126)

Arthur is burdened with a sulky, spoiled child, who finds it equally difficult to adjust to him. The modern problem of adjustment is dealt with in the fictional book Practical Parenting in a Fractally Demented Universe. Parents are enticed to understand their children's problems because of the strange time and universe that human beings live in. It sympathises with the adjustment problem of the child. The parents' problem in turn is to build a trusting, loving relationship with their children. When Arthur tries to show trust in Random, she betrays the gesture and leads to the destruction of the main characters' lives together with all possible Earths. This is an exaggeration of what happens in life. The reader is made to reflect on the general untrustworthiness of children, and of people generally. The majority of people are bound to be a disappointment when trust is put in them.

Often related to the above problem is violence, as portrayed by the media, also a modern human concern. The primitive people of Lamuella are not used to entertainment of this kind:

> 'They had only ever seen one spaceship crash, and it had been so frightening, violent and shocking and had caused so much horrible devastation, fire and death that, stupidly, they had never realised it was entertainment.' (p. 127)

Adams here reflects the way that the modern world works. A comment is made on the modern tendency to enjoy violence and gore. The tendency of the media to exploit this enjoyment is also commented upon.

The second case of pleasure identified above, which includes identification with comic characters, takes place in the case of Ford in So Long and Thanks for All the Fish. This happens when he reveals his way of dealing with a common human problem. It occurs occasionally that something must be said, but it is not clear what. Whenever this happens to Ford, he uses the meaningless Betelgeusian word 'Goosnargh' (p. 477)

Arthur Dent, generally easier to identify with than Ford, encounters another problem that is true to human nature. He misses an opportunity to give a lady a lift home:

> 'Thirty seconds into the conversation, and already he'd blown it. Grown men, he told himself, in flat contradiction of centuries of accumulated evidence about the way grown men behave, do not behave like this.' (p. 507)

Recognition also takes place in the case of the earlier mentioned episode involving the biscuits. Arthur says nothing and continues sharing the biscuits with the stranger because he does not know what else to do. Fenny agrees that she would not know what to do either, although the situation seems inappropriate.

Identification with characters take place in terms of satisfaction in Mostly Harmless. An old oracular woman enjoys killing flies with a table tennis bat. The reader identifies with the feeling of satisfaction experienced at killing such an insect.

Satisfaction is also experienced as a result of a job well done. When Arthur finds himself revered because of his sandwich making on the planted Lamuella, he is eager to impress Trillian when giving her a sandwich:

> '"My life's work," said Arthur, trying to sound proud and hoping he didn't sound like a complete idiot. He was used to being revered a bit, and was having to go through some unexpected mental gear changes.' (p. 115)

Here there is an apparent mismatch between skill and the reverence it evokes. This mismatch brings about the comic effect. Because Arthur is the sole owner of the skill of sandwich making in his environment the skill is appreciated by all his fellow inhabitants of the planet Lamuella. If one is to compare this idea with life in general, it is often true that people regard things without particular meaning with great reverence because of personal taste or superstition. Adams thus

makes fun of human preconceptions and beliefs. Arthur realises that sandwich making is not a highly regarded skill on other planets, yet does enjoy the reverence that accompanies it, perhaps showing him to be slightly hypocritical. This helps the reader to identify with Arthur as a human being with imperfections.

Another very human experience is boredom. The reader identifies with the inhabitants of Hell in Eric:

> '... boredom is universal and Astfgl had achieved in Hell a particularly high brand of boredom which is like the boredom you get which a) is costing you money, and b) is taking place while you should be having a nice time.'

One of the ways this is achieved is with a demon showing the inmates pictures of itself on holiday (p. 132). Sympathy is involved on the part of the reader with regard to both the inmates of Hell and the demons, none of whom enjoy the boredom thrust upon them by the demon King Astfgl.

Adams also invokes sympathy from the reader in the form of the other side of religion - the Rain God. Rob McKenna is not aware that he is the Rain God, only that it always rains where he is and that he hates it. In Chapter 2 of So Long and Thanks for All the Fish, he earns sympathetic laughter from the reader when his windscreen wipers break:

> 'He pounded his steering wheel, kicked the floor, thumped his cassette player till it suddenly started playing Barry

> Manilow, thumped it again till it stopped, and swore and swore and swore and swore.' (p. 468)

McKenna has identified 231 different types of rain, none of which he likes. However, in the above case it is his frustration that causes laughter, rather than his hatred of rain. His helplessness is also a fact that the reader can identify with, since he is born into a world where few things are completely under his control.

In the same novel Arthur Dent is the subject of sympathetic laughter when he is back in his own home and Adams describes him as looking quite well, except for his eyes:

> 'Only the eyes still said that whatever it was the Universe thought it was doing to him, he would still like it please to stop.' (p. 493)

His plea is not heard, however, as is seen in the fifth part of the Hitchhiker trilogy, Mostly Harmless. The reader again sympathises with him:

> 'Arthur felt at a bit of a loss. There was a whole Galaxy of stuff out there for him, and he wondered if it was churlish of him to complain to himself that it lacked just two things: the world he was born on and the woman he loved.' (p. 71)

Pratchett in Eric subjects Rincewind, the most incompetent wizard on the Discworld to sympathetic laughter. His equally incompetent master, Eric, and himself are in Hell and are told that the demon King is back, sounding angry:

> 'He didn't like the sound of Him being back and Him being angry. When ever something important enough to deserve capital letters was angry in the vicinity of Rncewind, it was usually angry with him.' (p. 135)

The reader laughs sympathetically, but without truly identifying with Rincewind, since his incompetence makes him a comic blunderer rather than someone to identify with. The same is true about Eric, who is an incompetent twelve-year-old demonologist. The reader laughs sympathetically when he tries to summon a sexy female demon and all he receives is a demon with a headache. The demon King, on the other hand, is not incompetent, but incompetence is one of his main problems. The reader identifies with and laughs at him in sympathy. He has a secretary who calls him 'guv', despite all efforts on his part to be called 'sir'. Like Death in the other Discworld novels, the demons are made likeable and funny, instead of terrifying, thus deleting the fear of the phenomenon.

The ways in which the authors evoke laughter are remarkably similar, for example the subjects they treat are similar and the reasons that readers laugh are exploited by both authors in order to evoke laughter. Pratchett, however, goes to greater extremes when exaggerating the absurdity of his world and characters in order to make readers laugh, whereas Adams uses the element of

identification with characters successfully. The individual's response is therefore connected with the presentation of the authors' material, as is the response of this researcher. Since Adams' work is more closely related to reality and his characters are more normal than those of Pratchett, this researcher finds it easier to laugh at his work than at Pratchett's. It is also easier for the reader to recognise himself through the works of Adams, although his situations are bizarre.

Pratchett exaggerates both situations and characters to the extent where some readers perhaps would find them difficult to identify and sympathise with and therefore more difficult to laugh at. This was the response of this researcher and therefore more attention has been devoted to Adams than to Pratchett in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF AND MAJOR THEMES IN SCIENCE FICTION AS USED BY ADAMS AND PRATCHETT

i

SF is defined by Brian Aldiss (1986:25) in the following way:

> 'Science Fiction is the search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge (science) and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic mode.'

SF is difficult to define, since it is flexible enough to suit the specific era in which it is written.

The origin and inspiration for SF begins with the Industrial Revolution. Aldiss (1986) calls it the "fiction of a techonological age" (Aldiss, 1986:14). Reality is made clearer and easier to cope with through SF. Man's hope of making the future a better place relies on machines. This function of SF remains the same for the modern world.

The same idea is raised by Parrinder (1980), who defines the purpose of SF as one of helping the reader put himself and the world into perspective, which has also been mentioned by Aldiss. There are new ways to view life, which are

not always considered by people in ordinary life. SF often has to do with worlds outside our own, an aspect which puts Earth and its problems into a clearer perspective. Whether this perspective is negative or positive is left for the reader to decide. The genre tries to excite new emotions and reflections - things untried before now become part of the reader's life. The perspective of both Adams and Pratchett is comic. They use comedy in order to place life in better perspective and certain things that have been untried before are used not only to give this perspective, but also as a source of comedy. Pratchett concentrates on fantasy in order to do this, while Adams' work is closer to reality and falls into the genre of Science Fiction.

Examples of things that have not been tried before are Adams' 'Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster' and the Babel fish which translates as it feeds on human brain waves. The 'Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster' is used as an exaggeration of a strong alcoholic drink, which most Earthlings are familiar with, in order to produce a comic effect. Pratchett, on the other hand, uses ancient beliefs of mankind, which is further removed from reality than the elements used by Adams in order to achieve comedy. He creates the Discworld, which is a flat disc, as the name suggests, on the back of four elephants which stand on the back of a traveling sky turtle. This world lies on the edge of reality, according to Pratchett. It is a strange, exciting world, though many of the elements and characters on it are familiar.

In the 1920s the British efforts at SF took the form of the scientific romance, whereas America mainly used the pulp magazines such as Amazing Stories for its SF stories. The subject matter of the British works is complex and diverse, dealing with change in the environment and man in relation to change. Adams carries on this tradition of dealing with the subject of change and incorporates it in his novel in order to suit the more modern style of his novel. Throughout the Hitchhiker trilogy Arthur struggles to cope with various changes in his life and his world. The fact that Adams uses the comic element in order to demonstrate Arthur's struggle is a new angle for science fiction. Arthur is laughed at because he is recognised as an ordinary human being with whom the reader can identify. Pratchett handles his characters slightly differently – while they are still easy to laugh at, they are more outrageous than the ordinary human being. The characters are less easy to identify with, because they seem to take things to extremes easily.

When the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan in the Second World war, many writers felt that there was no more room for wonder in their works. Some authors turned, instead of just creating wonderful stories, to exploring the implications of the nuclear bomb and other possible man-made disasters.

