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泰瑞‧普萊契的《貓鼠奇譚》與兒童文學再思

" A Story About Stories":

Rethinking Childhood and Children's Literature in *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*

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Table of Contents

摘要

在本文當中，我的主要研究文本為泰瑞・普萊契的《貓鼠奇譚》(2001)。此書屬於動物奇幻，針對的讀者群則是兒童。普萊契是著名的幽默奇幻暢銷作家，寫作手法上則以諷刺傳統的觀念和偏見見長。《貓鼠奇譚》中，普萊契諷刺的對象為——視兒童為純真、缺乏獨立思考能力的兒童文學傳統。因此，在本論文當中，我將探討普萊契如何在《貓鼠奇譚》中批評並翻轉傳統兒童文學的三個面向。首先我會討論普萊契如何翻轉兒童動物奇幻(children's animal fantasy)中的童年形象。接著我會探討普萊契如何利用荒謬文學(nonsense literature)的手法揭露語言與文學傳統本是人為，而非自然。最後，我會闡述普萊契如何探討兒童閱讀與說故事的過程。

本文中，我的論述以童年研究中的「童年建構論」為據。童年建構論指出，童年並非是一個純生理階段，也不是全人類皆有、固有的。它是根據一個時代的歷史文化背景建構而成的。根據這個論點，我認為普萊契在《貓鼠奇譚》中不只批判傳統動物奇幻裡的童年建構，更將兒童這個概念重新建構，賦予其自我覺察與辨別真實和論述的能力。正因為這種重新建構後的童年概念，普萊契才能合理的在兒童文學中，以一種疏離而帶批判性的態度探討語言與文學傳統之人為性，以及兒童閱讀與說故事的過程等議題。

關鍵字：泰瑞・普萊契；兒童文學；童年研究；動物奇幻；荒謬文學；閱讀；說故事

Abstract

In this thesis, I plan to discuss Terry Pratchett's *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* (2001), an animal fantasy aimed at a child audience. Pratchett is a well-known writer of comic fantasy, and he has been hailed as a keen satirist. Consistent with Pratchett's tendency to satirize established concepts and conventions, *The Amazing Maurice* targets the very genre it belongs to: children's literature. Therefore, in this paper, I will examine how in the novel, Pratchett critiques and subverts of three aspects of the tradition of children's literature: the first is Pratchett's subversion of the representation of childhood in children's animal fantasy, the second is Pratchett's use of literary nonsense to reveal the artificiality of language and literary conventions in children's literature, and the third is Pratchett's exploration of the process of children's reading and storytelling.

My discussions in the thesis are based on the premises of childhood studies, especially on its constructivist view of childhood. Construcvists scholars of childhood see childhood not as a biological, essential, and universal phenomenon, but as something constructed according to the historical and cultural context. With this concept in mind, I argue that Pratchett not only critiques the traditional construction of childhood in animal fantasy, but he also reconstructs children as being self-aware and capable of distinguishing between reality and the discourses people construct to structure it. Such a reconstruction of childhood allows Pratchett to justify presenting in a work of children's literature a detached and critical view on the artificiality of language and literary conventions, as well as the process of children's reading and storytelling.

Keywords: Terry Pratchett; children's literature; childhood studies; animal fantasy; nonsense literature; reading; storytelling

Introduction

Nowadays, any mention of the name Terry Pratchett is immediately followed by a description of his huge popularity. A writer of comic fantasy, Pratchett has been hailed as "Britain's bestselling author of the 1990s," and even after J. K. Rowling took his place as bestselling author, his newly released works still makes the best-sellers (Beckett 146). His Discworld novels, set on a flat, circular world which rests on the backs of four elephants, who in turn stand on the back of a giant turtle, attracted a wide following composed of both children and adults.

Perhaps because of his status as a popular writer and an author of comic fantasy, Pratchett has long been neglected by academic scholarship. It is only recently that several scholars begin to examine the various and complex issues underlying Pratchett's works. One book that focuses exclusively on Pratchett's works is *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*. The volume contains papers of different contributors, studying various themes and employing a wide variety of approaches such as social geography, gender theories and the post-modernist and psychoanalyst ideas from Derrida, Irigaray, and Lacan.

Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature is the only book-length criticism on Pratchett I can find. Other academic discussions of Pratchett are either individual essays or parts of larger studies on other themes. Sandra L. Beckett, for example, includes Pratchett in her study of crossover fiction. In her *Crossover Fiction: Global and Historical Perspectives*, Beckett points out the similarity between Pratchett's works for adults and those aimed at a younger audience. She argues that no matter which audience he is aiming at, Pratchett writes with a special brand of humor "which depends heavily on intertextuality and metafiction" (146). Also, Beckett observes that in both his books for adults and for children, Pratchett uses a kind of "stealth philosophy," meaning that

he tends to "slip[] philosophical issues subtly into his books" (146). The Discworld series, in parcular, varied little in style, no matter the targeted audience, and all of them are read by children and adults alike (147). Aside from Beckett, Kevin Paul Smith also dedicates a chapter to Pratchett in his study on fairy tale intertexts in postmodern fiction. In the chapter, Smith discusses Pratchett's metafictive and intertextual use of fairy tales in his Discworld novel *Witches Abroad*. Similarly, Jessica Tiffin addresses the use of fairy tale intertexts in Pratchett's work in *Marvelous Geometry: Narrative and Metafiction in Modern Fairy Tale*, though she emphasizes his place in popular culture and his self-conscious references and subversions of various generic conventions.

Aside from the studies mentioned above, an important part of the scholarship on Pratchett is devoted to his works for a younger audience. Up till July, 2011, Pratchett has published 13 works for children. Among them, five are set in the Discworld, one of which, *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*, won the prestigious Carnegie Medal for Children's Literature in 2002. Studies on Pratchett's works for children have noted their exploration of the meanings and boundaries of childhood and children's literature. Peter Hunt, for example, did a comprehensive evaluation of Pratchett's work for children in *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction* (2001).

Studying children's novels written by Pratchett before 2001, Hunt observes that it is hard to distinguish between the author's books for children and for adults. This blurring of the boundary between literature for children and adults, Hunt believes, comes mainly from the fact that in his books for children Pratchett constantly pushes "at the limits of what limited conceptions of childhood assume that children can understand" (92). Instead of patronizing his intended young readers, Pratchett uses a narratorial voice almost indistinguishable from that in his "adult" works (Hunt 95). Also, instead of simplifying his narrative and characters, Pratchett presents young characters

that are well informed, introduces complex concepts such as theories of time into his books, and engages in intellectual discussions as sophisticated as those in his adult novels (Hunt 96). Because of this, Hunt argues that Pratchett's works for children "explore the essential differences between children's and adults' books" (94). And since the writing of children's literature depends strongly on the construction of its intended audience, in exploring what children's literature can be like, Pratchett is also exploring "what exactly constitutes childhood" (Hunt 91).

In addition to Hunt, Cherith Baldry also focuses on Pratchett's works for children in "The Children's Books," a contribution to *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*. In the essay, he discusses the serious themes Pratchett introduces to his young audience through his writing, including time, alternate universes, religion, war, the hero, the enemy, racism, and gender issues. Just like Hunt, Baldry notices that Pratchett is never afraid to treat serious and complicated topics in his works for children. Not only does he introduce new subjects and ideas to his young audience, he also provides new perspectives to old concerns (41).

Aside from those scholarly works dealing comprehensively with Pratchett's books for children, there are also several essays focusing on individual works or series. Strangely enough, among all those essays, there are very few that deals with *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*. This is curious since not only does the book won the acclaim of the Carnegie Award for Children's Literature, but it is also the work in which Pratchett conducts his most explicit and comprehensive discussion of childhood and children's literature.

Published in 2001, *The Amazing Maurice* is set in the Discworld.[1] The novel

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[1] Pratchett's Discworld is a flat, disc-like world carried on the back of four elephants that stand on the shell of A'Tuin, the world turtle. In addition, Discworld is described as existing at the edge of reality and being a "world and mirror of worlds" (Pratchett *Reaper* 4).

tells of a cat named Maurice who mysteriously gains human speech and consciousness one day. Finding a clan of sentient rats and a pipe-playing kid named Keith, Maurice cons his way through towns by creating artificial rat plagues, and then charging the town councils after Keith leads the rats away with music. However, everything goes out of control in the town of Bad Blintz, where an evil rat king plots his revenge on humans by breeding and controlling a legion of strong, fierce rats. Through the combined effort of Maurice, the sentient rats, the pipe-playing kid, and the mayor's daughter, the rat king is defeated, and the crisis resolved. Finally, through Maurice's efforts, the sentient rats and the human residents of Bad Blintz strike a mutually beneficial deal that enables the rats to live with the townspeople harmoniously.

Despite being the first of Pratchett's children's books to win a literary award, and despite its exploration of childhood and children's literature, *The Amazing Maurice* have received little attention from critics. In his study on fairy tales in postmodern fiction, Kevin Paul Smith lists *The Amazing Maurice* along with Pratchett's other works like *Hogfather*, *Maskerade*, and *Lords and Ladies*, which play with fairytale intertexts and comment metaficitively on the process of storytelling (135; 177 n.2). Jessica Tiffin, on the other hand, discusses the novel in greater length, though her main focus is on the fairytale intertexts in another Pratchett novel, *Witches Abroad*. Mentions of *The Amazing Maurice* in Tiffin generally appear as examples to issues like the awarenss of "the power of narrative," the more bloody, folkloric side of fairytales, and the critique of anthropomorphized and sentimentalized animals in children's story (162; 162; 168). In addition to Smith and Tiffin, in "The Children's Books," Baldry includes some sporadic discussions on the issues of religion, war, the hero, the enemy, and gender in *The Amazing Maurice*. Details from the novel are used to illustrate how Pratchett treats these issues in his works for children. Since Baldry's discussion on *The Amazing*

Maurice tends to be short and unsustained, I will not elaborate on them here.

Aside from the three critics mentioned above, a full-length essay on *The Amazing Maurice* can be found in Marek Oziewicz's "'We Cooperate, or We Die': Sustainable Coexistence in Terry Pratchett's *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*." In this paper, Oziewicz identifies the central concern of the novel as the relationship between human beings and animals (86). He argues that in regard to this issue, the novel presents a model of "environmentally informed social dreaming about sustainable coexistence" (86). He believes that in *The Amazing Maurice*, through an understanding of the organizing principles on which ecosystems sustain themselves, the animals and the humans choose to cooperate and create a place in which they can coexist (88). This cooperation is in turn workable because of the characters' willingness to empathize and to maintain a dialogue despite their differences (87). Because of this vision, Oziewicz argues that the novel is an example of "transformative utopianism" (86). Citing the definition of Clare Bradford et al., he characterizes "transformative utopianism" as the imagination of an alternative social order that takes place in the here and now instead of in the future (86). In addition, transformative utopias are thought of as breaking free from the limitations of traditional utopias, but retaining their radical potential for critique and subversion (86). To Oziewicz, the rats' and humans' harmonious coexistence at the end of the novel is an example of such a concept.

While Oziewicz's study presents an interesting perspective, his claim that the novel is about human-animal relationship is problematic. For as Oziewicz himself acknowledges, Maurice and the rats "behave psychologically like humans with non-human bodies" (89). Having gained human speech and sentience through magic, Maurice and the rats are separated from their natural counterparts. Even though they occasionally struggle with their animal instincts, they are able to negotiate and coexist

5

with human beings because of their humanlike sentience and linguistic ability. Therefore, *The Amazing Maurice* is not so much a story about humans and animals as a story about humans and a new kind of sentient beings.

What's more, just as Tiffin, Smith, and Baldry, I believe Oziewicz fails to recognize the significance of *The Amazing Maurice* as a work of children's literature. For I argue that in the novel, Pratchett critiques the biases and limitations in traditional concepts of childhood and children's literature, and explores the ways in which conventional elements and concepts can be expanded, subverted, or transformed. *The Amazing Maurice* is an arena for such questioning and experimentation, as well as the result of such an exploration.

In my thesis, I will conduct a close reading of the novel, and the basic premises behind my analysis will largely coincide with those of literary childhood studies. As Susan Honeyman defines it, "[l]iterary childhood studies has emerged from traditional children's literature criticism under the influence of the identity politics of cultural studies," and its goal is to "dismantle the discourse we have built around [children]" (7; 11). Two of the field's basic premises include a constructivist view of childhood and the questioning of the definition of children's literature according to its audience.