Adams and Pratchett create heroes which are often ill-suited to cope with disaster occurring in their worlds. This implies a search for a definition of man and his status is looked for in the modern age. Pratchett's and Adams' heroes

are normal and cowardly people, easily identified with. This cowardice is also sometimes exaggerated to the extent where the reader has to laugh at them with something more derisive than sympathy. The blundering fool in their novels is laughed at. Pratchett uses a diversity of these foolish, but very human characters, whereas Adams' fool is only Arthur Dent throughout his trilogy. The effect of this is that Arthur Dent is developed better as a character, because the reader accompanies him on a long journey, whereas Pratchett's characters are not given as much time to develop. Hence this researcher reacts better towards the more familiar character, who is easier to identify with. However, readers may also feel that diversity is a better way of preventing boredom and thus prefer Pratchett's work to Adams'.

Nevertheless, one of the crises that these heroes have to deal with frequently is the destruction of the world. During the seventies, according to Aldiss there was a new awareness of Earth and the environment, whose destruction has become a popular theme in many SF novels as a result. The theme of death is also frequently examined, as can be seen in the novels of Pratchett especially. The way that Pratchett handles death can give the reader perspective and dilute the natural fear of it. Pratchett gives Death a personality and like Arthur Dent, his character is also developed over a number of novels in order to give him more human qualities and depth with which the reader can identify.

In a less grim mood, the moon landing brought technological changed to the

foreground of SF once again. The genre changes radically and this is the time during which Ursula Le Guin and Robert Silverberg came to prominence. Both these writers make interesting use of a combination of SF and fantasy.

ii

One of the themes that gives SF its popularity, and is also reflective of rapid technological growth is space travel; the ultimate escape. Space is a very large environment, as is pointed out by G. David Brin (Gunn,1988:479):

> 'The word universe is most often used to stand for "all that is". Alternatively, it can mean "all of which we know".'

Pratchett distinguishes between 'universe' and 'multiverse'. In his novels, one can take the meaning of the former to be the second meaning that Brin gives, whereas multiverse would then be 'all that is'. Adams merely mentions the universe in terms of 'all that is', which is vastly more and bigger than Arthur Dent could have dreamed. According to Brin the incredibly vast scale of the universe appears to intimidate most writers, but this is obviously not the case with Adams. There are adventure and unlimited experience to be found in this universe through space travel. And this is also the pursuit of Zaphod Beeblebrox. Douglas Adams lets his reader experience this infinite adventure with his characters through the theme of space travel, and laughter is caused by many of these adventures, increasing enjoyment. Pratchett does not include space travel in his Discworld novels, but, as mentioned above, the existence of other worlds is

assumed. His fantastic universe is based on different rules, governed by magic, but is accessible in the scientific universe. Pratchett's world is merely on the 'edge of reality', an idea which is used to emphasize the comic effect. According to Brin physicists hold the belief that space is curved in a higher, a fourth, dimension. This is an idea which is developed further when Adams' characters travel in space, and the idea is also slightly mocked through creating the 'improbability drive' which thrives on the improbability of things happening. This enables the ship to travel through all the curves of space.

Another popular theme of SF explored both by Pratchett and Adams is that of parallel worlds and alternate histories. Brian Stableford (David Wingrove, 1984) places the beginning of the idea of 'other dimensions' in the late 19th century. In modern SF the favourite use of this theme is with time-tracks. The idea is that there are many different Earths with slightly different histories. This theme is used by Adams especially in the fifth part of his Hitchhiker novels. Two different Trillians are created in this novel: one goes into space with Zaphod and the other remains on Earth. Each bitterly desires the life of the other. This novel is rather more satirical than the previous four, where fun was the main object of the characters. Trillian's bitterness and disappointment with her life is serious, and is meant to make the reader reflect, rather than only laugh. Pratchett uses this theme more lightly in Lords and Ladies where Granny Weatherwax uses the expression 'the trousers of time'. For each decision that one makes there is another person making the opposite decision on a different time-track of the

world. The 'legs' of these 'trousers' become confused in Pratchett's novel and Granny Weatherwax starts having memories from her counterpart in the other 'leg'. Stableford (Wingrove, 1984) also says that alternate histories provide a way for people to learn from history. However, in the novels of Pratchett and Adams it seems clear that people will never learn from history. I shall illustrate this idea later in this chapter with an example from Adams.

Closely related to the above theme is the theme of time travel. This theme was used in the 19th century in the form of people's falling asleep for some hundred years or more (Aldiss, 1986). H.G. Wells created the mechanical device in The Time Machine where time travel is made easier and open to all. Adams develops this idea in the Hitchhiker Trilogy in order to achieve comedy by creating the idea that one can even time travel into the past in order to become one's own father. By a strange accident Arthur and Ford travel two million years into the past and discover the real history of Earth, which leads to comic surprise for the reader. Pratchett's use of time travel is more subtle and magical for the purpose of reflecting the fantasy which he creates. In Wyrd Sisters time travel is used to save the Discworld.

iii

Three types of SF are distinguished by Isaac Asimov (Myers, 1983:6): adventure oriented SF, technological SF and social SF. The first is close to

fantasy in the sense that it mostly involves a clash between good and evil, where good usually overcomes. Good Omens is an example of this in terms of its theme, but does comment on society in a deeper way as well. Pratchett uses comedy to illustrate that there is no true good or evil. The second concerns 'gadget' stories which include new technological devices. Adams invents strange devices and worlds in his works, to suit his science fiction themes. These devices, some of which have been mentioned earlier, are created mostly for comic purposes. The third is concerned with the implications of technological progress for society. Adams and Pratchett examine these implications in a humourous way, giving the reader food for thought while providing enjoyment of the material.

Another three characteristics are allocated to SF by Patrick Parrinder (1980) who identifies science fiction as a reflection on society as product, message and document. Parrinder says that SF is a product of the society from which it comes. So for example the *Zeitgeist* of the early 20th century was one of pessimism, especially among European writers, about the ultimate results of mechanical progress (Aldiss, 1986). This *Zeitgeist* was the result of the global conflict at the time. The SF of the time was pessimistic. The world view of our time is much the same in terms of insecurity and depression, not only because of war and destruction that seem to be the order of the day, but also due to rapid technological development. As already seen, this has been the case for a long time. The works of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett emerge from this society, mocking the anxiety in the world as well as reflecting it. These authors

address many controversial issues. They ask questions about technology, religion, war, artistic intelligence, space, utopia and immortal souls. As already mentioned, these issues are quite serious when considered in the light of everyday life. Yet it has been shown that Adams and Pratchett address these issues with humour. The destruction of Earth is treated as something to be laughed at, as is the nature of God or gods. While making a mockery of what most people consider serious issues, Adams and Pratchett also comment seriously on them. Often these questions result in laughter, because nothing else can be done, but it is also a contemplative kind of laughter.

The world of Douglas Adams ends in Mostly Harmless. Also this is the end of the trilogy, at which time his work seems to have become more satirical than usual.

Terry Pratchett's view is one of having fun and staying alive at all costs. This view, in contrast to Adams', has prevailed, and is still prevailing through Pratchett's novels.

As documents, the works of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett criticise many elements of the world as it is through satire. A less positive example of satire than Adams' and Pratchett's is Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, which appeared in 1932. It opens six centuries into the future, where there are several major changes in the world. The novel foresees the new world with biting irony and disgust. This is in keeping with the definition of the mode given by many

critics such as Highet (1962:233) who says that satire includes personal and social criticism. Sutherland (1967) and Feinberg (1967) go further when they claim that in most cases the satirist aims to destroy the subject of his work without necessarily building it up again. Adams and Pratchett do not do this, but assume a gentler approach in their criticism, although Adams' criticism seems to be directed more at the world in general. Pratchett's criticism in Small Gods is directed towards religious hypocrisy specifically, whereas Adams in Mostly Harmless directs his satire at a variety of issues. According to Clute (1995:58), satire is most often written with a tone of regret at what has been lost and in order for it to be effective, it has to be social in nature. Clute includes science fiction when he says satire flourishes in this genre when the setting is the reader's own world in disguise. Adams uses this technique in So Long and Thanks for All the Fish, of which Time magazine (Gaiman, 1993:142) says:

> 'Fish is the best evidence yet that Adams is not simply a funny sci-fi writer but a bomb-heaving satirist.'

Adams' most satirical work, however, is Mostly Harmless, where there is regret on the part of Trillian and her counterpart Tricia at the loss of their alternative lives. There is regret on the part of Arthur at the loss of his love and his home. Ford regrets the loss of the Guide offices that he used to know and the reader regrets not seeing more of Zaphod and Marvin.

The most satirical work from Pratchett is Small Gods, in which he severely criticizes the abuse of religion for personal gain. This novel is much more severe than Mostly Harmless One could see Brutha, the priest of the small god Om, as

regretting the loss of his peaceful existence before hearing the voice of his god. The god in turn regrets the loss of his greatness, when the believers he had were many. Pratchett admits that this work is rather more serious than the typical Pratchett novel and that mail he has received about it has been more thoughtful than usual (Pratchett and Briggs, 1994,'95). Satire is used together with the genre of science fiction and fantasy in order not only to give the reader clearer perspective or escape, but also to enable the reader to handle this perspective or to escape better.

iv

In the world of reality, which can be as strange as created worlds, the future is dependant upon variables. SF can therefore not prophesy, but relies on *Zeitgeist*. The SF author dramatises the potential consequences of sociological, political and technological development. He also offers an alternative in case of collapse of the world.

Through these things and worlds a new sense of wonder and fascination is created. In this way the purpose of SF, according to Parrinder, is not to change the world in any fundamental way, which no literature in itself manages to do, but merely to make a comment on society, or the universe. A change does take place in the reader, however - there is a change of perspective and attitude. The genre is a means of changing its reader's mental attitude more than it is a way of

writing to predict or prepare for the future. It is a different way of seeing the world. As in the very earliest beginnings of SF, the purpose is to make reality clearer, as Adams and Pratchett do through using comic techniques. Reality is also made easier to cope with. The reader learns to laugh at himself and his circumstances, which teaches him to adjust better.

Lateral thinking, another way of seeing reality is the specialty of Edward de Bono (Peter Nicholls, 1987), and he links this way of thought to science fiction. He accuses many SF authors of following the easiest and established way of writing so that they miss the side-ways that the genre offers. For de Bono the future requirement for science fiction is to be provocotive, not descriptive or analytical. There should be freedom of provocation for the reader, but SF should be related to the semi-logical and existing state of the world in order to make sense. If SF and indeed any literature loses its link with reality, it at least partly loses its appeal, according to de Bono. When the reader has something to relate to in a novel it makes the reading more enjoyable and accessible to him.

Douglas Adams follows a side-way by combining humour with science fiction. He departs from reality by destroying Earth and creating new and unusual worlds. The link with reality is kept through several features, one of which is the characters of his Hitchhiker trilogy. Arthur is a very ordinary Earthling and Trillian is his fellow surviving Earthling, who copes with their strange experiences more successfully than Arthur does. Zaphod and Ford are fun-loving, irresponsible

aliens, but with human characteristics and humanoid looks. The aliens' kind is not difficult to find among Earthlings. Also the human values that remain provide a link with realitiy - throughout the universe, people are still obsessed with sex, worried about money, and the hazards of travel are the same.

Another link with reality, although more precarious than the above, is the theme of the myth. According to Susan M. Schwartz (Gunn,1988) SF is known better for its 'hard science' themes, but it does rely on myths and even creates new myths. Pratchett uses the element of the myth more than Adams does, since his work is closer to fantasy than to science fiction. In his Discworld novels everything is fantastic and very loosely connected with the real world, but upon closer examination it becomes clear that Pratchett uses myths and fantasies of Earth as fantastical elements in his novels.

The theme of ancient mythology has been used frequently in post-war SF. Pratchett's use of this element in a humorous way is part of the joke and also the side-way that he is following. He combines fantasy - witches, trolls, dwarfs and the ancient religious belief that the Earth is flat - with humour and science fiction. Earth is not mentioned, which also makes the link with fact equivocal, although the existence of other worlds is taken for granted. Apart from fantasies and legends from Earth another link with fact is in common human values, as Pratchett frequently uses the phrase 'throughout the multiverse' to introduce a human truth. The characters of the Discworld also incorporate some very human

characteristics, as one can see in Nanny Ogg, the unprincipled witch of the three and Magrat, the pious one. Even Death develops something human after temporarily living in a human world. Fear of death in the Discworld is as common as it is everywhere else. All the inhabitants, human or otherwise, of the Discworld accept everything on it as reality, a fact which makes this world real for the reader as well - it is everyday reality for them and becomes so for the reader. Pratchett and Adams pursue every illogical element with the logical, giving the illusion of reality and scientific correctness. The reader's mind is urged into believing what it perceives.

v

SF asks the question about the future: 'what if' and examines the possibility of the 'if' happening (Asimov - Meyers, 1983). The scientific aspect of the genre makes SF credible and realistic if it is well presented. Apart from the fact that the work has to be presented in a realistic way, the author's imagination is the only limit to the worlds and events in his work. Science fiction enables the non-scientist to appreciate the fact that the world is changing and doing so rapidly.

This rapid development brings fear of destruction and this is why the question that Douglas Adams asks is 'what if the world is destroyed?'. The fear is diluted through laughter and laughter gives perspective on life with regard to crisis. Adams seems to be implying that the worst that can happen, is that one could

die, and even that is not too bad. The possibility of the world's being destroyed is not a new fear; it is one by which all societies are haunted and the theme of many ancient mythologies (Stableford, 1984:45). There are many SF authors who have based their writing on this possibility, but few have made the destruction as complete as Adams has, or included laughter with the fear. Perhaps there is some explanation for this in the fact that Adams is British. British disaster stories have been explored impressively among others by John Wyndham, John Christopher, J.G. Ballard and Brian Aldiss. In post-war SF the theme of natural disasters became overtaken by the theme of disasters caused by technology and irresponsible scientists (Aldiss, 1986). The major disaster in Adams' works is not strictly caused by Earthling technology, but is rather the result of alien development; and the same thing happens on Earth, when Arthur Dent's home is destroyed, which is a smaller disaster. The juxtaposition of these contributes to the comic effect of the trilogy. Brian Stableford (David Wingrove, 1984:47) also makes the following statement:

> 'Where writers of such (disaster) fantasies differ
> .... is in prescribing appropriate patterns of
> psychological adaptation.'

Arthur Dent, as the reader sees, finds it quite difficult to adapt to his new circumstances. The reader, in laughing at him, also laughs at himself, recognising that it would be difficult for any normal person to adjust to the circumstances that Arthur has been thrust into. He is the single surviving

Earthling until the reader later finds out about Trillian. An element that makes the bizarre story accessible to the reader is the Arthur's plainness. He is as ordinary as the events around him are strange and this contrast also provides a sharp edge for the element of humour.

In the novels of Terry Pratchett the question 'what if' deals with a world ruled by magic instead of, as in the case of Adams, science. Magic is the science of the Discworld. The fact that this world is entirely flat with an edge from which a person could drop, is an allusion to the naive science of Earth's past. The witches and wizards are the scientists of the Discworld. Some of the witches use psychology or, in Pratchett's humorous terms, 'headology' to conjure their cures for the ill (Granny Weatherwax) and others make use of more scientific methods (Magrat with her herbs). The wizards have a university with a library with books containing magic spells and formulas. These spells are treated as scientific formulas in a scientific library. They have to be studied to the letter, and they seldom make sense. The slightest mistake of a syllable could result in disaster or great embarrassment, which provides a good opportunity for laughter. The scientific element in these novels of Pratchett's is quite clear and this could be used to classify them as science fantasy instead of merely fantasy.

The rapid and often hectic way in which the worlds of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett change gives the reader perspective on his own situation and the way the world develops. The fact that the writers use humour in order to handle this change also provides the reader with the means to enjoy life, rather than

worry about it.

Another aspect of this development is again fear, which also includes fear of aliens, perhaps the most popular theme in SF. This fear has been dealt with in countless films. In the nineteenth century, according to Stableford (Wingrove, 1984), when the evolution theory became popular, SF writers began to realise how many possibilities there are for evolution on planets where conditions are different from those on ours. This is dealt with by Adams, who mentions the evolution of the Vogon race, and makes the theme humorous through exaggerating it by making the Vogons the ugliest aliens in his trilogy. Pratchett does not deal with evolution directly, but does include an implication of it when creating creatures suitable for a world which is situated on the edge of reality.

According to Patrick Parrinder (1980) alien beings could have either bad or good intentions for our world. This would depend on the nature of the aliens involved, so it should be said that the element of hope is not be overlooked. However, the attitude frequently seen in SF is that typified already in J.G. Wells's War of the Worlds (1898), in which it is presumed that alien beings must be our enemies. In the Hitchhiker trilogy, on the contrary, the reader finds both the perfectly harmless specimens, for example Ford and Zaphod, and also the extremely murderous, for example the Krikkiters, whose mission it is to destroy the universe, and the Vogons, who want to destroy the Earth in all its forms, despite the fact that it is no longer necessary. The humourous element is

included through exaggeration of the strangeness of the aliens. These beings are not only strange, however, but are also used to reflect human traits, such as the tendency to destroy in favour of development, the need to run away from problems, and sexual preferences. The above mentioned beings are all roughly humanoid in appearance, a fact which confirms the idea of human hopes, fears and characteristics, enabling the reader to laugh at them with identification. The Vogons are a personification of the fear of losing one's home. What they do has been done on Earth and is indeed done to Arthur Dent, the main character. The Krikkiters are a personification of man's tendency to make war rather than peace and the fear of the consequences of such a tendency. There are also the very 'alien' aliens who are and look nothing like a human being. An example of this is the 'Ravenous Bugblatter Beast' of the planet Traal that eats humans, which is so absurdly tragic that the reader has to laugh, and the insect-like being that works at the head offices of the Guide. These, though fear- and awe-inspiring themselves are not so much an incorporation of ordinary human fears as their purpose in the trilogy is merely to evoke wonder and laughter at their strangeness. They are also reminiscent of the delight early pulp SF writers took in creating worlds with bizarre creatures that have nothing to do with evolutionary possibility. Their purpose in Adams' novels can be seen as to reduce human fears to elements of minimal importance.

Terry Pratchett does not include aliens as a definite theme in his Discworld novels; there are in fact enough representatives of the 'alien' idea on the

Discworld itself without his having to resort to space for outside sources of the strange. Some very alien beings on the Discworld are for example the dwarfs and the trolls who could, if they choose, eat humans. Again, most aliens in Pratchett's novels, as in those of Adams, merely look extraordinary but are in fact entirely human. Therefore the reader can identify with them and also laugh at them in sympathy. However, life beyond the Discworld is taken for granted, as is indicated by the frequent use of the word 'multiverse' before Pratchett embarks on an explanation of some or other general human truth. In Good Omens aliens play a very brief role as a figment of the imagination of the child Antichrist. These aliens are very conventional, and Pratchett does this deliberately in order to increase the comic effect: they are small green men traveling in a round flying saucer. The purpose of their visit to Earth is to give humans a lesson in morals and ecology. This is the typical view that children have of aliens, and for the purposes of this novel they are portrayed as products of the imagination rather than real beings. Pratchett does this in contrast to Adams, whose aliens are spectacular and beyond imagination.