One of the most influential constructivist scholars of childhood is Philippe Ariès, who argues in his *Centuries of Childhood* (1962, English translation) that childhood as we understand it today did not develop fully until the Enlightenment (47). To him, as to other scholars with a constructivist view of childhood, childhood is not an essential phenomenon; it is in fact constructed according to the historical and cultural context of a specific time. Ariès's view of childhood has generated a lot of debate among scholars of childhood, and prompted some to consider adults' place in the construction and representation of children.

6

A well-known upholder of the constructivist view is James Kincaid. In his much cited *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*, he argues that our so-called knowledge about children is actually cultural constructions made due to our "fear, desire, and denial" (3). In fact, he claims, the child is not an essential category, but a role people play. What we call a child "changes to fit different situations and different needs" (5). It is hollow, waiting to be filled with adult desires and emotions (Kincaid 13). In addition, Kincaid believes that adults define themselves against children, attributing to children what adults are not (7). And this otherness that is the child becomes something that adults desire and fear at the same time (7).

In 1984, Jacqueline Rose published her influential *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction,* arguing that what is called "children's literature" is neither *of* nor *for* children. Instead, it is written, produced, and chosen by adults according to their wishes and desires. In fact, what children's literature contains is the projection of desires from adults. Through what is called children's fiction, adults satisfy their desire for a pure child figure and a pure language directly in touch with truth and reality, without the need for mediation. In addition, Rose argues that through children's literature, adults construct children as the other, who is outside of language, and then paradoxically attempt to take this other "in," to have the elusive child in their grasps through texts and language (2). Rose's book became an influential work for childhood studies in her exposure of the workings of adult desire in the so-called "children's literature" and her questioning of the very definition of the genre itself.

Along a similar line, Richard Flynn acknowledges the idea of the constructed child, and calls for a combination of literary and cultural criticism in the study of children's literature (144). Defining the object of studies in the field, Flynn believes that childhood studies

1. examines the representation of children and childhood throughout

literature and culture;

2. analyzes the impact of the concept "childhood" on the life and

experience of children past and present;

3. investigates childhood as a temporal state that is often experienced

more in memory than in actuality;

4. explores childhood as a discursive category whose language may

provide a potentially useful perspective from which to describe the

human person and to understand subjectivity (144)

In spite of the shared constructivist views in the field, there has been some

debate concerning the term "childhood studies." For example, Karen Coats believes that

"children's studies" is better, for it includes both the image of childhood constructed by

adults and the experience of real children. In contrast, Honeyman opts for "childhood

studies" in order to stress that what scholars are dealing with is the discourse

surrounding children, not the real-life children themselves.

Honeyman gives a detailed overview of the field of childhood studies and

children's literature in 2005 in her book *Elusive Childhood: Impossible Representations*

in Modern Fiction. She reiterates the view that childhood is a historical, cultural

construct and that it is a blank space waiting to be filled by adult desire. What's more,

following Rose's arguments, she believes that writings about children are necessarily

projections of adult desire instead of objective representations of children. This leads to

two conclusions. First of all, childhood is inaccessible, in writing and in discourse, since

what is produced is produced by adults and reflects our desire. Secondly, what literary

critics study is the *discourse* around children, not the children as real subjects (14). With

these emphases in mind, she describes the purpose of childhood studies as "to dismantle

the discourse we have built around [children]" (11).

In my thesis, I share with scholars of childhood studies a constructivist view of childhood and children, and also a questioning attitude towards the definition and boundaries of what we call "children's literature." What's more, I argue that Pratchett also share such an awareness to a degree in his critique and exploration of childhood and children's literature in *The Amazing Maurice*.

In accordance with the quote in the title of my thesis, "a story about stories," I will look at three aspects of children's literature ("stories") which Pratchett explores and subverts in *The Amazing Maurice* (Pratchett *The Amazing Maurice* 1). Chapter 1 of my thesis will deal with Pratchett's critique on the representation of children and childhood in children's animal fantasy. Chapter 2 will be focused on the artificiality of language and generic conventions in children's books. Chapter 3 will be centered on the processes of reading and storytelling, especially those gone through by children.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I will discuss how in *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett explores traditional concepts and representations of childhood in children's literature, and presents his own re-imaginations on the subject. This is done through his appropriation, critique, and transformation of the conventions of children's animal fantasy. In children's literature, talking animals dressed in human clothes is a popular device. One of the reasons for this is that animals are often considered suitable for children's reading because of their perceived similarities with children. In Romanticism, children are believed to share a closer connection with nature and hence with animals, while in developmentalist theories, children are considered primitive and animal-like (Nickolajeva and Scott 92).This belief in the connection of children and animals is so widespread that, in some works for children, anthropomorphized animals often act as "disguises for children" (Nikolajeva *Rhetoric* 125).

9

With this connection of children and animals in mind, I will examine these two kinds of characters in *The Amazing Maurice*. The discussions of children and animals in the novel will be based on comparisons of the main text and *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*, a picture book discovered by the rats in *The Amazing Maurice*, and extracts from which appear at the start of each chapter in the novel. I argue that the characterizations of the animal characters in *Mr. Bunnsy* reflect traditional conceptions and representations of children and childhood in animal fantasy, which the main story of *The Amazing Maurice* critiques and subverts.

Concerning the child characters of *The Amazing Maurice*, I argue that unlike traditional animal fantasy, which often constructs children as animal-like, primitive, and needing adult guidance, *The Amazing Maurice* reconstructs children as having "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts," two concepts invented by Pratchett in another of his novel for children, *The Wee Free Men*. "First Sight" refers to the ability to distinguish reality from the discourses people construct to explain and structure it. "Second Thoughts" refers to the ability to observe in a detached and critical fashion one's identity, thoughts, actions, and one's relation with the world. With the acquisition of these two abilities, the children in *The Amazing Maurice* gain a keen sense of self-awareness and an understanding of how discourses and narratives shape people's view of reality. This understanding in turn empowers the children by enabling them to manipulate people and events through narratives.

Just as the children in *The Amazing Maurice* are free from the constructions in traditional animal fantasy, the animal characters are also free from being stand-ins for children. The animals in *The Amazing Maurice* have their own traits, problems and motivations as speaking, thinking animals. Instead of being children, these animals are more like a group of sentient beings outside of human society. What's more, their

unique position as talking animals enables Pratchett to explore questions of animality, sentience and culture. However, in spite of not being children in disguise, the animals do share with the children a similarly marginal position in society. This enables Pratchett to explore children's relation with language and social discourses without claiming direct access to children's minds.

In Chapter 2 of my thesis, I will discuss Pratchett's use of the conventions of literary nonsense in *The Amazing Maurice*. Consistent with his portrayal of children as having the ability to distinguish between reality and discourses/narratives, Pratchett uses the devices of literary nonsense to reveal the arbitrariness and artificiality of language and literary conventions. According to Kimberly Reynolds, literary nonsense "sets out to question received wisdom and in the process it stimulates new ways of thinking (45). It plays with logic and language, complicates the process of meaning-making, and subverts established norms. Devices commonly seen in nonsense literature include intertextuality, parody, inversion and wordplay (Reynolds 48). In Chapter 2, I will look at three ways in which Pratchett uses elements and conventions from literary nonsense in *The Amazing Maurice* to subvert norms and conventions, and to challenge his young readers to think critically and creatively.

In the first part of my discussion, I will examine the use of fairy tale and children's literature intertexts in *The Amazing Maurice*. As Gabriele Schwab observes, nonsense comes from a "collision of systems of meaning" (51). Such clashes between systems of meaning tend to destabilize the relation between signifier and the signified, and upset established thought patterns. In *The Amazing Maurice*, the logic of fairy tale and children literature intertexts is juxtaposed with the logic of everyday life. The clashes between these systems of meaning result in the subversion and destabilization of both systems, and also in the complication of the process of meaning-making and

11

interpretation, thus prompting readers to read critically and creatively.

Aside from the juxtaposition of fairy tale and children's literature intertexts with everyday logic, another nonsense device Pratchett makes use of is parody. The main case of parody in *The Amazing Maurice* can be seen in the interaction between the main narrative of the novel, the conventions of animal fantasy, and *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*. *Mr. Bunnsy* is said to be a picture book the talking rats in *The Amazing Maurice* find in a bookstore. In the novel, the picture book is occasionally commented upon or read out loud by the characters, but its content appears mostly as epigraphs at the start of each chapter. The narrative of *Mr. Bunnsy* plays two roles: first, it at once parodies and summarizes traditional elements and conventions of animal stories; secondly, it parallels the plot of the main story of *The Amazing Maurice* while also serving as a target of subversion for the main narrative. Therefore, *Mr. Bunnsy* not only critiques and subverts the conventions of animal fantasy, but also interacts with the main narrative of the novel to produce various layers of possible meaning.

In addition to the devices mentioned above, Pratchett also uses the nonsense device of wordplay in *The Amazing Maurice*. As Gabriele Schwab points out, one of the most important concerns of nonsense literature is the relation between signifier and the signified, between representation and the represented (49-50). In *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett shows a similar concern through his use of wordplay, which includes games with names, puns, figurative language, and obscure words.

In Chapter 3, I will examine Pratchett's thoughts on reading and storytelling. In *The Amazing Maurice*, stories, or narratives, including fairy tales, folktales and children's literature, act as an important socializing force in children's lives. They introduce children not only to the customs and norms of the society, but also to the various underlying discourses. In fact, they essentially act as a frame through which

people make sense of the world. While the importance of such stories is acknowledged in the novel, Pratchett puts special emphasis on the folly of reading such stories literally and imposing them on real life. To him, such an imposition would at worst lead to a disregard to the feelings of real people. This is reflected most clearly in the character Malicia, whose habit of interpreting events as stories not only makes a fool of herself, but also renders her unable to sympathize with others.

To avoid such a dehumanizing outcome, Pratchett advocates a self-conscious, flexible, and creative approach to stories. That is to say, he believes that it is best to be conscious of the constructed quality and limits of stories, and use them flexibly and creatively according to the situation in real life. For while rigid imposition of stories on real life is harmful, elements and materials from old stories can be modified and transformed to suit the situation at hand. Such an attitude is found in Maurice, who uses stories flexibly to achieve his ends, and it is also a lesson that the rats and the children have to learn throughout the book. Finally, this spirit is found in the very composition of the novel itself. Through his subversion of the traditional construction of children and generic conventions, Pratchett succeeds not only in questioning the limits of past works, but also in transforming the old into something new.

Hopefully, with the three chapters outlined above, I will succeed in conveying how through *The Amazing Maurice* Pratchett explores and redefines the meaning of childhood, children's literature, and the relation between the two.

Chapter 1:

"Smaller Humans"－Children and Animals in *The Amazing Maurice*

One of the most noticeable features of *The Amazing Maurice* is its use of talking animals as main characters. The storyline centers on a cat and a group of rats, while the only humans with significant roles are a pair of teenagers who act as supporting characters to the animals. The inclusion of talking, thinking animals put *The Amazing Maurice* in the category of animal fantasy. The term "animal fantasy" refers to works that include animal characters with the abilities of thought and speech. Alternatively, it can also refer to those works that involves animal metamorphosis (Swinfen 10). According to Ann Swinfen, the modern animal fantasy appeared at the end of the 19th century, and it is heavily influenced by the tradition of animal folklore, animal fable, animal satire, and naturalists' animal tales before it (17-18). Indeed, in the novel, Pratchett draws extensively on the conventions of animal fantasy for children, especially those featuring talking animal characters dressed in human clothes. Instead of simply following those conventions, however, he examines, critiques, and parodies the conventions of the genre. Moreover, through the appropriation and transformation of traditional motifs in those animal stories, Pratchett is able to articulate his views on children, childhood, and how these two are presented in modern discourse. To explain how this is done, I will first discuss the association of children with animals in children's animal fantasy.

1.1 Children and Animals in Animal Fantasy

Stories with animal characters have long been considered particularly suitable for children. John Locke, for example, recommended *Aesop's Fables* as appropriate reading material for children, one reason being that he believed those stories would promote kindness for animals (Cosslett *Talking* 10). In the 18th century, a time when

children's literature was flourishing, animal stories were considered particularly suitable for children because it was thought that they imparted natural knowledge, inculcated kindness for animals in children, and were devoid of the superstitions of fairy tales (Cosslett *Talking* 1). Although some of these reasons did not continue into the modern society, animal stories, especially animal fantasy, pervade as a genre in children's literature. The reasons for this have a lot to do with the modern construction of children and childhood. For example, books with anthropomorphic animals are thought of as more suitable for children because of the modern conception that children have less clear ideas of boundaries and a more active imagination, which enable them to accept animals talking and dressing like humans (Cosslett *Child* 475-76). Another reason for the prevalence of animals in children's literature, and one that is more relevant to my essay is the association of animals with children in the modern construction of childhood. In the Romantic conception of childhood, children are thought of as being closer to nature than adults. Since animals are a part of nature, children are more closely connected with animals by extension. Also, children and animals are connected in their inability to speak, though Cosslett also notes that this does not apply in cultures which believe that animals can speak (*Child* 475-76).