Aliens, whether malignant or benign, have been synonymous with SF for as long as the genre has been in existence. This increases the sense of wonder in SF, and although Pratchett does not use aliens directly except to sometimes mock the general view of them, they are always present on a subconscious level in the form of dwarfs, trolls and elves. Aliens form part of the reader's adventure which is tinged with humour through exaggeration and on occasion identification

and sympathy.

Exaggeration takes place in the trilogy by Adams when an ancient dream of mankind, eternal life, comes true for Wowbagger in the Hitchhiker trilogy. The reaction of scientists to the accident that causes this state proves with comic effect that people do not learn from history. Readers laugh at themselves and the truth of the fact.

From another perspective, the quest for eternal life or eternal youth may fail altogether and result in death. In Eric by Terry Pratchett, Ponce da Quirm dies after drinking from the fountain of youth without boiling the water. The comic effect here is ironic - he did not know that the water should be boiled first. Ponce is met in hell by the main characters.

To judge from the above it seems wise of the gods not to have granted man the gift of eternal youth and/or life. The wisdom of God or the gods is, however, frequently questioned in SF and especially in the comedy/SF of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett, who mock it as well.

The first writer of SF, Mary Shelley, author of Frankenstein treats God as an absent being, having no concern for the personal lives of mankind. Instead of seeking Him man seeks after power and self-fulfilment. The science fiction of the time is Gothic - distant and unearthly. Together with that of Edgar Alan Poe, Shelley's rather pessimistic writing addresses the fears generated by technology and change.

Terry Pratchett does not address these fears as such, but his gods are portrayed as living on a mountain, impersonal and distant from creatures of the Discworld. The creatures prefer it this way. The gods are portrayed as very human in personality - weak and uncertain; when they are forgotten by humans they die and turn into haunting spirits. If even only one person remains believing the god in question becomes a small god. The nature or status of the god depends not on his own works, but on the belief of men. Here Pratchett makes an important point about religion. As man's faith in science increases, his faith in God seems to diminish, and accordingly his power seems to have diminished. The gods in Pratchett's novels are shown to be weak and dependant on people for their prosperity, instead of the other way around, which is the more conventional view of gods or God. The gods are reduced to beings that are absurd and laughable; not at all effective in the physical world.

The limited knowledge of God in the world today is also satirised by Douglas Adams in the form of Zarquon, the prophet who returns at the end of the world and is unsure about what to say at the event. His followers are disappointed, if not embarrassed. The basic elements of religion remain the same, although the religion itself is different. People still swear by the prophet-god's name - Zarquon - and believe that he will return at the end of the world, which he indeed does. Like Pratchett's gods, the prophet is also uncertain of himself and weak in the face of rationality and the physical world. However, the element of need for people's belief in order to exist does not feature as prominently in the Hitchhiker

trilogy as it does in Small Gods. A more serious writer who combines SF with religious fantasy is C.S. Lewis in Out Of The Silent Planet(1938), which is an example of the more serious treatment of religion in SF/fantasy. He uses his own religious beliefs as a theme in his novels. Adams and Pratchett rather use the popular beliefs of the world as themes.

Religion is a popular theme in SF, as writers become more interested in our moral and metaphysical lives, but another approach Adams and Pratchett use is combining humour with religion in science fiction. This is what Pratchett does in his non-Discworld novel, Good Omens. He departs from reality by creating spiritual or religious characters, such as a devil, an angel and an antichrist. The situation is the end of the world. A further departure from the state of logic occurs when the destruction of the world is stopped by the Antichrist himself. Pratchett links his novel with reality through the human qualities of his characters - they want to experience Earth and its good things for longer if possible. Also the antichrist and his gang members are typical children, which fact occasionally causes laughter.

In both the above cases there is a mockery of the conflict between the spiritual and the secular aspects, a conflict which is reflective of our own modern world and society.

The theme of a computer as God is also a popular one in SF. The conventional God fails, therefore humans decide to build their own god, which

ironically fails even more badly. These computers can, like the aliens, also be either malignant or benign, but, in the opinion of Douglas Adams, they are always useless, regardless of their nature. Deep Thought takes millions of years to discover that the answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything is 42, during which time he is useful for nothing else. Eddie the ship computer of the Heart of Gold is active and even friendly, but irritating. Hactar, who minipulates the people of Krikkit into a life of war and destruction, is an extreme example of a useless and equally destructive computer. These computers are indicative of Adams' own view of computers at the time of writing the trilogy. Neil Gaiman (1993:149) reveals Adams' opinion:

> 'In a 1982 interview he revealed that he considered computers to be, if not intrinsically malevolent, then useless - either HACTARs or EDDIEs. He had just moved into the Islington flat, and had found it impossible to convince the various utilities companies' computers that he had in fact moved.'

The above is a problem that many people have with the modern world of computers. Adams exaggerates problems with computers to evoke laughter. The fact that Deep Thought talks in prophetic terms about a computer to come also raises the issue of God and his true usefulness or helpfulness. The examples of Hactar and Eddie could be viewed as two different ways of seeing God in the modern world. He is seen by some as destructive, malevolent and seeking only his own good fortune; others again see Him as aloof, indifferent, completely useless and slightly ridiculous. These views are incorporated in

Adams' work, whereas Pratchett sees God as dependent on man for his existence, rather than the other way around.

Wars, computer-caused or otherwise, and total destruction of the world are themes that both Terry Pratchett and Douglas Adams incorporate into their work. The cause of the destruction in both cases is technology - the earlier mentioned 'science' of the Discworld, magic, and the logical science in Douglas Adams' work cause war and destruction, or the danger of it in the world or universe. The shock of this is reduced by the comic element in both novels.

In the Hitchhiker trilogy the theme of destruction comes in the form of Earth destroyed by the Vogons and the danger the universe is in later with the Krikkit wars. The level of seriousness with which the impending disaster is handled by Adams' 'heroes' is remarkable and also funny, not only because of what it says about their character, but also because of what it suggests about human nature in general. Ford wants to go to a party to drink and dance. Arthur's home has been destroyed, so he has ceased caring. Even the judge who gives a solution to the Krikkit wars does not remember it beyond the court room. All of these reactions are easy to identify with and laugh at, because the reader recognises himself. The salvation of the universe is left entirely to Trillian who fortunately succeeds quite well.

The heroes of Pratchett are also interesting to note. They are much more

erratic and strange than Adams' heroes, but react the same way to danger and life-threatening situations. Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979) state that the typical hero in fantasy:

> '.... is usually a human or humanlike being and is almost always a representative type, an Everyman character.'

This is true of the above mentioned characters from Adams, and also of Pratchett's characters. However, it is also mentioned by these critics that the heroes usually do not know the noble qualities they have until called upon to test them. This is the point where we find the heroic qualities in both Adams' and Pratchett's characters falling short. They simply remain human, not wanting to be involved and needing to lie down and hide when trouble appears on the horizon. In this regard Pratchett and Adams mock the usual heroism of normal fantasy and science fiction characters. Theirs is not a typical fantasy. The heroes remain reluctant, finding no noble qualities and just remaining their cowardly selves, although this is not the case with all the novels by Pratchett, but only in those examined here.

The theme of danger and death because of science also frequently appears in the Discworld novels, where the world is often in danger because of the ease with which the delicate balance between magic and reality is disturbed. This can happen in any number of ways: Death is fired; the Dungeon Dimensions break through; elves come into reality; or fairy tales come true. All these have to do

with magic and it is often this, the very 'science' on which the world is based, that brings with it the danger of destruction. The exaggeration of the fantasy element also brings about comedy.

In Good Omens the theme of war and destruction is handled in terms of religion when the war between Heaven and Hell threatens to destroy the world. However, human beings seem to be able do destroy the world quite well without divine intervention. The reader recognises the human tendency to be cruel and destructive. This tendency is mocked by Pratchett. In fact, Crowley the devil plays a major role in keeping the war that would destroy the Earth, from taking place. The danger lies not in outside sources, but in man himself. The wanton destruction of the environment in favour of technology amounts to the same thing - no aliens or powers can do what humans can do themselves to help utter destruction. This seems to be a common theme in the works of both Adams and Pratchett. Although the theme is handled with undertones of laughter, it is also a forboding idea handled by these authors in a way to make the reader think.

However, human values remain. At the end of Mostly Harmless the Earth in all its forms is destroyed, yet Zaphod Beeblebrox is still in the universe and so are the other characters Arthur Dent has met during his journey. There is a uniform moral code in the universe that cannot be destroyed, despite the evil forces that are at work. Religion still exists, however feebly, with Zarquon who is bound to return at the end of time, in spite of technological advances which have

become the new god of human kind.

The dangers of technology are handled with humour in the novels discussed here. Most of the time there is impending disaster in these works, but it is also always laughable. Many of the issues satirised are serious and modern, as will be discussed more elaborately later, but the idea that laughter is always possible remains. By incorporating these issues in their comedy/SF works, Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett manage to envision a world which is less pessimistic and morbid than might have been expected from this genre.

CHAPTER V

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF FANTASY, AND THEIR USE BY ADAMS AND PRATCHETT

i

Ann Swinfen (1984) distinguishes between two schools in fantasy - those who condemn this mode, and those who accept it. Those who accept it are increasing in numbers, as many universities are including fantasy in their courses and critics often pay serious attention to the genre. Fantasy was made acceptable among adult readers by J.R.R. Tolkien. The fantasy writer, according to Swinfen (1984), has to take into account the rational mind of modern man and write his fantasies accordingly. Faye Joyce Ringel (1979:38) states:

> 'The times have changed, however; fantasy has infiltrated the "mainstream" of literature, if not in traditional guise.' (1979:37)

And subsequently quotes from Rabkin:

> '...we can see how, in the precarious world of the Bomb, Fantasy has moved out of the Victorian nursery and into the adult library.'