Susan Honeyman, on the other hand, examines the connection of children and animals in developmentalist theories. She argues that with the influence from "early evolutionary theories," developmentalism sees maturation as a purely biological process in which children are constructed as "primitive animals who need to develop through chronologically fixed, universal stages to reach civilized adulthood" (81). This biologically determined view of maturation has had a strong impact on the modern conception of childhood. In addition to developementalism, Honeyman also mentions that the theory of recapitulation postulates that the development of human individuals

15

mirrors the evolutionary development of the human race (Honeyman 85). This means that human children are similar to adult animals. The association of children and animals in developmentalism and the theory of recapitulation marks children as primitive and inferior, which often merges with the idea that children need socialization and education to develop into a proper adult (Honeyman 82). Therefore, according to this construction of childhood, children are animalistic and primitive beings that need the help of adults in order to develop into rational humans.

Aside from the developmentalist views, Maria Nikolajeva notes another tendency to link animals with children. She argues that children are more able to identify with small animals because of the "disempowered subject positions" they share (Rhetoric 7). What's more, Nikolajeva notes that not only are stories with animal characters considered appropriate reading material for children, but animal characters often act as children in disguise. In spite of their appearances, these animal characters share the behaviors and predicaments of human children (*Rhetoric* 125).

Perry Nodelman and Mavis Reimer have an argument similar to Honeyman and Nikolajeva's; they believe that in the modern construction of childhood, children are basically "animal-like beings who must be taught how to act like civilized humans" (194). Nodelman and Reimer also note how children and animals are connected through their liability to being eaten in literature (194-95). They list several literary examples, such as "Little Red Riding Hood," in which the child protagonists are in danger of being eaten by someone stronger. As Nodelman and Reimer point out, "the fact that human beings eat creatures that once lived but were too weak to protect themselves suggests that people—particularly children—might therefore also be eaten" (195). According to the two scholars, this theme of eating and being eaten "raises the question of children's animality in an especially intense way" (195).

No matter which reason comes into play behind the connection of animals and children's literature, one important fact is that these reasons are not based upon essential facts about children, but on constructed ideas about children and childhood. According to constructivist scholars of childhood, the terms "children" and "childhood" do not refer to an essential and universal phenomenon, but instead to constructions that change accordingly to cultural and historical contexts. The same has been said for the specific connection between animals and children. Honeyman, for example, argues that constructing children as primitive, underdeveloped, weak, and powerless justifies adult control and intervention (111-12). Nikolajeva also mentions that the idea of the connection between children and animals "reflects a stereotypical and obsolete attitude to children as not fully human, at least not fully developed as human beings" (*Rhetoric* 125).

It is this kind of attitude behind the conventions of animal fantasy that Pratchett refers to and critiques in *The Amazing Maurice*. Pratchett's parody of those conventions is especially clear in the fictional picture book *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*, fragments of which serve as epigraphs for all the chapters of *The Amazing Maurice*. *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure* is a children's picture book mentioned in the novel featuring anthropomorphic and clothed animals as main characters. The book is said to have been found in a bookstore by the talking rats, or, as they call themselves, the Changelings. Passages from *Mr. Bunnsy*, appearing at the beginning of each chapter of *The Amazing Maurice*, often echo and parallel the main events in that chapter. The depictions in the picture book suggests that the animal characters are actually children in disguise, and the characterization points to the biased portrayals of children and childhood discussed above. The fact that the animal characters are children in disguise is revealed by several details. One such clue is seen when the Changelings comment that the humans in *Mr.*

Bunnsy treat the animals "like, well, smaller humans" (50). Here the phrase "smaller humans" may refer to the fact that the animals are like humans with a smaller stature, or it can mean that the animals are considered child-like. The hesitant "well" suggests a sense of unease with the way the animal characters are treated. In this case, it is possible that the humans treat the animals with the kind of condescension often shown to children. This attitude reflects the previously mentioned idea that children, like animals, are primitive and inferior.

In addition, a connection between the animals and children can be seen in that Mr. Bunnsy, the main protagonist of the book, is reminiscent of Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit, who is evidently a child in the story. The reference to Peter Rabbit can be seen in the very first extract from *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*: "One day, when he was naughty, Mr. Bunnsy looked over the hedge into Farmer Fred's field and saw it was full of fresh green lettuces. Mr. Bunnsy, however, was not full of lettuces. This did not seem fair" (1). The fact that Mr. Bunnsy is a rabbit, the mention of garden, lettuce, and farmer, and the act of transgression are all clear references to Potter's text. What's more, in a later excerpt, Mr. Bunnsy is described as "tangled in the brambles and his blue coat all torn" (268). The blue coat reminds readers of Peter's "blue jacket with brass buttons", which is lost in his misadventure in Mr. McGregor's garden (Potter 35).

Other animals in *Mr. Bunnsy* also act according to certain stereotypes of children. This can be seen in the epigraph of Chapter 9: "Farmer Fred opened his door and saw all the animals of Furry Bottom waiting for him. 'We can't find Mr. Bunnsy or Ratty Rupert!' they cried" (195). Here, instead of trying to find their friends by themselves, "all the animals" go to a human (and probably an adult) for guidance. This action reflects the construction of children as helpless and needing guidance, like small animals.

18

In contrast to this simplified version of childhood parodied in *Mr. Bunnsy*[2],

Pratchett presents his own reconstruction of children in *The Amazing Maurice*. Instead

of making the animals children in disguise, or making the children animal-like,

Pratchett breaks the connection between the two groups, but acknowledges their similar

marginal position in relation to the mainstream. With this acknowledgement of similar

positions, Pratchett is able to use the animals as a means to explore children's relation

with dominant social conventions and discourses without claiming knowledge to

children's mental processes.[3] To demonstrate this, my following discussions will be

divided into roughly two parts. The first will center on Pratchett's treatment of children

and childhood in *The Amazing Maurice*, while the second will focus on the depiction of

animal characters in the novel. Discussions in both parts will be based on the

comparison between the main narrative of *The Amazing Maurice* and *Mr. Bunnsy Has

an Adventure*.

1.2 Children and Childhood in *The Amazing Maurice*

Perhaps due to the ostensibly minor role children play in *The Amazing Maurice*,

I have not yet come across any scholarly discussion on the representation of children

and childhood in the novel. There are, however, more general discussions of Pratchett's

treatment of children and childhood in his works. Peter Hunt, for example, in

Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction, examines Pratchett's exploration of children and

childhood in his novels.[4] Hunt observes that in his works for children, Pratchett shows

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[2] That is, animals=children.

[3] As Honeyman points out, due to adults' loss of childhood subjectivity and due to the language barrier
between children and adults, children's minds are inaccessible to adults and especially to adult writers,
who rely on language as the tool of representation (16; 32). Similarly, in *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett
does not construct the illusion of accessing the child characters' minds. This can be seen in that the
children's thoughts are almost never directly narrated by the narrator, but are indirectly inferred from the
children's speech or actions. More discussions on this will be given later in this chapter.

[4]Aside from one section on the Discworld novels, which address an adult audience, Hunt's discussion
mostly centers on the seven works for children that were published at his time of writing. These include
The Carpet People, *The Bromeliad* trilogy, and the Johnny Maxwell trilogy. Published in the same year as
Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction, *The Amazing Maurice* (2001) apparently came out too late to be

respect to his young readers (96). Not only does Pratchett adopts an unpatronizing tone, but he also assumes that his young readers share with him the same degree of knowledge on subjects such as theories of time and pop culture (Hunt 95; 96). What's more, as Hunt points out, Pratchett fills his works for children with the same abundance of "ideas and intellectual speculation" as can be found in his novels for adults (96). This attitude towards his young audience is reflected in Pratchett's representation of children in his novels. As Hunt observes, the children in Pratchett's works are very "knowing" (96). Not only do they have knowledge about topics such as time theories and popular culture, but they are also acutely aware of their own position in the world they live (Hunt 105). This self-awareness is exemplified in the Johnny Maxwell books, Pratchett's trilogy that centers on a group of modern teenagers:

> the teenagers [in the trilogy] know about psychology and marriage
> break-ups, and urban living and racism: none of it is a surprise, none of it
> is for the reader to deduce as a sub-text. The characters are all immersed
> in the popular culture of science-fiction films, and fantasy computer
> games, and children's fiction. (Hunt 105)

In addition to having such knowledge and self-awareness, Hunt also notices how Pratchett's child characters are often required to make moral decisions and carry them out (105).

Here Hunt makes several important observations about Pratchett's treatment of children and childhood, though I believe these points can be better summed up with Pratchett's own words on the matter. In one of Pratchett's works for children, *The Wee Free Men*, the 9-year-old protagonist, Tiffany Aching, is described as having "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts." "First Sight" refers to the ability to see "what's really

included in Hunt's discussion.

there, not what your heid [sic] tells you *ought* to be there" (112). This indicates an ability to see reality, and to observe the gap between reality and the discourses people construct to explain and organize it. "Second Thoughts," on the other hand, refers to the part inside the mind that "watches the rest o' ye" (111). That is to say, "Second Thoughts" refers to the ability to observe oneself at a distance, to view objectively one's interaction with the outside world. This ties in with Hunt's observation about the self-awareness of the children in Pratchett's novel. The combination of these two traits, "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts," empowers children, for the awareness of the gap between reality and discourses, and of one's place in the world and in discourses, and enables children to manipulate the discourses to their own advantage.

In *The Amazing Maurice*, the matter of "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts" is discussed through the two child characters, Keith (a. k. a. the stupid-looking kid) and Malicia Grim. In Keith, the child's abilities of "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts" are covered and contrasted with his innocent and simple exterior. The nickname "stupid-*looking* kid" is a direct example of this (italics mine). In fact, when Keith first appears, he seems every bit as his nickname indicates. Aside from his telling epithet, Keith is seen reading "slowly, and aloud, and moving his finger over the words" (2). The fact that he mispronounces the next word is not particularly impressive either. This awkwardness with language makes it only too easy to place him in the category of a simple child. The fact that the rats and Maurice all treat him in a teacherly and slightly condescending manner reinforces this impression. When Keith mispronounces a word, one of the rats corrects him and adds, "But you're doing well" (2). Maurice does similar things, but in an even more patronizing fashion. This can be seen on the following occasion when Keith asks Maurice whether they are doing a bad thing, to which Maurice answers the following words:

21

"All right," said the unseen Maurice. "But what you've got to ask

yourself is: Who do we take the money from, actually?"

"Well , , , it's generally the mayor or the city council or someone

like that."

"Right! And that means it's . . . what? I've told you this bit

before."

"Er . . ."

"It is *gov-ern-ment* money, kid," said Maurice patiently. "Say it.

Gov-ern-ment money."

"Gov-vern-ment money," said the boy obediently.

"Right! And what do governments do with money?"

"Er, they . . ."

"They pay soldiers," said Maurice. (3-4)

In this passage, Maurice treats Keith like a teacher does a very young child, and

perhaps with rather more condescension. He asks close-ended questions, tells Keith to

repeat after him, dismisses the boy's remarks, and interrupts him in mid-sentence.

Keith is generally treated with such a belittling attitude all around. On one

occassion, Malicia, the mayor's daughter, repeatedly forgets Keith's name:

". . . it's something to do with plagues of rats, right? All those

towns we've heard about . . . well, you heard about them too, and so you

got together with thingy here—"

"Keith," said Keith.

"—yes—and so you go from town to town pretending to be a

plague of rats, and thingy—"

"Keith." (82)

In this fashion, Keith is generally patronized, ignored, and talked over by those around him. He is the unimportant, invisible child. In fact, the rats and Maurice did not even try to ask for his name until in Chapter Four of the story. He is most often referred to along the lines as "kid."