More or less the same is said about science fiction in my previous chapter and this is doubtlessly true of fantasy. Pratchett's fantasy is a manifestation of the untraditional when he satirizes several modern issues. In this way he uses fantasy in order to achieve a comic effect. He does this to make a comment on the world that he perceives. Adams uses the genre of science fiction in the same way.

ii

Brian Aldiss (1986:26) offers the following definition of fantasy:

> 'In its wider sense, fantasy clearly embraces all science fiction. But fantasy in a narrower sense, as opposed to science fiction, generally implies a fiction leaning more towards myth or the mythopoeic than towards an assumed realism.'

Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979:3) agree with the above:

> 'Fantasy, as a literary genre, is composed of works in which nonrational phenomena play a significant part ... that could not occur or exist according to rational standards or scientific explanations.'

The distinction between science fiction and fantasy has always been a

difficult one. F.R. Muller (1970) states that critics fail to make the distinction between science fiction and the supernatural in their attempts to define the first mentioned genre. However, Kingsley Amis (1963), also mentioned in the work of Muller, defines SF as presenting situations not yet possible. If one is to go by the above definitions, the word 'yet' in Amis's definition implies that they may become possible in terms of science. Amis goes on to say that psuedo-scientific terms create the illusion of scientific possibility in an SF work. While I have to disagree with the opinion that it is only the terms will create such an illusion, this is an important element of distinguishing between fantasy and SF.

For example, Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979) continue to make a distinction between science fiction and fantasy by saying that science fiction attempts to explain its marvels through science. This is true, whereas in fantasy no such explanations are offered. No matter how improbable, the marvels of science fiction are always possible, if man develops in a certain way, or certain inventions are made. He also mentions the term 'science fantasy', which is a type of high fantasy where the secondary world's existence is merited by scientific explanation. When the secondary world is entered, however, scientific explanation once more makes way for myth and magic. Pratchett's Discworld novels could be classified under this heading, since his secondary world is set on 'the edge of reality', assuming that there is a way to reach it through for example space travel. When the Discworld is entered, magic rules and is still unexplained by science. Pratchett combines this with comedy. His fantasy world is made

comic through the fantasy that it represents. The reader laughs at the fantastic world and thus finds not only one way of escape (through fantasy), but two (also through laughter). Adams' works are clearly science fiction, since themes such as aliens and space travel feature prominently. Adams also uses laughter in order to provide an escape for readers.

iii

As seen in the previous chapter and implied in Aldiss's definition above, science fiction is the fantasy of the technical age; the modern fairy tale. Anything can be accomplished through science. The only thing that is needed is a wish and it will be so: things such as time- and space travel, strange and exotic creatures and worlds, as well as eternal youth can be attained through the 'magic' of science.

Stableford (Wingrove, 1984:58) says of this very popular theme:

> 'Magic is, by definition, not science. It is, therefore, that which cannot be entertained within science fiction. Its banishment, however, has been less than total.'

In the light of this it is clear that fantasy has a deep relationship with science fiction. Magic is closely related to the science of the future because it (magic) works according to a set of rules, as does science. This has been discussed in the previous chapter. As Kathryn Hume (1984) also confirms, SF is a kind of

fantasy - a departure from the real. The scientist in SF takes the role of the wizard, who can do anything, and the alien takes on the role of the witch, a scary, but mystical creature. Wonder is brought about by science as well. Together with wonder, Adams also brings about laughter. His worlds of wonder are so absurdly exaggerated at times that the reader laughs. Together with this the reader is bombarded with one comic situation after the other.

Another idea voiced by Hume (1984) is the fact that the reader's attention is not directly called to the differences between the literary world and ours, but rather to the similarities. Tolkien, for example, creates a world populated by realistic characters (dwarves and monsters), which is surprisingly like our own. The same thing happens in the novels of Adams and also of Pratchett, when a suspension of disbelief takes place. Since Adams' work is more closely related to reality than Pratchett's, this is a greater feat for the fantasy author. The reader unconditionally believes everything the author tells him. The authors make full use of their freedom in terms of imagination, yet the reader is compelled to believe in their strange and different worlds, partly because he wants to believe in these worlds, and partly because of various techniques used to make these bizarre places seem more authentic. Laughter is another technique that can contribute to the realistic effect of the authors' worlds. In laughing, the reader identifies with situations and characters, thus making them more accessible and easy to believe. The fantasy world created by Pratchett is by no means a utopia; in fact this world bears much resemblance to our own in terms of general human

values, which increases the credibility of the fictional world. The reader's attention is not called directly to the differences between the literary world and the real world, but rather to the resemblances. The limits of credibility are stretched, sometimes through comedy, but not to the extent of the meaningless. The fact that the Discworld and other fictional worlds are accepted as real by both the authors and their creatures for what these worlds are in themselves, rather than in relation to Earth, also increases the reader's ability to accept something that otherwise would seem absurd. Swinfen (1984) agrees with this by saying that the starting point for an author's exploration of a different, strange world is our own world. It is therefore natural that fantasy would find its origin in our world and not be that far a departure from our reality as would tend to seem the case. By combining this with comedy, Pratchett also gently teaches the reader to laugh at himself and his own beliefs and values. The conventional is being overridden by new thought processes; G.B. Smith (1990:3) calls fantasy a 'new avenue of meaning' that emerges from this process, and the process is expanded by Pratchett when he uses comedy.

In the same vein Swinfen (1984) mentions primary and secondary worlds, where the secondary world is the world of fantasy. There are, according to her, two things essential in order for the secondary world to be realistic: firstly, the physical nature of the secondary world should be comprehensible and realistic, and secondly, the culture and background of the secondary world should be consistent. As seen above, both Adams and Pratchett take considerable pains to

achieve both these goals through techniques such as religion, language in the secondary worlds and social issues. The worlds are like our own, because these issues are present in our world as well, but the authors present them in such as way as to make the secondary worlds in which they exist real and at the same time easy to identify with through laughter.

iv

Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979) distinguish between high and low fantasy, where low fantasy is set in the primary world, the world we know and live in, whereas high fantasy has to do with secondary worlds, alien to our own. Pratchett uses both these modes; for example I would classify Good Omens as a low fantasy novel. It is set in our own world, where the supernatural intrudes. The world does not believe in magic or ghosts, but a host of supernatural phenomena take place in the story. When the war between Heaven and Hell is finished, every person on Earth seems to forget the chaotic and supernatural events that accompanied this war. The normal human being rules out the supernatural, for which there is no rational explanation.

As we have seen, the idea of reality is maintained in the fantasy of Pratchett and Adams, and reality is strengthened by using comedy, although Pratchett uses the supernatural more often than Adams. According to Eric Rabkin (1976) human knowledge infects all fantasy. It is good that this is so, because one of

the roles of fantasy is to reveal the truth in the human heart. Pratchett's world is not the denial of the real in favour of a far-fetched fantasy, but rather an exchange of realities - there is more than one reality. Even now in the every-day real world, reality becomes more unreal with technological advances and bizarre human occurrences. Even in the modern world the bounds of realism are elastic. Therefore laughter seems to be essential for man to cope with all the strange occurrences in the world. G.B. Smith (1990:2) considers this point:

> '..."fantasy" becomes more fluid by being unyoked from reference to the parameters of the real. This occurs naturally when the parameters of the real themselves become fluid.'

Smith goes on to say that this fluidity of reality is occurring in the present century. I believe it is with this in mind that the authors introduce the reader to the unknown, rather than the unreal and help him cope with it through laughing at it. Adams deals with the fluidity of reality by creating as many strange worlds as he possibly can, whereas Pratchett creates the Discworld, as strange as possible, with as many strange characters and occurences as possible. Reality, according to Rabkin (1976), is not merely what man thinks it is - there are many different realities, as also becomes clear in the SF and fantasy novels discussed here. The reader is not bound by reality; he travels in fantasy worlds. This is clear when all that separates the reader and indeed all Earthlings from the worlds of Adams and Pratchett are time, technology and distance. Their realities are

strange and unusual, often comic, but never do they give the impression of being unreal. This is the main characteristic of the fantasy worlds of these two authors. Eric Rabkin (1976:10) mentions the term 'anti-expected'. The opposite of what is expected happens. This is true of the novels I discuss in my dissertation. For example, Death is a personality in the novels of Pratchett. He is not expected by those who die, or by the reader. But through laughter the reader is able to identify with him. Adams creates a more realistic version of the unexpected when he lets Arthur Dent survive against all expectation.

The horror element in fantasy is a popular theme that has not been left out by Adams and Pratchett. Death again serves as a good example of horror fantasy – Pratchett presents him as a skeleton with a scythe, a source of fear in fantasy and myth. Adams, on the other hand, uses themes such as the imminent destruction of the world, or the universe. The theme of destruction seems to feature less prominently in the novels of Pratchett. This, while being a departure from immediate reality, is not something unfamiliar to the reader. Another role of fantasy, as Rabkin (1976) notes, is to provide psychological escape for the reader. This is escape from the belief that the world is in a hopeless state and that there is no way out of it save death. Pratchett combines laughter with fantasy in order to help this escape further. It is also an escape from the boredom of everyday life, but gives no escape from responsibility and order. The idea of freedom is introduced by Smith (1990:10) who equates fantasy with the idea of freedom and perhaps defines it best in the words: 'The Search for

freedom does away with boundaries.'

In the Hitchhiker trilogy even Zaphod and Ford are eventually forced to take some responsibility for saving the universe and this will in the end secure their freedom from destruction. In Good Omens by Pratchett, the world is threatened by religious forces; something that never happens in the novels of Adams, unless the computer is seen as god. Those forces, whether good or evil, are portrayed as unsympathetic towards humans, and thus the reader rejoices when in the end the antichrist manages to save the world after all.

In the other novels by Terry Pratchett, as already mentioned, it is the 'science' of the Discworld, magic, that threatens to destroy the world. This is not a very far departure from the reality in our own world, where scientific development causes destruction of the world we live in.