For the most part, Keith's reaction to such treatments is passive acceptance and even obedience as, for example, when he repeats after Maurice. And sometimes he even shows undisguised and almost naïve admiration of those with knowledge. In one scene, when Maurice explains the meaning of the word "Rathaus," Keith responds by saying, "'You really know a lot of words, Maurice'" (31). In spite of this, many points in the novel hint at Keith's astute skill of observation that sees what is real disregarding what other people say. When Keith and Maurice arrive in Bad Blintz, for example, he observes, "'The people look poor,' [. . .] 'It's the buildings that look rich'" (30). Also, earlier in the story, when Maurice is arguing on the importance of buying food before going to a desert island, Keith interrupts and comments that there should be coconuts on such islands, according to what he heard. Aside from being able to spot what is real, Keith is also aware of the gap between reality and the narratives or discourses people construct to structure it. For example, in one rare outburst, Keith confronts Malicia about her tendency to make real life into stories: "'Real life isn't a story. There isn't some kind of . . . of magic that keeps you safe and makes crooks look the other way and not hit you too hard and tie you up next to a handy knife and not kill you'" (178). This ability to see what is real and the awareness of the differences between reality and narratives belong to the category of "First Sight." In addition to this, Keith also shows signs of having "Second Thoughts," which enables him to view his thoughts, his actions, and his place in the world at a distance. For in spite of being generally ignored and patronized, in spite of understanding how he is viewed by other people, Keith has a

23

solid kind of confidence that comes of knowing exactly who he is and what he wants. In one conversation with Malicia, Keith demonstrates this: "'I may be stupid-looking,' Keith added, 'but I'm not stupid. I have time to think about things because I don't keep on talking *all the time*. I look at things. I listen. I try to learn. I－'" (136-137). This is a good self-assessment of how one is viewed by the outside world, how one really is, and how one acts. The same self-knowledge is shown again when Keith describes his skills and love for music: "I'm a musician. I'm good at it, too" (74). There is no bragging in this declaration, but only a simple confidence in what one is. With his keen awareness of reality and of himself, what Keith gradually learns in the novel is to use his "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts" actively to his advantage. At the start of the novel, Keith does not actively do much, probably because his wish to play music is simple enough. However, at the end of the novel, in his confrontation with the rat piper, he learns from his supposed opponent the skill of manipulating people through narratives, or "stories." The rat piper tells Keith about manipulating people through the use of rumor, a kind of narrative in itself:

> It always pays to advertise, kid. Sometimes these little towns can be pretty slow when it comes to parting with the cash. 'Cos the thing about turning people into badgers and all the rest of that stuff is this: It never happens *round here*. [. . .] Once the story gets around, it does your work for you. Half the things people say I've done even *I* didn't make up (303-04).

And Keith shows his understanding of how narratives or "stories" work when he suggests to the piper that they lead the rats away together: "We'll do it together, and the rats will follow us, really follow us into the river. Don't bother about the trick note－ this will be even better. It'll be . . . it'll be a great . . . story" (305). Although the plan to

cooperate with the piper is made by Maurice, Keith's comment about it making a good story indicates his understanding about how narratives structure people's view of the world and how one can therefore use stories to manipulate people.

In contrast to Keith, whether Malicia has the ability of "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts" is more unclear. At a first glance, Malicia's tendency to impose stories seems to indicate her lack of "First Sight." However, upon closer observation, Malicia's imposition of stories on everyday life exists paradoxically with her ability to engage stories in a more critical fashion. For example, she critiques *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure* by pointing out that "[t]here's no subtext, no social commentary" (196). While the validity of her statement is debatable, it shows that she has the ability for independent critical thinking. Also, she criticizes the Mr. Bunnsy books for being unrealistic in their description of animals in human clothes. For example, she points out how unrealistic it is for a duck in *Mr. Bunnsy* to wear shoes: "[A] *duck* losing a *shoe*, right?" (196). From this, it can be seen that Malicia does in fact knows the difference between reality and stories. The reason why she imposes stories on real life, I argue, is not because she cannot spot the difference, but because she wants to gain power by substituting real life events for stories that work to her favor. The motive for her action, I believe, comes from her peripheral position in the society as a child and as a female. This can be seen first of all in that her love for storytelling is discouraged by her father and dismissed by the townspeople. Malicia once tells Keith about how her maternal grandmother and great aunt, the Sisters Grim, wrote fairy tales, and how her mother was discouraged by her father from a career of storytelling. This account shows a lineage of female storytelling and creativity, which is deemed impractical and trivial in a patriarchal society. Malicia gets similar discouragements when her father smacks her or locks her out her room for "telling stories." Another example of Malicia's marginal

position in the society can be seen when her father offers to marry her to the piper or Keith as a reward. Here the significance is twofold. For one, Malicia is her father's child, a minor for whom decisions are made. In addition, she is a daughter, a female, someone to be married off and a reward to be given like princesses in fairy tales.

In spite of their shared marginal position in the society, Malicia's response is different from Keith's. While Keith keeps quiet, watches, and learns, Malicia defies society's demand that she be quiet and unobtrusive. Instead, she adopts a more rebellious and aggressive attitude. Not only does she not stop telling stories, she forcefully and openly imposes them on real life. She uses the stories in an attempt to empower herself or to put herself in a more sympathetic light. She empowers herself by casting herself as the agent of actions, the protagonist of stories. She only casts herself as more passive and weak characters when she wants other people's sympathy or interest. For example, she casts herself as the victimized Cinderella when she wants to show that she is treated with injustice: "'Well, you probably won't be surprised to know that I've got two dreadful stepsisters,' said Malicia. 'And I have to do all the chores!'" (75). Her desire to assert herself can be seen in one remark: "'If you don't turn your life into a story, you just become a part of someone *else's* story'" (179). This attitude, however, also makes her self-centered and oblivious of the things going on outside of the illusion she has made for herself. As the narrator comments, "Malicia had never been very interested in other people's feelings, since she'd always considered that her own were a lot more interesting" (182). Despite the fact that Malicia's strategy enables her to exercise her imagination and protects her from the attitude of the society, it also estrange her from the world outside, as can be seen when she asks Keith to be her friend in a deliberately nonchalant fashion"'[. . .] I have millions of friends, of course,' Malicia went on. She looked, Keith thought, absolutely miserable" (337). The lack of concern

26

for other people isolates Malicia and leads to her failure to manipulate them into seeing what she wants them to.

In short, Malicia does not have the full power of "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts" like Keith does, though she is not totally lacking either. In regard to "First Sight," Malicia has her clear moments about what is real and what is not. However, more often than not, she lets what she wishes to be true to eclipse that knowledge. And although she recognizes the importance of narrative, she does not know enough about how narratives work in people's minds to manipulate them to her advantage. In terms of "Second Thoughts," Malicia knows what she wants and is aware of her marginal position in regard to the society. However, more often than not, she is too immersed in her own imaginations to observe herself from a detached position. As the novel progresses, Malicia gradually learns to pay attention to what is real, to understand how people's minds work, and to manipulate people with stories. Her attention to reality can be seen just before she asks Keith to be her friend, when she admits that her earlier account about her stepsisters is just a story:

> "When I told you that I had two sisters, er, that wasn't entirely true," [Malicia] said. "Er . . . it wasn't a lie, of course, but it was just . . . enhanced a bit."
>
> "Yes."
>
> "I mean it would be more literally true to say that I have, in fact, no sisters at all."

This admittance, together with her request for Keith to be her friend, indicates Malicia's growing engagement with reality. Aside from her attention to reality, the fact that Malicia learns to pay attention to how people's minds work can be seen in her conversation with a mob of townspeople looking for the rat catchers:

27

> "Are you *sure* you don't know where those men are?" asked the
>
> leader suspiciously. "People said they headed this way."
>
> Malicia rolled her eyes. "All right, yes," she said. "They got here,
>
> and a talking cat helped us to feed them poison, and now they're locked
>
> in a cellar."
>
> "Yeah, right," said the leader, turning away. "Well, if you do see
>
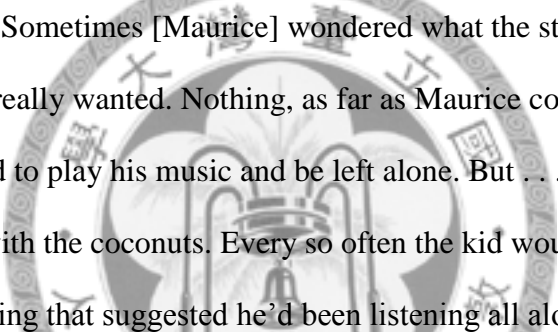> them, tell them we're looking for them, okay?"
>
> Malicia shut the door.
>
> "It's terrible, not being believed," she said. (228)

Two important points can be seen in this passage. First of all, Malicia has enough

self-knowledge to know people's generally disbelief about her words. Secondly, she

pays enough attention to how people's minds and narratives work that she is able to

manipulate people to her advantage. With the things she learns as the plot progresses,

Malicia gradually gets a better grasp on the skills of "First Sight" and "Second

Thoughts."

1.3 Talking Animals in *The Amazing Maurice*

After the discussion on Pratchett's representation of children above, I would like

to go on to Pratchett's depictions of anthropomorphic animal characters in *The Amazing*

Maurice. As I have mentioned before, in the novel, the animal characters are no longer

children in disguise. Instead, Pratchett uses the juxtaposition of animality and human

sentience in these characters to explore subjects such as self-consciousness, identity,

community, and morality. However, Pratchett also acknowledges the marginal positions

in relation to the society that the children and the animals have in common. In fact,

through the animal characters, Pratchett is able to explore children's relation with

dominant social conventions and discourses without claiming knowledge to children's

mental processes. As I have mentioned before, in *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett is careful not to construct an illusion of access to the minds of the child characters. His does so by not directly reporting the children's thoughts.[5] Instead, what the children are thinking can only be inferred from their speech and actions. Take Keith for example. Throughout the novel, the author never looks into Keith's mind directly. Everything the readers have is Keith's words and action, or other characters' opinions of him. The impenetrability of Keith's mind can be summed up by Maurice's comment on Keith's surprisingly accurate observation concerning coconut as a source of food on desert islands:

> Sometimes [Maurice] wondered what the stupid-looking kid really, really wanted. Nothing, as far as Maurice could tell, but to be allowed to play his music and be left alone. But . . . well, it was like that thing with the coconuts. Every so often the kid would come out with something that suggested he'd been listening all along (19).

Pratchett's careful avoidance of creating an illusion of accessibility, however, makes it difficult to depict the children's mental interaction with social conventions and discourses. Under such circumstances, the animals, with a similar position as the children, become a good substitute for the child characters.

In the following paragraphs, I will first discuss how Pratchett uses the juxtaposition of animality and human sentience in the animal characters to explore subjects such as self-consciousness, identity, and morality. And then I will devote my attention to the shared marginal position between the animals and the children.

Unlike many animal fantasies which feature animals with human speech and

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[5] Actually, there is one, and only one, direct description of a child character's thoughts: "Malicia had never been very interested in other people's feelings, since she['d] always considered that her own [were] a lot more interesting" (182). I have not yet determine the reason for this isolated case of claiming to have access to a child's mind..

behaviors built into them from the start, in *The Amazing Maurice*, these abilities are acquired, not inherent. The rats gained the ability to speak and think through eating garbage contaminated by magic outside a magical university. Maurice in turn gained sentience from eating one of the talking rats. The fact that the animals' ability to think and speak is acquired means that not only are their instincts and thinking placed in sharper contrast, but their identity is also separate from that of human beings, not to mention human children. Unlike those animal characters that dress, speaks, and act like humans with only a smattering of animal characteristics, Maurice and the Changelings are evidently animals given the bare tools of thinking and speech. Instead of conforming to human actions and culture, the animals' actions are the results of the interaction between their new ability and their instincts, desire, and experiences as animals. This is seen most clearly in the Changelings' differing response to what they call the Change, the acquisition of human speech and thinking faculties.

Among the rats, there are clear differences in attitude and thought patterns. It seems that the differences come from age. That is to say, the amount of the experience before the Change has a great influence on how the rats deal with the new ability they acquire. Hamnpork, for example, as one of the oldest rats, is also the one that sticks most closely to his instincts and experiences before the Change. He relies mostly on instincts and physical senses when dealing with the world. For example, in response to Dangerous Bean's questioning of what a rat is, Hamnpork responds: "Teeth. Claws. Tail. Run. Hide. Eat. That's what a rat is" (64). It is not that he rejects thinking altogether. In fact, the ability to think helps him greatly in fighting and tactics, as can be seen when he defeats several rats in the rat catchers' cages: "*A couple of dumb, swanking young keekees [non-talking rats] with no tactics and no experience of down-and-dirty cellar fighting and no fancy footwork and no* thoughts *were simply not a contest*" (151). Here

it is clear that Hamnpork employs a combination of pre-Change experience

("*down-and-dirty cellar fighting*") and thinking ("*tactics*," "thoughts") to achieve his

ends. However, fighting is about the extent to which he uses his abilities. He mostly

uses his thinking abilities for survival instead of metaphysical musings. In fact,

throughout the story, he is constantly bewildered by the metaphysical musings from

Dangerous Beans and by the change in lifestyle.

　　In contrast to Hamnpork, Dangerous Beans is a great thinker. Born after the

Change, Dangerous Beans spends a lot of time thinking about more metaphysical and

visionary matters such as morality, meaning of life, and death. This does not mean that

he avoids his instincts altogether. In fact, it is stated in the novel that "[n]o one, not even

Hamnpork, ha[s] a sense of smell like Dangerous Beans" (116). It is just that he tends to

devote most of his thoughts on more metaphysical matters than survival. The scene

containing the description of Dangerous Beans's sense of smell, for example, depicts

him using his nose to understand and sympathize with the condition of a frightened

keekee (116; 118-19).

　　Unlike Hamnpork and Dangerous Beans, Darktan starts out at a point

somewhere between them. He is practical and mostly concerned with survival in the

tunnels. Already mature at the time of his Change, Darktan believes that life is hard

enough without worrying about things one cannot see. He does not give much thought

to the younger rats' concern with light and shadow, and it is revealed later in the book

that he has never truly believed in the idea of a faraway island. However, he is more

creative and extensive in his use of thinking. Unlike Hamnpork, who uses his thinking

purely for immediate fighting, Darktan uses his new mind to learn new things such as

trap disposal. He is still mainly concerned with survival, but he goes about this in a

more creative and skillful way. In fact, not only does he know how to learn new things,

31

he is also good at adaptation and invention. A good example of this is the leather belts

he invents for placing trap-disposing tools. The inspiration originated from the depiction

of human clothes in *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*. Some rats tried to wear human

clothes after reading the book, but found the clothes impractical for rat usage. However,

instead of giving up the idea completely, Darktan modifies the clothes into broad belts

easier for rats to wear, and with pockets on them that can carry tools for trap disposal.

This shows a talent for adaption. Another example of Darktan's resourcefulness is his

invention of maps. In order to easier convey the knowledge of tunnels and the location

of poisons and traps, he invents drawings of the world. From these examples, it is clear

that at the beginning of the novel, though Darktan seldom give thoughts to metaphysical

thoughts like Dangerous Beans, he is nevertheless more adaptive and innovative in his

use of thinking than Hamnpork.

These responses to the Change highlight the rats' negotiation between instincts

and thinking, which, as was mentioned before, Pratchett uses to explore topics such as

self-consciousness, identity, and morality.

One of the first defining features of the Change and one of the sites of struggle is

a recognition of self. This is seen in Maurice's memory of his Change: "He'd realized

something was odd that day, just after lunch, when he'd looked into a reflection in a

puddle and thought, *that's me*" (11). With the rats, the recognition of self is exemplified

by Hamnpork's thoughts when he is caught and put into the rat pit:

> Cages. Panic. The white rat. Hamnpork. That was his own name.
>
> Odd. Never had names. Just used to smell other rats. Darkness. Darkness
>
> *inside*, behind the eyes. That bit was Hamnpork. Everyting outside was
>
> everything else.
>
> Hamnpork. Me. Leader. (188)

Here Hamnpork's thoughts show the ability to distinguish against oneself and other. Pushed further, this awareness of self (and other) leads to discussions concerning identity. In the rats' Thoughts, a compilation of important philosophical doctrines thought up by Dangerous Beans, an important Thought reads: "We are the Changelings. We Are Not Like Other Rats" (67). This doctrine shows that the rats have begun to define themselves as a community against others.

The appearance of a community in turn leads to the establishment of a new social structure among the rats, which also shows the interaction between animal instincts and human-like thinking. When it comes to social structure, it is interesting to note that the rats do not have individual families. On the matter of blood and relations, they only speak of the Clan, a general recognition of the fact that all the Changelings are related. The fact that there are no familial units can be seen in that apart from the leader, Hamnopork, the rats also have a "head female," Big Savings, who is in charge of the pregnant rats. This social structure based on relation and sex has its foundation in the more instinctual, animalistic part of the Changelings. In contrast, there are certain human structures incorporated into the frame of the Clan. For example, there is a group of "Plague rats" in the Clan, who launches "plague" campaigns in towns, and also reacts to dangers in new places. They are organized in a military fashion, divided into platoons, and with assigned duties such as widdling, stealing in front of humans, and even trap disposal. The leading hierarchy also shows an interaction of rat ways and human ways, which is seen clearly in the interactions between Hamnpork, Darktan, and Dangerous Beans. Officially, Hamnpork is the leader of the rats, who gained this position by being "big and tough and fight[ing] all the other rats that wanted to be leader" (332). However, it is clear that since the Change, the power has gradually transferred to Dangerous Beans and Darktan. Dangerous Beans, with his visions and philosophical thinking, acts

33

as a kind of spiritual leader for the rats, while Darktan, with his expertise in trap disposal, poison antidotes and military leading, gains his own authority. The power shift among the three testifies to a clash between animality and humanity.

Aside from the definition of their social identity, the rats also explore their identities on a more existential level. They raise the question of what a rat is, and whether they can be more. These questions constitute an important theme throughout *The Amazing Maurice*. It is mentioned, for example, in a debate between Hamnpork and Dangerous Beans:

> Dangerous Beans had said, "What *is* a rat?" and Hamnpork had replied, "Teeth. Claws. Tail. Run. Hide. Eat. That's what a rat is."
>
> Dangerous Beans had said, "But now we can also say 'What is a rat?' And that means we're more than that" (64)

Here it is suggested that the recognition of self leads to the ability to conceive oneself as something more, to transcend what one is at the moment.

In spite of the belief that one should strive to be more than one's instincts, Pratchett does not deny the importance of instincts. In fact, those that do well in the story are those who reconcile and use both instincts and thinking to achieve their goals. Take Dangerous Beans, for example. Despite his penchant for thinking, he is also said to have the best sense of smell among the Changelings, which he uses not only to examine his surroundings, but also to understand and empathize with a frightened, non-talking rat found in underground Bad Blintz. Aside from Dangerous Beans, Darktan also mixes his instincts for danger and the skills of planning, maneuvering, and trap disposal to run the platoons. Even Hamnpork, who relies most on his instincts, is able to win his fights with non-talking rats by thinking.

A further indication of the importance of joining instincts and thinking is seen

when the rat king is defeated by Maurice. Temporarily stripped of most of his intelligence by the rat king's power, Maurice attacks the rat king and his rats through pure instincts. It is the fury and power from his instincts that make him especially ferocious in his attacks. However, the thing that enables the final blow to kill the rat king comes from thinking: "And as the cat rolled and struggled and bit, a weak little voice all the way at the back of his tiny brain, cowering out the way, the last tiny bit of him that was still Maurice and not a blood-crazed manic, said, 'now! Bite *here*!'" (270). In conclusion, for Pratchett, instinct is an integral and important part of a person. However, one should not be limited by it, but try to go beyond. By uniting instinct with thinking, the former gains direction, while the latter gets extra help.

Aside from the issue of self-awareness and identity, another important theme in the struggle between animality and humanity is that of morality and conscience. In the novel, morality is a key point of confrontation. Among the rats, the question of what one should or should not do pops up constantly. Sometimes this comes from the moral guidelines thought up by Dangerous Beans, which are often a point of confusion and debate among the rats. For example, in one scene, Dangerous Beans declares that a rat should not kill another rat, which confuses Peaches a little:

> "I have been thinking that we shouldn't kill other rats. No rat should kill another rat."
>
> "Even *keekees*?" [Peaches] asked.
>
> "They are rats too."
>
> Peaches shrugged. "Well, we've tried talking to them, and that didn't work. Anyway, they mostly stay away these days." (60)

And in another scene, some rats are looking at a late comrade inside a trap. One says, "'Dangerous Beans says we shouldn't eat rat at all,'" to which another answers,

"'Not, it's only if you don't know what they died of, 'cos they might have died of poison'" (102). From these two examples, it is clear that the idea of morality has not completely penetrated the ranks of the rats. Some of the rats still operate mainly on instinct and practicality. And sometimes, when more important decisions are at stake, practicality and morality clashes, as can be seen when the rats find a non-talking rat, and are debating about what to do with it. Hamnpork advocates turning the non-talking rat lose in the dangerous underground so that it will not eat the Clan's provisions, while Darktan, Peaches, Dangerous Beans and others believe that they cannot "send it out to die" (119). The argument almost leads to an attack by Hamnpork to Dangerous Beans, the former most set in the instinctual and practical way of doing things, while the latter is deeply concerned with morality.

Aside from the rats, the problem of morality is also a central concern for Maurice. His case is slightly different from the rats since he is at once a very sophisticated thinker and a practical self-serving cat. He has a shrewd understanding of how people think and behave, and good planning skills, which he uses to further his own ends, as can be seen from the pied piper scam he invents. However, underneath his gleeful planning and manipulation, there is a regard about morality and other people's feelings. In one episode, Maurice stumbles over his explanations when he tries to avoid referring to rats as vermin or as food. Of course, there is the possibility that he does so because he thinks offending the rats is not to his best interest. However, when Maurice explains what a rat pit is, he shows a concern for their feelings: "I'm a cat, right?" said Maurice. "[. . .] A lot of places don't mind cats wandering in, right, because we keep down the vermi―we keep the, er―" (166). Here Maurice shows a sensitivity to the rats' feelings by trying not to call them vermin. And later after describing to the Changelings how people unleash terriers onto the rats in rat pits, Maurice "tr[ied] to

36

avoid their expressions" (167).

Aside from this, Maurice also has a conscience, which often clashes with his survival instinct. His refusal to eat any talking being is a frequent battlefield for such clashes. In the story, Maurice constantly reminds people around him that he does not eat anyone who can talk. Later in the story it is found that his insistence on the point is because he once ate a talking rat, which also gave him the ability to speak and think. Maurice's aversion and guilt about eating talking beings comes from the fact that he identifies himself with other talking beings, which makes the act of eating any of them an act of cannibalism.

Aside from not eating talking beings, Maurice's sense of morality and survival instinct also clash when he tries to run to safety and to abandon the rats. His conscience chides him for betraying Dangerous Beans's trust, and after much agonizing, he reluctantly offers his help. The scale of his internal conflict can be seen when he rails against his conscience: "I'm a cat! Cats don't go round feeling *sorry*! Or guilty! We never *regret* anything! . . . . That's not how a cat is supposed to behave" (174). Such concern with morality, it is clear, comes from the ability to think, and more specifically, from a sense of self and other, which induces thoughts about appropriate interpersonal relationships and makes one able to sympathize with another person. As Maurice mentions, he ate a talking rat because "'*I didn't know he was anyone! I didn't know* I *was anyone!*'" (173-74). And later in the chapter, Maurice observes that thinking brings trouble, since "[e]ven when you know other people can think for themselves, you start thinking for them *too*" (176). Just how far this care for others goes is revealed when Maurice decides to give one of his nine lives to save Dangerous Beans from death. And after the war with the rat king, Maurice helps the rats negotiate with the townspeople of Bad Blintz, and when he embarks on another journey, he leaves all the money made
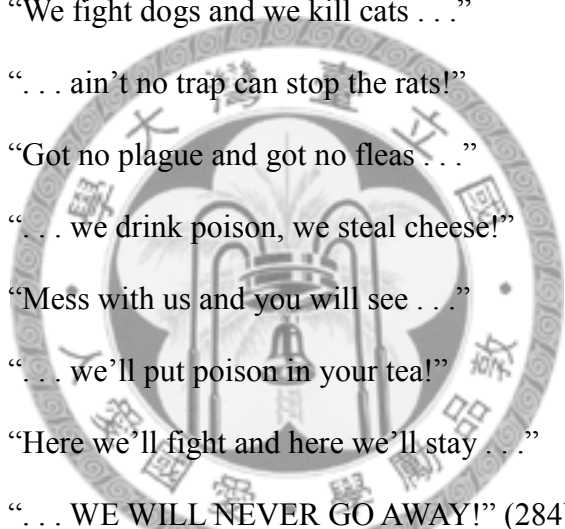
from the Pied Piper scam to the rats.