The reader also sympathises with the horror of all Earthlings when they hear that the Earth is to be obliterated in a few seconds. The panic that seizes them is completely impotent and powerless; the reader can identify with the feeling and laugh at it. In the fourth part of the Hitchhiker trilogy it is revealed to be nothing more than an illusion, except for the vanishing of the dolphins, another comic absurdity that Adams includes. The horror is veiled by the illusion that nothing at all has happened. Another aspect of this in the trilogy is the fact that people make a show of the end of the universe. The horror is entirely obliterated by

man's need for entertainment, to which laughter is closely linked.

This way of handling horror is reflected in the works of Terry Pratchett as well. In Good Omens the strange events at the end of time are soon forgotten when the danger is in the past. People forget and live their lives as usual again. This inner protective device of human beings features most prominently in Reaper Man, where Death, as a result of having been fired, is forced to live among people. People see him as a tall, thin man; however, children and animals see Death for what he is. When Death, or Bill Door, as he renames himself, holds a chicken in his hand, the creature simply dies of fright, because of what it has seen. This is an absurd exaggeration, meant to cause laughter, but also serves to create the illusion of reality. When shown their self-deception, people become defensive and uncomfortable. When a little girl calls Bill a 'skellington', she is shushed by the grown-ups who are afraid to see him. This idea is one of those used by Terry Pratchett and Douglas Adams to make the fantasy of their work more real - it is a general truth that people select what they want to remember or see. Thus their own fantasy world is created in the past or present - a departure from rational reality.

Rational reality is often more chaotic than any fantasy can be; therefore fantasy is often written to turn the chaos of the world into something useful and positive, a function reminiscent of that of SF. Pratchett does this effectively through combining the genre with comedy – the reader laughs at the chaos of the

world, learning to cope better with it. Pratchett (1995:7) says of reality:

> ' ... reality is a bit untrustworthy at the best of times. There are plenty of people who believe that Elvis is alive, or that aliens occasionally land here to do highly personal things to people, or that the whole idea of evolution is a conspiracy of godless scientists. Almost all of these people can vote and some of them have got guns.'

When reading humorous SF/fantasy novels the reader can put his own problems into better perspective. Fantasy, and this is especially true of the authors discussed here, does not mirror life as it is. It is rather a distant vision of life, of which the author is intensely enjoying the distortion. Pratchett, together with his readers, enjoys this distortion to an even greater degree when comedy is included. Fantasy is a celebration of the imagination and when reading it the reader finds his own imagination enhanced and stimulated. Pratchett does this through comic situations – the reader's imagination is further stimulated by laughter. However, there is still a real concern for the human condition without which the novels would be shallow. Pratchett (1995:278) gives his own definition of fantasy:

> ' ... something old and commonplace presented in a new way so that you're almost seeing it for the first time. That's what fantasy should be.'

When one examines this definition in the light of Sutherland's (1967) view that

satire is used to expose the ugliness of reality, it seems that the two cannot be used together in the same work. However, Pratchett and Adams incorporate satire successfully in their work together with fantasy, at times exposing ugly facts, but at the same time teaching people to not take this too seriously.

Smith (1990:16) calls fantasy a form of 'play', and the genre is left open to many possibilities, a number of which Pratchett and Adams examine to the full. Smith continues that 'play' can also be a very serious process. Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett realise this as they address issues such as the universe, science, religion, politics, sex and death, making fun of human pain and problems, 'playing' with them, but not omitting an undertone of seriousness. What these authors say about the issues is true - politics is corrupt, sex is enjoyable, and death strikes fear into the human heart throughout the universe. However, neither author seems to lose his sense of humour, except perhaps in the case of their more satirical novels, such as Small Gods and Mostly Harmless, although there are situations in these novels that are very comic.

Part of the chaos of the rational world is the modern sense of truth. There is nothing truly knowable in the world; God seems far away and untrustworthy. So modern literature tries to make sense also of this 'non-truth'. In the novels of Pratchett and Adams the disorder and uncertainty are faced directly and laughed at. Through the vitality of the text and celebration of life by characters such as Nanny Ogg and Zaphod Beeblebrox, strength is drawn from discouraging

circumstance. The truth in these novels is merely a question of perspective. The examples of Reaper Man and Good Omens have already been mentioned in this regard. The ways that Pratchett and Adams address these issues are similar – they seem to share the same philosophy of life.

There is also the question of parallel universes, where for every decision there is an opposite decision and consequences in other universes parallel to our own. Pratchett uses this theme very prominently in Lords and Ladies Granny Weatherwax begins to have memories of her counterpart in a parallel universe. This counterpart marries, has children and grandchildren and never becomes a witch. Pratchett creates many comic situations through this theme – for example the idea of Granny Weatherwax and Ridcully falling in love.

Adams handles this theme in a more concrete way. The survival of the Earth in the Hitchhiker trilogy is made possible by the fact that for the one destroyed Earth there are thousands which continue existing. Unfortunately, however, the Vogons manage to destroy all of these versions of Earth through a clever scheme with the new and improved Guide. In this way nothing is certain even in the world of fantasy and science fiction. While Pratchett and Adams admit to and face the negative facts of life, vigour and energy is still derived from these facts without seriously trying to change them, perhaps to a greater degree in Pratchett's work. The authors then enable the reader to cope with events through laughter.

In a sense, Pratchett's fantasy world is logical. he begins with an illogical idea, but builds upon it with logic, which gives it the illusion of reality. Fantasy depends on the general perception of accepted reality; it is a re-statement of the real world. Through imagination the author uses fantasy to explain reality. There is not much difference between what does happen and what can happen. As already mentioned it is simply a question of distance - all the reader needs to do is travel to the edge of reality, where the Discworld will be found. Adams uses logic in the same way in order to make his science fiction worlds seem real.

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Fantasy, according to Hassler, expresses ideas about the modern world and its values. The mode is no longer simply escapist literature. It has deepened into a literature which appreciates the world from a different viewpoint. The familiar is made strange, while at the same time the strange is made familiar. In the Introduction I have mentioned that I strongly disagree with the notion that fantasy and science fiction are meant only for children. Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979:24) employ the term 'all ages' fantasy to catagorise the type of fantasy suitable for children and adults alike. Their statement is:

> 'Until recently, it has generally been assumed ... that high fantasy is for children. Only children ... were uncritical and gullible enough to enjoy literature about faeries or magic.'

As already said, it was J.R.R. Tolkien who changed this point of view to the one that well-written fantasy can be both entertaining and serious. Both the works of Adams and Pratchett confirm this. Although the inclusion of comedy in their work might strengthen criticism against them. However, far from being frivolous and funny fantastic stories, their works comment seriously on issues of everyday life - war, politics, religion, sex etc. This should make it obvious that they are not for children alone. The readership of Pratchett has been mentioned in the Introduction.

The motivation given for the statement that fantasy/SF is only for children, is explained by Thomas M. Disch as being that most of the genre's protagonists are children. This motivation is shown to be incorrect by Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer, who state that child protagonists often act like adults when faced with challenges from the secondary world. In Pratchett's Good Omens Adam, the child antichrist shows remarkable insight and maturity when he saves the world from destruction by a heavenly war. Because high fantasy has so much of the serious in terms of gods and magic, according to Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979), it offers much to all age groups, even though in the case of Pratchett one is also allowed to laugh at these serious issues. However, most of Pratchett's work would appeal to adults to a greater degree if one is to consider his use of wit and parody. These are elements that adults rather than children are meant to understand.

They do, however, point out that this is not the case with all high fantasy. There is a distinction to be made when looking at the style of a certain work. Very simplistic work would qualify for children's literature, wheras great complexities of language would impair the enjoyment a child would find in a fantasy work.

Style and character development are also used by Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979) to classify all ages fantasy.

In conclusion, of course, there is the academic interest in the genre which finally proves that fantasy has great merit in the adult world as well. Many fantasy literature units and courses have been created by both schools and colleges (Tymn, Zahorski, Boyer, 1979:30). This has resulted in critics taking a remarkable interest in the genre.

CHAPTER VI

COMPARING THE WORKS AND IDEAS OF TERRY PRATCHETT AND DOUGLAS ADAMS

Mostly Harmless by Douglas Adams is the most satirical novel of the Hitchhiker trilogy. It has already been mentioned that this is probably because Adams has tired of the trilogy, although some readers have reacted very positively towards it. Some of the elements causing the novel to be more negative and less fun than the previous four may be the absence of Zaphod Beeblebrox, the change of the Guide to something sinister and dark rather than a source of comedy and the complete destruction of the Earth and most of the main characters of the trilogy.

Despite this, Adams still makes use of the elements previously discussed in order to achieve a comic effect in his SF work, together with a serious satiric comment on society. Laughter is for example evoked with repetition before the beginning of the novel when Adams begins with a series of seemingly repetitive statements on four consecutive pages to the effect that things happen. This is used as a starting point for the subject of time travel and parallel universes, which is the theme of the novel. Adams here uses a typical SF theme and combines it effectively with comedy. Arthur Dent is seriously affected with regard to parallel universes in the loss of both his girlfriend and the Earth he knows. He has to settle for a life on a primitive planet where he is revered as a sandwich maker. This is a case of exaggeration designed to make the reader laugh, despite the tragedy of it. Tricia and Trillian are even more intensely affected. For

each decision that Tricia makes and regrets, another one of her in a parallel universe, Trillian, makes the exact opposite decision, which she also regrets. Adams here combines irony with SF. Trillian enjoys a life of strange universes and worlds, but longs for Tricia's normal life. Another case of irony is when Tricia finally believes that she has received a second chance, only to discover that the Grebulons cannot show or tell her anything that she does not already know.