Aside from the matter of identity and morality, Maurice and the rats' struggle between instinct and thinking also lead to an exploration of the matters of instincts and revenge. This can be seen in their battle with the rat king, for the rat king is not just a villain. He is the other side of the coin, the shadow to the light of the Change. The rat king once declares that he is what makes a rat a rat:

> *You defy me?* Spider screamed at the bowed form of Dangerous Beans. ***When I am everything that truly is RAT? I am filth and darkness! I am the noise under the floor, the rustling in the walls! I am the thing that undermines and despoils!*** (261)

Here it is shown that the rat king defines himself in terms of the hatred of humans as well as the rats' instincts. As he states in one scene, "***Humans have tortured and poisoned and killed, and all of that is now given form in me and there will be REVENGE***" (257). It is clear from this that the rat king is not only the embodiment of instincts, but also of pain and hatred born of human torture, given shape and purpose through a thinking mind. In fact, the rat king is literally born from human cruelty and the suffering of rats. It is said in the novel that the rat king is made by a rat catcher through tying together the tails of eight rats, and thereby depriving their ability to run or hunt. The rat king with his thinking mind is bent on revenge to the humans through a rat plague of epic scale, with "***destruction such as people cannot imagine***" (257). With his thirst for revenge, the rat king has no concern for the rats under him. He made the rat catchers breed stronger rats by shutting rats in cages and letting them kill and eat each other until the strongest survive. And in one scene, he declares, "***The weak are food. That is how it has always been!***" (259). And when Dangerous Beans asks the rat king whether he knows what a rat under his command thinks, the rat king replies in

38

confusion, "***Thinks? Why should it think anything? It is a rat!***" (260). However, it is also clear that the rat king can think strategically and create plans, as evidenced by his plan to breed stronger rats and invade the human world.

In fact, in some ways, his thinking is disturbingly similar to the Changelings'. In one scene, the rat king taunts in Maurice's mind: "***Cats, cats, bad as dogs, worse than rats. I'm in your HEAD, and I will never go AWAY***" (198-199). The singsong quality and the words used in this line are similar to what some of the rats sing in a later chapter:

> "We fight dogs and we kill cats . . ."
> ". . . ain't no trap can stop the rats!"
> "Got no plague and got no fleas . . ."
> ". . . we drink poison, we steal cheese!"
> "Mess with us and you will see . . ."
> ". . . we'll put poison in your tea!"
> "Here we'll fight and here we'll stay . . ."
> ". . . WE WILL NEVER GO AWAY!" (284)

The most disturbing similarities, however, appears between the rat king and Dangerous Beans. For example, both Dangerous Beans and the rat king emphasize the importance of cooperation. The first two Thoughts of the Changelings are "In the Clan is Strength" and "We cooperate, or we die," while the rat king states, "***Together we are strong!***" (61; 62; 258). What's more, the first Thought in the rats' writing is shown as a big rat consisting of smaller rats. The picture is reminiscent of the rat king, whose single mind is born from tying some rats' tails together. In addition to their emphasis on cooperation, Dangerous Beans and the rat king are also similar in that both have visions and plans for their rats. This is remarked by the rat king, "***You have a mind like mine,***

that thinks for many rats, not just one rat" (259). Both Dangerous Beans and the rat king have great influence on the future of their rats through their thinking and planning.

However, Dangerous Beans points out one crucial difference between them: "'you just think for many rats,' . . . 'But you don't think *of* them'" (260). And later he declares, "You have plans for rats? Well, *I* have dreams for them" (261). In these two statements, Dangerous Beans argues that he is different from the rat king in that in his plans and visions for the rats, he takes into account the rats' feelings and welfare. The juxtaposition of the word "dreams" against "plans" in particular stresses that Dangerous Beans wants something more and better for his rats. And herein lies the greatest difference between Dangerous Beans and the rat king, which gives an insight into the latter's character.

In some ways, the rat king signifies an alternative path the Changelings might have taken. He is the shadows inside their minds, their pain and hatred of human beings. In one scene, Darktan goes to a rat pit to rescue Hamnpork, and as he looks down from a beam at the humans' delight in the rats' suffering, he plans to drop a match into the hayloft around the rat pit and burn the humans to death. In that moment, he is channeling the rat king, drawing on hatred. This path, however, offers only more suffering. As Dangerous Beans says to the rat king, "'you are no answer. You are just another bad thing humans made. You offer rats nothing except more pain'" (263). Following one's instincts and desire for revenge only brings on more suffering. It does not make anything better. It does not bring a better future.

What Dangerous Beans strives to do is to change this. He does not dwell on what the rats are now, and on what revenge they want. He focuses instead on what they can become, and how their lives can be made better. In this sense, the monstrous rat king, the terror in the Dark Wood, resides in fact in one's mind. He is the shadows that

lurks inside the dark recesses of one's mind, waiting to control that person when he or she is, as Dangerous Beans puts it, "tired or stupid or upset" (263). However, as the story goes on to prove, even when he is in one's mind, one can still "control the shadows inside, which is where all darkness is" (264). This is proved by the rats' triumph over the rat king, and more importantly, by their ability to stop their war with the humans of Bad Blintz and negotiate with them. The greatest enemy is oneself, and by overcoming this, one can become something more.

In spite of the fact that the animals in *The Amazing Maurice* are clearly not children in disguise, they share with children a similarly marginal position in relation to mainstream culture and society. And through these animal characters, Pratchett is able to discuss without presuming to know the mental and cognitive processes of children what occupying such a position may mean, and how individuals in such a position may interact with mainstream society. The animals' marginal position can be seen in the rats' struggle with language and certain literary discourses. The Changelings' struggle with language can be seen firstly in their very names. According to Keith, the rats have strange names like Darktan and Big Savings because they create their names by picking words with sounds they like from packages and labels they found in a garbage dump. Here the appreciation of sounds before the understanding of meanings is reminiscent of children's delight in the sounds of words before understanding the meanings. This loose grasp of language is later improved through the rats' effort at educating themselves.

However, another level of problem comes up after the rats' grasp of language: the discourses and conventions of a literary narrative. This is seen in the rats' problematic reading of *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*. According to the novel, the rats are amazed by the peaceful coexistence between animals in the picture book, and between animals and humans: "And all of [the animals] talked, and none of them ate

any of the others, and─and this was the unbelievable part─*they all talked to humans*"
(50). Also, the rats comment upon the fact that there are little bad events in the book,
and the fact that the animals all wear human clothes. In fact, the Changelings take the
descriptions in the book rather literally, as they ponder whether the book is "a vision of
some bright future," and how humans can present rats in a good light in books while
killing them in real life (50-51). The fact that the rats take the book literally shows their
lack of understanding of the discourses and conventions behind the genre of children's
animal fantasy. Their failure to understand the safeness of the book is due to their
ignorance of the popular construction of children as innocent and needing protection,
just like small animals. Their questions concerning the human clothes indicate that they
do not know the connection between animals and children behind the conventions of
animal fantasy. Furthermore, their inability to understand how humans can depict rats in
books while killing them in real life hints at the rats' ignorance concerning the idea of
fiction. The rats' literalness and their problem with underlying discourses and
conventions suggest an outsider position which they may share with children before
socialization.

In spite of the rats' outside position in relation to mainstream society, they
struggle to educate themselves on the matters of language and discourses in the novel,
which parallels a similar effort on the part of the child characters in *The Amazing
Maurice*. For example, the rats' struggle with language is similar to Keith's efforts at
learning reading. At the start of the novel, Keith is seen trying to pronounce a word
correctly:

> "Ubberwald," [Keith] read out.
>
> "That's Überwald," said a small, squeaky, but very clear voice.
>
> "The dots make it a sort of long 'ooo' sound. But you're doing well."

"Oo*ooo*oberwald?"

"There's such a thing as *too much* pronunciation, kid" (2).

Also, as is mentioned before, Keith is unfamiliar with longer words, and admires

Maurice for knowing them.

Aside from language, the rats' learning of discourses and narrative, and how to

manipulate them to one's advantage is similar and described in more detail than the

children's experience on the same matter. Darktan is a good example of this. Starting as

a practical minded individual who does not care about things one cannot see, Darktan

gradually recognize the importance of narratives in structuring people's view of reality,

and learns to manipulate these narratives to achieve the desired result. This is seen most

clearly when he uses the image of the Dark Wood in *Mr. Bunnsy* to raise the morale of

his troops: "Well, we're in the Dark Wood now. Oh, yes. There's something else down

there. Something terrible. It hides behind your fear. It thinks it can stop you, and it's

wrong. We're going to find it and drag it out, and we're gonna make it wish we'd never

been *born*!" (252). From this instance and the examples above, one can see that

Pratchett uses the Changelings to illustrate how someone of a marginal position in

society gradually acquires language and discourses. Since such a marginal position is

shared by the children and the animals in *The Amazing Maurice* alike, Pratchett's use of

the Changelings in his exploration has the added bonus of avoiding the illusion of

access to the children's cognitive and mental processes.

In this chapter, I have discussed Pratchett's portrayal of children and animals in

The Amazing Maurice. Instead of portraying children as animalistic and helpless,

Pratchett chooses to represent his children as capable of "First Sight" and "Second

Thoughts." Instead of making his animal characters children in disguise, Pratchett

juxtaposes animality and human sentience in these characters, and uses them to explore

subjects such as self-consciousness, identity, community, and morality. Also, Pratchett acknowledges the animals' and children's similarity in their marginal social position, and uses the animals to explore the implications of children's peripheral position in relation to mainstream society without the presumption of having full access to children's cognitive and mental processes. Pratchett's new way of representing animals and children subverts the conventions of animal fantasy, and most importantly his new idea of childhood affects his view towards children's literature and how he writes *The Amazing Maurice*, as will be shown in the following chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 2:

Literary Nonsense in *The Amazing Maurice*

In keeping with his belief that children are capable of seeing the gap between reality and the discourses invented to structure it, Pratchett highlights the artificiality and arbitrariness of literary conventions and language by drawing on techiniques of nonsense literature. Literary nonsense, according to Celia Catlett Anderson and Marilyn Fain Apseloff, refers to "a subversion or undercutting of sense" (9). It contains "a contrast to some linguistic, spatial, emotional, or ethical form that is accepted as sense," and can take the form of verse, stories, and wordplay (4). In literary nonsense, writers often aim for effects such as "humorous absurdities with double or split meanings, [. . .] contrasts, reversals, and mirror images" (5). Techniques used to achieve such effects include absurd connections or juxtapositions, literalness, exaggeration, over-application of logic, and parody (5-6). Similarly, Reynolds defines literary nonsense as follows:

> literary nonsense has its own conventions and logic: as well as obeying
>
> the rules of grammar, it employs inversion and wordplay, mixes
>
> unrelated or contradictory items (usually suggesting an affinity between
>
> them through rhyme or parallelism), and tends to present things in terms
>
> of extremes. Literary nonsense also tends to be highly intertextual,
>
> frequently, though not invariably, through parodic relationships. (51)

Through these devices, Reynolds argues, literary nonsense "simultaneously purports to say nothing and points to meanings that may or may not be there" (Reynolds 48).

In terms of its history, Anderson and Apseloff trace the tradition of literary nonsense back to the literature and philosophy of ancient Greece (9). Nonsense literature for children, on the other hand, is said to have come from a tradition that began in the humorous verses for children in the 17th and 18th century, and culminated in

the influential works of children's nonsense literature in the 19th century (17-19).

Anderson and Apseloff mention Victorian authors of nonsense such as Edward Lear and

Lewis Carroll, who played with language and logic in order to examine and subvert

established norms of the society (20). The tradition of literary nonsense continued into

the 20th century, appearing in literature for both adults and children. Among the works

of nonsense literature for children, the prose works are considered by Anderson and

Apseloff as the "most distinctively twentieth century in flavor" (25). Their discussion

covers works of writers such as A. A. Milne and Dr. Seuss.

Unlike Anderson and Apseloff, Reynolds believes that elements and devices of

literary nonsense can be traced back to works in the 16th century (46). She argues that

literary nonsense originated from "highly specialised discourses in high culture," such

as the rhetoric and practices of the legal profession (Reynolds 46). According to her, the

word "nonsense" went into obscurity sometime after, and was revived in the Victorian

period by writers such as Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, who produced works of

literary nonsense that remain influential even today.

In terms of its effects, literary nonsense is believed to encourage subversion,

creativity, and flexibility. Gabriele Schwab, for example, argues that literary nonsense

seeks to disrupt the relations between language and the represented, the signifier and the

signified, thereby upsetting one's mental habits (49-50). Leo Schneiderman points out

how literary nonsense exposes the artificiality of the norms and conventions in the

society, and encourages its readers to entertain new possibilities (94). Furthermore, he

argues that nonsense literature fosters flexibility, for it "prepares the mind to shift back

and forth between the real and the unreal, between the reasonable and the outrageous,

and between meaning and the absence of meaning" (99). This emphasis on the

arbitrariness of language and conventions, together with the encouragement of

subversion, creativity, and flexibility, is what Pratchett aims for in his use of nonsense elements and techniques in *The Amazing Maurice*.