The Oxford Complete Wordfinder defines parody as: 'a humorous exaggerated imitation of an author, literary work, style, etc.' In Mostly Harmless religion, among other SF themes, is parodied. Adams uses this comic device when he creates the primitive planet Lamuella, on which Arthur is a sandwich maker. The religious leader on Lamuella, Thrashbarg, claims to be the only one who knows the will of the 'almighty Bob'. Through him, Adams parodies the styles of many religious leaders in order to show up the pretentiousness of such figures. Thrashbarg's followers are ignorant of the fact that he manufactures all that he knows about their god, but they do suspect something. This is a parody of the fact that religious leaders do not wish to expose their own ignorance and instead tend to keep their followers in the dark. When Random arrives, she brings technology, entertainment and corruption and Thrashbarg is pressurised to make his tales wilder and wilder in order to compete with secularism. This is a parody of the tendency to prefer violence as entertainment instead of religion. Adams comments on the human perception of entertainment. Other cases in the novel where Adams parodies the way that religion is perceived is, for example, where he mentions the faculty of Divinity and Water Polo at the university of

Maximegalon. The idea of the secular and religious in a joint faculty is somewhat ridiculous, but meant to make the reader laugh. In the beginning of Chapter 3 of Mostly Harmless Adams provides another parody of the way that deities are sometimes presented and perceived. He mentions the position of Advanced God, which is possible to be achieved. Such a god, according to the author, also has a lot to explain about the inaccuracies with regard to the creation of the world. The inaccessability of God is also parodied through the phrase '... and are therefore not available for comment on matters of deep physics at this time.'

Another popular SF convention is robots. Adams parodies the way in which robots tend to be presented in SF stories though the use of Marvin in the first four novels of his trilogy. Marvin dies in the fourth part, and the robot Colin is used for parody in Mostly Harmless. Colin, a robot which Ford names after a dog, is a security robot for the new Guide offices. Ford changes the robot's circuitry in such a way that it is ridiculously happy about everything. The robot is as smart as before, but its new emotional quality serves as a parody of its usual presentation as an efficient, non-sentient being. Adams uses parody here in order to achieve a contrasting effect with Marvin. Colin is the exact opposite emotional type (after having been changed by Ford) from Marvin. Perhaps this is a comment on the competence of manufacturing companies – Marvin had a fault in his system, whereas Colin experiences enjoyment of life with some effortless redesigning from Ford.

Adams parodies the kind of high-tech SF which makes great play of things like advanced security systems when he shows Ford to break into the main

computer at the Guide offices and with the use of a stolen identity card deceives the security system into thinking that he is an authorised person. The security system is shown to be incompentent because of its very efficiency.

Through various comic devices, including parody, Adams explores the universe in his novels – in true SF tradition he creates worlds and situations far away from Earth. This theme of SF is not usually seen in comic terms, but here also the author combines it with humour. The focus is on the way that time works. The reader laughs at the absurdity of some of the worlds in the universe – an absurdity caused by parallel universes. An example is the number of Earths that Arthur arrives on after having lost his girlfriend and before finding Lamuella. The absurdity of this situation is a parody of the presentation of this theme as it is conventionally used in SF.

In his trilogy, Douglas Adams achieves a remarkable effect through combining SF with humour. As mentioned in the Introduction of this dissertation, this is a sideway followed by the author in order to give his work an unusual edge.

Witches Abroad is a parody of the fairy tales Cinderella and the Frog Prince. Pratchett parodies the first fairy tale when he calls the girl who must marry the prince Ella, and she is unwilling to marry him. Ella's fairy godmother is too enthusiastic to bring about a happy ending, and things go wrong in this way. An element of horror is introduced when The Frog Prince is parodied. The prince is a frog at night and a man by day. Ella is not very happy about kissing a man who

reminds one of a frog. These parodies work together for a typical Discworld happy ending:

> 'The wicked witch is defeated, the ragged princess comes into her own, the kingdom is restored. Happy days are here again. Happy ever after. Which means that life stops here. Stories want to end. They don't care what happens next...'
> (p. 267)

Pratchett also uses parody with regard to the Discworld itself. The flat world that is carried around by a turtle and four elephants is a parody of previously held beliefs on Earth. Scientific knowledge is parodied in the same way. Pratchett mentions that there is nothing that scientists truly know anything about and thus they simply concentrate on the chaos of the universe. Adams also parodies this idea when he mentions the 'whole sort of general mish-mash' in Mostly Harmless.

In Witches Abroad Pratchett parodies the story of Midas in the footnote on page 11. A deity that is not educated and does not know how to spell, causes a greedy emperor to turn everything he touches into Glod (a dwarf) instead of gold. By means of this parody Pratchett makes fun of religion and deities.

Witchcraft is related to religion and Pratchett comments on generally held beliefs about witches. He parodies the perception of what witches do – according to Pratchett, they do not dance naked at night, do not eat pieces of reptile, and do not believe in holding sabbats together with other witches. The blame for these misconceptions is laid on artists and writers, whose style is to

exaggerate things in order to create sensation.

Pratchett also comments on the general human perception of travel and foreigners. The traveling witches' somewhat condescending outlook reflects what people in the everyday world are likely to think and feel when visiting a place which is not familiar to them.

Adams uses parody with regard to science fiction elements and themes, whereas Pratchett moves more towards fantasy for his use of parody. However, some parallels can be seen in both the novels discussed above. Pratchett parodies religion and certain human perceptions, such as those about witches and travel. Adams also makes use of religion for his instances of parody, and comments on the human perception of entertainment and violence.

In general, Pratchett's novels end more happily than the Adams' trilogy. All the main characters are still alive and the world has been saved as the threat is destroyed.

Pratchett achieves a comic effect through his characters. The three witches, his main characters who save the day, are easy to identify with. Each has a personality which compliments the other two. Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg and Magrat have been discussed in detail elsewhere in this dissertation. Travel is used as subject a of comedy in Witches Abroad. It is an aspect of human life which has caused difficulties for many people. Readers laugh at the exaggeration of such problems in the novel. Science and other

human aspects are also used as subjects of comedy in the novel In this way Pratchett effectively combines fantasy with humour.

Because Pratchett's leans more towards fantasy than science fiction, he parodies elements of fantasy. Most of his characters are parodies of creatures found in this genre, for example, witches, wizards, dwarfs and trolls. Apart from fantasy elements, he also parodies the way that people perceive religion and science, which compares well with the way that Adams parodies these same elements. Through this, Pratchett comments effectively on human nature, which includes hypocrisy and self-deception. Because of the way that he combines fantasy with comedy, his works are seldom offensive. The example of Magrat can be used to demonstrate how Pratchett comments on the part of human nature that is prudish and unwilling to experiment and take risks, whereas Nanny Ogg is on the other side of the scale with her questionable morals and adventurous spirit. Granny Weatherwax is an example at some points of the tendency to deceive oneself – she would never admit to weakness. All three of these are fantasy figures. The elements of human nature are exaggerated to such an extent as not to offend. Together with the fact that they are created as figures of fantasy to enjoy, this leads to Pratchett's comedy not being offensive, and at the same time, readers can recognise their own nature in them and laugh at it. His purpose is also that of the satirist, in letting the reader know what is wrong in the world, such as racism – or speciesism on the Discworld, of which Granny Weatherwax is guilty, and political oppression, which is embodied by the

Patrician.

The same applies to Adams, who also parodies the way in which science and religion are perceived, as well as other elements of SF, such as the way that robots, high-tech features and the destruction of the world are normally used in the genre. In the same way as mentioned with Pratchett, Zaphod Beeblebrox is a character who largely embodies the hypocritical element of human nature, without being offensive, because he is created to give the reader enjoyment. At the same time he provides food for thought and the ability of the reader to laugh at his own faults. When Adams comments on religion, he succeeds in making it seem absurd to an extent where the reader laughs. The worlds that are discussed are sufficiently far removed from Earth to not give offense, but at the same time not too far removed to comment seriously on what happens on Earth. An example is Thrashbarg on the planet Lamuella, who has been mentioned earlier to have to compete with secularism in order to keep his religion popular and at the same time deceives his followers. Adams achieves the effect of the reader enjoying to laugh at things usually taken seriously, such as religion and science. However, like Pratchett, he also acts as satirist when he comments on things that are wrong in the world, such as police brutality, famine and political hypocrisy, of which Zaphod Beeblebrox is an example.

From the above it is clear that Pratchett and Adams use a very similar approach when combining their different genres with comedy. A difference is that Pratchett's comedy depends largely on character rather than other elements,

such as language. However, it has already been mentioned that other elements such as exaggeration, interesting expression and word play are also used in his novels. Adams also creates some very lovable comic characters, but he rather depends on language - interesting expressions or words, as well as bizarre situations - to evoke laughter in his readers. His main character, Arthur Dent, is a very ordinary man. Although he does create strange characters such as Zaphod Beeblebrox, diversity of characters is lacking in his novels. This is because his works form a trilogy, whereas the novels of Pratchett allow for a wide diversity of characters, perhaps making his works more interesting than those of Adams for some readers.

It can be that Pratchett's techniques of comedy are more successful than those of Adams, because a wider variety of material is available to him. He creates a single world, but with a great diversity of characters and situations. The reader can look forward to something new and fresh every time a new Pratchett novel is published. The Hitchhiker trilogy by Adams consists of five novels all about the life of Arthur Dent, which would tend to become a little tedious. Adams seems to have lost sympathy with his characters at the end of the trilogy, where the main characters are all obliterated through the mistake of a teenager. Pratchett seems to love his characters, as he loves the Discworld. He enjoys spending time with them and the endings of his novels are always happy, at least until the next life-threatening situation occurs.

The most obvious difference between these two authors in general is that

Terry Pratchett uses more outright fantasy elements in his Discworld novels than does Douglas Adams in the Hitchhiker trilogy. In the trilogy there is an abundance of aliens, alien worlds, space travel and technological ideas. Terry Pratchett invents witches, wizards, dwarfs and a world ruled by magic. As stated, his works can be called science fantasy, because magic is used in the place of science; Douglas Adams' work can be partly classified as fantasy because it is removed from reality as it is generally known in the world.

Both authors involve many of the same science fiction themes in their works, despite the fact that the one is more fantastically inclined than the other. Examples of these themes are: time travel in order to save a world or universe in danger, parallel realities as found in Lords and Ladies and Mostly Harmless, and the assumption that the particular world on which the characters find themselves at the moment is not the only one in the universe. The horror element, also popular in the science fiction genre, is used by both authors in the form of the world in danger of destruction, cosmic disaster. In the case of Terry Pratchett the destruction always looms on a rather small scale; there is only one world in danger, although to the inhabitants of this world the disaster may not seem that small. With Douglas Adams the danger progresses from Arthur Dent's house destroyed by the government, to the Earth destroyed by the Vogons, to the Universe destroyed by the Krikkiters. In all these cases, it is the 'science' of the particular world which tends to destroy it, whether it be technology or magic. There is a difference between the authors, when Adams finally kills most of his

main characters at the end of the trilogy, whereas the Discworld is still in existence and does not give any indication of stopping soon.

The heroes reponsible for saving the Earth, universe or Discworld are not the typical heroic type. In the creation of their heroes Adams and Pratchett use similar ideas. Arthur, Ford, Zaphod, Rincewind and most of the witches and wizards are cowards and prefer to hide somewhere until the cosmic disaster has occurred, as long as they don't have to die in the process. However, they are always thrown into the action somehow and manage to save the world in question.

An equally obvious fact is that Terry Pratchett uses no chapters in his Discworld novels, but in the more reality-related work Good Omens chapters are present. One interpretation of this can be that there is no limit to the Discworld - the imagination is set free. Anything can happen there; this is reflected in the 'free' style in which the novels are written. The Discworld is farther removed from reality than Douglas Adams' ideas, because with some scientific development, what happens in the trilogy may still be possible in the future. In the case of Pratchett there is the fact that our world is ruled by straightforward science, instead of magic.

In the light of the above it is obvious that different readers would find one or the other author more appealing. Those who prefer the more realistic kind of science fiction and to whom interesting lingual jokes would appeal, would prefer

Douglas Adams. Whereas those who prefer more fantastical writing would rather read Terry Pratchett. This is closely related to the fact that different people find different things funny because not everyone has the same standards, the same education or the same opinions. For example whereas many readers found Adams' work appealing throughout the trilogy until the fifth part, there is a difference of opinion on the part of Judith E. Boss (Gunn, 1988:2), who states:

> 'The good fun, and the best-seller tradition, continued through three sequels ... although the comic invention tends to dwindle through the last two.'

Adams receives more complimentary criticism from Robert Reilly (Smith, 1986:2):

> 'His imagination permits him to pile improbability upon improbability whirling the reader into a tailspin of laughter.'

However, this opinion also becomes negative:

> ' ... So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish, although it includes a number of details clearly intended to wrap up some of the loose ends from the previous volumes, proves to be too much of the same thing. The freshness which lent such force to Hitch-Hiker is gone; the joke has been carried too far.'

The opinion of Reed (Collins & Latham, :80) seems to be positive, although not a discussion of the Hitchhiker trilogy as such:

> 'No one writing in contemporary SF or fantasy quite has

> Adams's flair for manic humor and narrative twists done with elegant style.'

From the above it becomes clear that Adams' work is subject to many diverse opinions, but it does remain best-seller quality.

Another difference between the authors is that Adams, after the fifth part of his trilogy seems to have tired of the Hitchhiker's world, whereas Terry Pratchett still publishes one book after another. The reason for this can be that Adams started with the creation of his worlds earlier than did Pratchett, and also used a different medium. He started out with radio broadcasts, moving on to the stage and television; the novels only appeared after the radio plays. Neil Gaiman (1993:36) gives some reasons for the rapid rise in popularity of Adams' radio play:

> 'Science fiction fans like it because it was science fiction; humour fans like it because it was funny; radio fans got off on the quality of the stereo production; Radiophonics Workshop fans doubtless had a great time; and most people like it because it was accessible, fast, and funny.'

Terry Pratchett (1995:8) started by writing novels. He says of the Discworld:

> 'After eight million words, I still like the place. You can't help having a soft spot for something that stands between you and real work.'

At present Terry Pratchett has written 21 Discworld novels, of which four have been adapted for the stage. He is reluctant to sell film rights. Whichever medium these authors use, they have both gained immense popularity with the public. Pratchett says that he will probably stop writing Discworld novels in the future; however, for the time being, readers can look forward to more.

An increasingly popular medium with the public, as is science fiction, is the computer game. Both authors have brought out computer games of their work, which should make both of them even more popular.

It has been mentioned that the intention of Pratchett and Adams is not to change the world, but to comment on it. The social criticism they give is rather extensive. When they subject religion, politics, war and hypocrisy to laughter, it is usually with the intention of criticising the institution or person involved. It is, however, a gentle criticism in most cases and maybe through this more than anything else these authors acquire a subtle power of change in their novels. For example when reading about Thrashbarg, it may become clear to a religious leader how ridiculous his style of presentation is, and he may be inspired towards change or at the very least to think. Another example can be the three witches, Matgrat, Nanny Ogg and Granny. There are characteristics in each of these witches that the reader could recognise in himself. When these characteristics are exaggerated in order to make them seem comic, the reader may come to realise the ridiculousness of extreme behaviour and may be inspired to think about his own faults. Thus, through parody and exaggeration people laugh at

themselves, realising they may be wrong and are inspired to change often ridiculous behaviour. This is also achieved through the other elements of comedy used by Adams and Pratchett.

Adams and Pratchett use the remarkable idea of combining SF and fantasy with humour to achieve an effect that is well worth studying. Comedy, SF and Fantasy have been studied seperately for some time. The authors discussed in this dissertation create a combination of the genres which can have great value for the academic world if studied further. The authors create a valuable new field of study for the new generation.

CONCLUSION

Science Fiction has proved many times that it is a very valuable field for study in the world today. Unusual works which combine comedy with science fiction such as those of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett are especially intriguing to study, because the reader can identify with all the problems presented in these works, while still being able to laugh at them. This is not only because the style is extraordinary, but also because of the message of these works for the world today. Through comic techniques Adams and Pratchett give a valuable message for the world.

SF is enjoyed by many fans - those who do not read it, watch it on television or in the movies and play the computer games. A quote such as the one by Edward James that I have mentioned in my Introduction, may have been more or less valid sixty years ago, but today holds little merit. Adams has done anything but dismiss the problems of Earth by destroying it in the first part of the Hitchhiker trilogy; the human problems remain - they are the same throughout the universe as are human values. The way that Arthur and his companions deal with these problems is the message of the novel. By using a combination of the comic and satire, Pratchett and Adams create worlds which are strange while being realistic and tolerable (Heilman, 1978:175). Heilman's (1978:16) view seems to coincide with that of the authors: '...we practice a life which permits a comic perspective.' Satire is no longer only what the definitions from Sutherland (1967) and Feinberg (1967) suggest - there is no positive alternative for things that are wrong in the

world. However, the view of Tilton (1977) is more positive; satire is tragic rather than bitter or frustrated, not condemning man, but rather sympathising with his plight.

The message from Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett can be summarised in the words from the Hitchhiker trilogy: 'don't panic'. The alternative offered for negative things in the world is a positive one - to laugh. The novels from these authors may have the inherent power to change hearts and attitudes. This, together with the fact that the novels offer something for everyone, makes them valuable for the world of today. Tymn, Zahorski and Boyer (1979:38) say of the need for fantasy:

> 'Ours is a frenetic age; today, perhaps more than ever before, people have a deeply felt need to escape for a time in order to restore their sense of awe and wonder and to regain a fresh perspective on this world.'

Science fiction is also deemed necessary for the modern world by G. David Brin (Gunn, 1988:481):

> 'Nowhere else is it more forcefully shown how literature and science jointly alter each other and are altered as humanity's range of knowledge slowly grows and evolves.'

Muller (1970:187) has the same opinion:

> 'The point is therefore not that future developments may

> make science fiction a valuable literary genre - it is already that - but that it is likely to become more valuable and permanent in the future.'

Works like those of Pratchett and Adams are valuable for the world for all the above reasons - they provide escape from, a fresh perspective on, and restore a sense of wonder to the world of the reader.

ABSTRACT

After a brief introduction to the genres that are to be discussed (Comedy, Fantasy, Science Fiction), this study aims in the following chapters to discuss works by Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett and consider how they have incorporated these genres into their works.

In the first three chapters comedy in their works is discussed – what these authors use as subject for their comedy, how they use stylistic elements in order to achieve comedy, and which techniques they use in order to make the reader laugh.

In chapter four and five themes and characteristics of science fiction and fantasy are discussed in relation to the works of Adams and Pratchett. I also attempt to show how the works of each author relate to the different genres.

Chapter six compares the works, ideas, and methods of the two authors discussed, followed by a conclusion to the dissertation.

From Douglas Adams the Hitchhiker trilogy is discussed, and from Terry Pratchett four Discworld novels, and one non-Discworld novel have been selected (see Bibliography for details).

This dissertation aims to demonstrate the comic techniques used by Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett. It also shows how these authors use established techniques in a way that gives their writing fresh perspective. Events in the world are seen in a new light through their writing. I have discussed the role of an

established mode such as comedy when incorporated in the unconventional works of Adams and Pratchett. Thus I have attempted to demonstrate the merit of studying the genres science fiction and fantasy. To conclude, the authors are compared in terms of techniques, style and subject matter, further demonstrating the unique way in which each uses comic techniques in order to suit his particular style.

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