In this chapter, I will discuss how Pratchett uses certain techniques of literary nonsense to subvert established conventions and to challenge readers to reading critically and creatively. To illustrate this, the chapter will be divided into three parts. The first part will focus on Pratchett's juxtaposition of intertexts of the fairy tale and children's literature with the commonsense and logic of everyday life, thus creating a subversive effect. In the second part of the chapter, I will examine the use of parody in *The Amazing Maurice*, focusing mainly on how *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure* and the main narrative of the novel work as a two-fold parody of the conventions of children's literature. In the last part of the chapter, I will discuss Pratchett's use of wordplay in the novel. In *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett exhibits a strong interest in the relation between words, sounds, and the objects they represent. This can be seen in his play with names, puns, figurative language, and obscure words.

2.1 Juxtaposition of Fairy Tale Intertexts with Everyday Logic in *The Amazing Maurice*

Interxtuality is a feature of Pratchett's works that is often remarked upon by critics. As Francis Spufford points out in his review on *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett's Discworld books and his works for children all provides what he calls "the pleasures of recognition." That is to say, one of the many challenges in reading Pratchett's works is identifying the references he makes and taking them into account when interpreting. This use of intertextuality in Pratchett's works has been commented upon by other critics. Kevin Paul Smith, for example, devotes a whole chapter to Pratchett's use of fairy tale intertexts in *The Postmodern Fairytale: Folkloric Intertexts*

in Contemporary Fiction[6]. In his study, Smith points out that Pratchett's use of fairy tale

intertexts includes both revision and metafiction (135)[7]. That is, in his works, Pratchett

rewrites some of the fairy tales he draws on, and he uses these intertexts to comment on

the genre of the fairy tale itself. For example, Smith discusses how in one Discworld

novel, *Witches Abroad*, Pratchett retells canonic fairy tales from the point of view of

marginalized characters such as the grandmother in "Little Red Riding Hood" and the

witches in various tales (135-36; 141-42). Also, Smith notices the way Pratchett uses

fairy tale intertexts to comment metafictively upon how these tales structure the way

people view the world and may at times become repressive (160; 161).

     In spite of the studies on Pratchett's use of intertexts mentioned above, I have

not yet come across scholarship dealing with the use of intertexts in *The Amazing*

Maurice, nor have I found any critics who links Pratchett's use of intertexts in the novel

with the tradition of nonsense literature. I believe that instead of discussing the

intertextuality in *The Amazing Maurice* by itself, one should consider its juxtaposition

with the logic of commonsense, a technique that belongs to the tradition of nonsense

literature.

     Juxtaposition is a common device in literary nonsense. Anderson and Apseloff

argues that the juxtaposition of "incongruous ideas or objects" results in an absurd effect

(5). Similarly, Schwab discusses how nonsense often comes from a "collision of

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[6] Smith's discussion of Pratchett's use of fairy tale intertexts is centered mainly on the Discworld novel *Witches Abroad*. However, as he points out, other works bear a similarity to the novel in their subversive use of fairy intertexts and their incorporation of metafictive elements (135). The examples he provides include *Hogfather*, *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*, *Lords and Ladies*, and *Maskerade*.
[7] In *The Postmodern Fairytale*, Smith divides the intertextual use of fairy tales into eight categories:
          1. Authorised: Explicit reference to a fairytale in the title
          2. Writerly: Implicit reference to a fairytale in title
          3. Incorporation: Explicit reference to a fairytale within the text
          4. Allusion: Implicit reference to a fairytale within the text
          5. Re-vision: putting a new spin on an old tale
          6. Fabulation: crafting an original fairytale
          7. Metafictional: discussion of fairytales
          8. Architextual/Chronotopic: 'Fairytale' setting/environment. (10)

systems of meaning":

> Nonsense is a sense produced by a disorder in the system of meaning.
> According to Rudolf Arnheim, disorder results not from a lack of order,
> but from a collision between different systems of order within a larger
> system. Nonsense can be defined accordingly not as a lack of sense, then,
> but as a collision of systems of meaning. (51)

In Pratchett's Discworld novels, the collision and the juxtaposition usually occurs between the logic of commonsense and the conventions of fantasy, movies, and mythology, to name just a few. In one interview, Pratchett mentions how as a child, he used to apply commonsense logic to fairy tales, and how this same attitude becomes a major part of the Discworld novels: "I applied logical laws where logic shouldn't be applied. I saw things in the stories that I wasn't supposed to see and that it was fun to find. A lot of the humor of Discworld has derived from taking the logical view" ("Terry" 156). In *The Amazing Maurice*, the logic of commonsense is juxtaposed with the conventions of fairy tales, animal stories, boys' adventure stories, and fantasy novels. With this juxtaposition, Pratchett highlights the artificiality of the generic conventions mentioned, and achieves a subversive and nonsensical effect, presenting a great challenge for meaning-making and interpretation.

In the novel, references to fairy tale and children's literature intertexts occur on many different levels. On the most basic level, the characters in the story make intertextual references. Malicia is a good example for this. Sometimes she would mention specific stories. For example, in one scene Malicia summarizes one of the tales written by the Sisters Grim, "The Seventh Wife of Greenbeard," in which "'she broke out of his Room of Terror and stabbed him in the eye with a frozen herring'" (115). In spite of comic tone, this refers to the fairy tale "Blue Beard," in which the new bride of

the mysterious Blue Beard discovers a secret room hiding the corpses of her husband's previous murdered wives. Other times Malicia would refer to general tropes or motifs. For example, in a discussion of Keith's personal background, Malicia speculates,

> You were stolen away at birth, I expect. You probably are the rightful king of some country, but they found someone who looked like you and did a swap. In that case you'll have a magic sword, only it won't look magic, you see, until it's time for you to manifest your destiny. You were probably found on a doorstep. (72-73)

This passage describes what John Stephens and Robyn McCallum term "the heroic paradigm," with the emphasis on destiny and the description of an "unpromising youth," "infantile exile," and the "return home and the accession to power" (101; 104; 107). The paradigm is quite widespread and recurrent in literature, but the reference to kingship and the magic sword places the passage in the tradition of the fairy tale or fantasy.

In addition to Malicia, other characters also refer to fairy tales or children's literature. A good example of this can be found in one scene where the townsfolk of Bad Blintz associate Maurice with the talking cats in fairy tales and folktales:

> "I can see it's difficult for you to talk to rats, but humans like talking to cats, right?" [said Maurice.]
>
> "Like in Dick Livingstone?" asked Hopwick the clockmaker.
>
> "Yeah, right, him, yeah, and－" Maurice began.
>
> "And Puss in Boots?" asked Corporal Knopf.
>
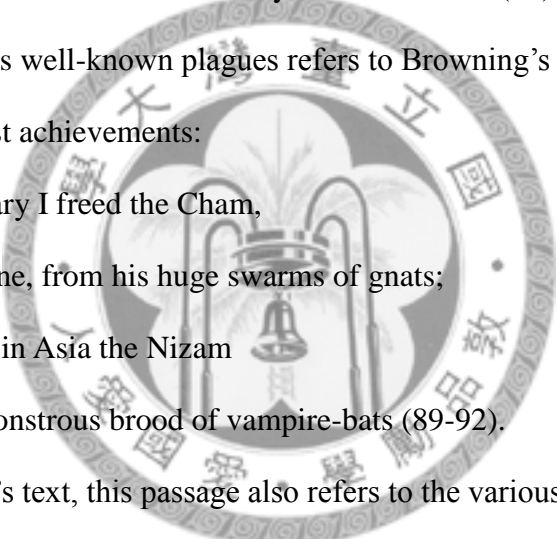> "Yeah, right, just like in books," said Maurice, scowling. (315)

In this passage, the fairy tale "Puss in Boots" is referred to by name, and "Dick Livingstone" refers to the well-known British folktale "Dick Whittington," in which a

poor orphan sends his cat with a ship to Africa, where a king pays a hefty price for the

animal in order to get rid of the rodents in the country (Nikolajeva "Devils" 250)[8].

Aside from the references the townspeople make, there is also a reference made

not by any specific person, but by the general public:

> Everyone knew about plagues of rats. There were famous stories about
>
> the rat pipers, who made their living going from town to town getting
>
> plagues of rats. Of course there weren't just rat plagues－sometimes
>
> there were plagues of accordion players, bricks tied up with string, or
>
> fish－but it was the rats everyone knew about (28).

The mention of the less well-known plagues refers to Browning's poem, in which the

Piper describes his past achievements:

> In Tartary I freed the Cham,
>
> Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
>
> I eased in Asia the Nizam
>
> Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats (89-92).

Aside from Browning's text, this passage also refers to the various folktales concerning

rat-catchers, in its mention of the emphasis on the oral transmission of stories.

According to Wolfgang Mieder, rat catchers ridding towns of their plagues of rats or

mice is a popular subject in the oral tradition of Europe (11; 40).

In addition to the characters' references to certain tales and motifs, fairy tale and

children's literature intertexts can also be spotted on the level of the main narrative itself.

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[8] The fact that "Dick Livingstone" refers to the story of "Dick Whittington" is even clearer when Malicia tells the story in brief later:

> ". . . Well, Dick Livingstone was a penniless boy who became Lord Mayor of Übergurgl because his cat was so good at catching . . . er . . . pigeons. The town was overrun with . . . pigeons, yes, and in fact later on he even married a sultan's daughter because his cat cleared all the . . . pigeons out of her father's royal palace－" (225)

Even though Malicia uses "pigeons" instead of rats because of Keith's friendship with the Changelings, the similarity between her story and the plot of "Dick Whittington" is clear.

That is to say, certain events and narrative patterns of the novel reflect those in fairy tales and children's literature[9]. The whole novel, for example, is a rewrite of the Pied Piper tale and especially of Robert Browning's "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." The very first line of the novel (aside from the epigraph) makes this clear: "Rats!/They fought the dogs and killed the cats, and－"(1). These lines are an almost direct quote of Robert Browning's "The Pied Piper of Hamelin": "Rats!/They fought the dogs and killed the cats,/And bit the babies in the cradles" (10-12). "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" (1842) is Browning's famous retelling of the Pied Piper tale in verse form, subtitled "A Child's Story," and dedicated to William Macready the Younger, the son of William Charles Macready, a famous actor of that time. Major elements and motifs of the poem are referred to in *The Amazing Maurice*. For example, Maurice's Piper scam is based on the general storyline of the Pied Piper tale: a rat plague occurs in a town and is banished by a piper with his magical pipe. In addition, the leading of the rats out of the town by the real piper and Keith also refers to Browning's text and the Pied Piper tale he draws on. Another intertextual uses of Browning's work include the mention of the town's mayor and of the town council refers particularly to Browning's poem, which includes long sections describing the mayor and the council's reaction to the plague and their foolish decision to underpay the Piper.

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[9] The power of stories and their patterns is a literal force in Discworld, on which the events of *The Amazing Maurice* is set. In *Witches Abroad*, another novel in the Discworld series, how this force operates is explained in detail:

> [Story's] very existence overlays a faint but insistent pattern on the chaos that is history. Stories etch grooves deep enough for people to follow in the same way that water follows certain paths down a mountainside. And every time fresh actors tread the path of the story, the groove runs deeper.
>
> This is called the theory of narrative causality and it means that a story, once started, takes a shape. It picks up all the vibrations of all the other workings of that story that have ever been.
>
> This is why history keeps repeating all the time.
>
> So a thousand heroes have stolen fire from the gods. A thousand wolves have eaten grandmothers, a thousand princesses have been kissed. A million unknowing actors have moved, unknowing, through the pathways of story.
>
> It is now *impossible* for the third and youngest son of any king if he should embark on a quest which has so far claimed his elder brothers, *not* to succeed. (3)

In contrast to these conventions and patterns of fairy tales and children's literature, there is the logic and commonsense of everyday life. A good example of this is the discussions concerning animals dressing like humans in *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*. After reading about the clothes wearing in the book, some of the Changelings try unsuccessfully to copy the action: "They'd tried wearing vests, but it had been very difficult to bite out the pattern, they couldn't make the buttons work, and frankly, the things got caught on every splinter and were very hard to run in. Hats just fell off" (51). The impracticality of clothes on animals is again commented upon when the mayor of Bad Blintz and Darktan discuss a character in *Mr. Bunnsy*:

> "Oh, come on," said Darktan. "Olly the Snake had a collar and tie!"
>
> "Well?"
>
> "Well, how did it stay on? A snake is tube-shaped!"
>
> "Do you know, I never thought of it like that," said the mayor. "Silly, really. He'd wriggle out of it, wouldn't he?" (334)

Throughout the novel, the conventions of fairy tales and children's literature clashes continually with the logic of everyday life, achieving several different effects. First of all, the clashes between the two different kinds of logic shows how far the conventions of fairy tales and children's literature are from reality. This can be seen in a conversation between Malicia and Maurice:

> "I don't think you're a *proper* talking cat, anyway," said Malicia
> [. . . .]
>
> "Gosh, she's got that right," said Maurice.
>
> "I mean you don't wear boots and a sword and have a big hat with a feather in it," said the girl [. . . .]
>
> Maurice gave her a long stare. "Boots?" he said at last. "On *these*

paws?" (111)

In this passage, the convention of dressed animals in fairy tales and children's literature is shown as absurd in light of the reality of a cat's anatomy.[10]

Aside from using commonsense to disrupt fairy tale/children's literature conventions, Pratchett also notes how the logic of stories acts as a crucial structuring factor of people's perception of the world, disregarding what really happens. This is shown when the piper hired by Bad Blintz reveals that the stories concerning his magical ability is just rumors:

> It always pays to advertise, kid. Sometimes these little towns can be pretty slow when it comes to parting with the cash. 'Cos the thing about turning people into badgers and all the rest of that stuff is this: It never happens *round here*. [. . .] Once the story gets around, it does your work for you. Half the things people say I've done even *I* didn't make up. (303-04)

Here it is shown how stories structure people's view of reality, and can perpetuate this vision by producing more stories to justify it.

The coexistence of these two effects, the unrealistic logic of fairy tales/children's literature and the structuring power of this very logic, creates an ambiguous effect. There is no nice and comfortable conclusion; there is no indication that commonsense is superior to stories or vice versa. And in some cases, Pratchett would put these two kinds of logic in close proximity, letting them operate in the very same scene. A good example of this can be found in one scene where Malicia sets out to pick a lock on the rat

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[10] This application of commonsense logic to the conventions of fairy tales and children's literature also puts an interesting spin on the conventions of nonsense literature. Typically, literary nonsense creates a topsy-turvy world in which the facts and norms of the real world is subverted. However, in the case of *The Amazing Maurice*, the fairy tale and children's literature intertexts actually lead readers to *expect* a deviation from real life logic. Instead of meeting this expectation, Pratchett deliberately confounds it by applying commonsense to fairy tale/children's literature situations. Therefore, here it is commonsense and everyday logic that act as a disruptive, subversive force.

catchers' shed:

> [Malicia] pulled out a small bundle of black cloth. When she
> unrolled it, Maurice saw the gleam of metal.
>
> "Ah," he said. "Lock picks, right? I've seen burglars at work—"
>
> "Hairpins," said Malicia, selecting one. "Hairpins always work in
> the books I've read. You just push one into the keyhole and twiddle. I
> have a selection of prebent ones."
>
> [. . . .]
>
> Maurice *had* seen thieves at work. . . . And what thieves tended to
> have, he knew, were complicated little tools that were used with great
> care and precision. They didn't use stupi—
>
> *Click!*
>
> "Good," said Malicia in a satisfied voice.
>
> "That was just luck," said Maurice as the padlock swung free. He
> looked up at Keith. "You think it's just luck too, eh, kid?" (113-14)

In this passage, the clash between commonsense and narrative conventions
results in repeated subversions of readerly expectations. The first surprise comes when
Maurice's realistic expectations of lock picks are confounded by the appearance of
hairpins. The fact that Malicia bases her belief upon the logic of books (possibly boys'
adventure stories) makes her seems unrealistic. The false air of professionalism from the
roll of black cloth and the prebent hairpins only adds to the feeling of absurdity. Thus
readers are invited to set up the second expectation with Maurice, that of Malicia's
failure, according to commonsense, which dictates that hairpins are not suitable for
opening locks. This second expectation is confounded again, however, when Malicia,
against the logic of everyday reality, actually opens the lock. The readers are left

unbalanced and incredulous, just like Maurice, whose vehement claim that it is all luck and his request for agreement from Keith only shows how unsettled he is. Here the spirit of nonsense is at its best: expectations are confounded, certainties are subverted, and readers are left disoriented between the clashes between different kinds of logic, unable to cling to one or the other.

2.2 The Use of Parody in *The Amazing Maurice*

In addition to the juxtaposition of fairy tale/children's literature conventions and commonsense, I feel that I should dedicate a section of this chapter to one special instance, that of *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*. The story of *Mr. Bunnsy* is special in that it operates on different levels. On the one hand, it is just one intertextual reference mentioned by the characters of *The Amazing Maurice*. On the other hand, the narrative exists outside of the main plot of the novel but interacts with it, acting as a kind of two-fold parody.

Parody is cited by Anderson, Apseloff, and Reynolds as an important device of literary nonsense. Parody's contribution to nonsense, according to Anderson and Apseloff, lies in the fact that it can "highlight both the sensible and potentially silly elements in the original" (6). In *The Amazing Maurice*, *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*, the main narrative of the novel, and the conventions of children's animal fantasy interact and parody each other. More precisely, both *Mr. Bunnsy* and the main narrative of the novel parody the conventions of animal fantasy, and both parodies each other as well.[11]

In general, *Mr. Bunnsy* is a parody of those works of animal fantasies that feature talking animal dressing up like humans. In particular, it refers to canonical texts of children's animal stories such as Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and

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[11] Since a parody is a spin-off from one or multiple original texts/conventions, there is naturally intertextuality involved. The difference between my following discussion and section 2.1 lies in the fact that here my emphasis is on how the three narratives─*Mr. Bunnsy*, the main narrative of *The Amazing Maurice*, and the tradition of animal fantasy─ interact, mirror, and subvert each other.

Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. For example, in the epigraph of Chapter 1,

Mr. Bunnsy is described as eyeing the food in a farmer's garden: "One day, when he

was naughty, Mr. Bunnsy looked over the hedge into Farmer Fred's field and saw it was

full of fresh green lettuces. Mr. Bunnsy, however, was not full of lettuces. This did not

seem fair" (Pratchett 1). This passage is reminiscent of Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of*

Peter Rabbit, in which Peter enters Mr. McGregor's garden to eat the vegetables against

his mother's warnings. The text then recounts the food he eats in detail: "First he ate

some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes" (Potter 22; 23).

His preoccupation with eating is again referred to in *Mr. Bunnsy*: "Mr. Bunnsy had a lot

of friends in Furry Bottom. But what Mr. Bunnsy was friendly with more than anything

else was food" (28). Another reference to *Peter Rabbit* is seen when Mr. Bunnsy is

trapped in brambles, "his blue coat all torn" (268). This is a reference to Peter Rabbit, in

which Peter wears a "blue jacket with brass buttons" that gets caught in a net in the

garden (Potter 35). Finally, in *Mr. Bunnsy*, there is one scene in which Mr. Bunnsy is

trapped in a forest, and he is caught in the fear of being eaten: "Mr. Bunnsy realized that

he was a fat rabbit in the Dark Wood and wished he wasn't a rabbit or, at least, not a fat

one" (158). This danger of being devoured is reminiscent of one scene in *Peter Rabbit*:

while admonishing her children not to go into Mr. McGregor's garden, Peter's mother

mentions, "[Y]our Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor"

(Potter 11).

Aside from references to *Peter Rabbit*, there are also intertextual elements from

The Wind in the Wollows in *Mr. Bunnsy*. The most evident of these is the Dark Wood,

which is a clear reference to the Wild Wood in *The Wind in the Willows*. In *The Wind in*

the Willows, the Wild Wood stands in contrast to the safe, everyday world of the river

bank. It is a place of mystery, danger and wilderness, containing a different set of laws

and rules. Similarly, the Dark Wood is a dark place containing unknown horrors, and which stands in contrast to the safety of Furry Bottom. In addition to this, reference to *Willows* can be found in the figure of Ratty Rupert, who is reminiscent of the Water Rat in Grahame's work. The similarity in the two characters' name is clear, especially considering that the Water Rat is nicknamed "Ratty" in *Willows*. In addition to this, both characters save their friends from danger. In *Willows*, the Rat finds the Mole in the Wild Wood, while in Mr. Bunnsy, Ratty Rupert finds Mr. Bunnsy in the Dark Wood and brings him back to Furry Bottom. What's more, both characters are associated with weapons. In *Willows*, when the Rat goes into the Wild Wood to find the Mole, he brings with him "a brace of pistols" and a "stout cudgel" (66). And when Rat, Mole, Badger, and Toad attacks the Wild Wooders in Toad Hall, the Rat is described as wearing a "belt bulging with weapons of every age and every variety" (331). Similarly, in *The Amazing Maurice*, Darktan carries a miniature sword with him, the inspiration for which comes from *Mr. Bunnsy*. Though it is not specified in the text, the sword in *Mr. Bunnsy* probably belongs to Ratty Rupert, since he is described as "the bravest rat that ever was," and because of his connection to the Water Rat (89).

In spite of these references, *Mr. Bunnsy* is not just a reiteration of the elements and motifs of children's animal fantasy. Instead, *Mr. Bunnsy* acts as a parody of the genre it refers to. It does so through an exaggeration of the safeness and cleanliness in some works of animal fantasy for children. As the Changelings observe, in *Mr. Bunnsy*, "[t]here were no traps, no poisons. Admittedly [. . .] Olly the snake was a bit of a rascal, but nothing truly *bad* happened. Even when the rabbit got lost in the Dark Wood, he just had a bit of a scare" (50). Malicia later sums up this tendency by commenting that in the Mr. Bunnsy books "everyone's so nice and cozy it makes you absolutely *sick*" (196). Here the object for parody is the bland safeness and the perfect, unproblematic

resolution of some works of animal fantasy. *Willows* belongs to such a category. Even though disruptions such as the Wild Wooders' attack on Toad Hall occurs in *Willows*, order is restored at the end of the story as the disruptive forces of the Wild Wood are put back in their place, and the Edenic life of the river bank and of Toad Hall continues unchallenged.

In addition to *Mr. Bunnsy*, the main narrative of *The Amazing Maurice* also parodies the tradition of animal fantasy. This can be seen in Pratchett's portrayal of talking, sentient animals. The rats, for example, are capable of speech and thought, but do not wear human clothes, due to the fact that they do not have the ability to produce attire, and that clothes are impractical for their life in the tunnels. In spite of such examples, most of the references to the tradition of animal fantasy are indirect. The direct target of parody for the main narrative of the novel is actually *Mr. Bunnsy*. In fact, I believe that one of the major functions of *Mr. Bunnsy* is to act as a kind of summary of the tropes and conventions of children's animal fantasy. With all of the targets of Pratchett's parody gathered and laid out in parallel to the main narrative, the effects of the parody becomes clearer and strengthened, as shall be shown in the following analysis of the interaction between *Mr. Bunnsy* and the main narrative of *The Amazing Maurice*.

As is mentioned before, excerpts from *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure* is placed at the beginning of each chapter of the novel, and these short passages act as a kind of parallel to the main storyline. Sometimes these epigraphs anticipate the main events in the chapters. For example, the epigraph of Chapter 3 goes as follows: "'Never go into the Dark Wood, my friend,' said Ratty Rupert. 'There are bad things in there'" (44). This excerpt is an obvious reference to *The Wind in the Willows*, in which the Water Rat warns the Mole not to enter the Wild Wood. In light of this reference, it is reasonable

that the Dark Wood shares some of the symbolic meanings of the Wild Wood: danger, darkness, the unknown, the uncivilized, and the untamed. In relation to the main narrative in this chapter, the passage foreshadows the Changeling's exploration of underground Bad Blintz, a place where "creatures that want to stay out of sight" live, and which shares the feeling of unknown danger just like the Dark Wood (44). Another example of such foreshadowing effects of the epigraphs can be found in Chapter 2, where the epigraph reads, "Mr. Bunnsy had a lot of friends in Furry Bottom. But what Mr. Bunnsy was friendly with more than anything else was food," foreshadowing Bad Blintz's shortage and concern with food (28). In some cases, however, the epigraphs contrast with the main content of the chapters, achieving an ironic effect. For example, the epigraph of Chapter 9 reads: "Farmer Fred opened his door and saw all the animals of Furry Bottom waiting for him. 'We can't find Mr. Bunnsy or Ratty Rupert!' they cried" (195). Here, instead of trying to find their friends by themselves, "all the animals" go to a human (Farmer Fred) for guidance. This stands in stark contrast to the main content of the chapter, in which Keith and Malicia, two human children, are rescued from their captivity by the rat catchers. The Changelings' autonomy becomes a critique on the naïveté and dependence of the animals in *Mr. Bunnsy*.

Another example of the contrasts between *Mr. Bunnsy* and the main narrative of *The Amazing Maurice* can be seen from the different attitude towards the "Dark Wood." As is mentioned before, the Dark Wood in *Mr. Bunnsy* is seen as a place of mystery, darkness, danger, and disorder. It is a place to be avoided. In *The Amazing Maurice*, the Dark Wood has two levels of significance. On one level, the Dark Wood symbolizes underground Bad Blintz. Just as the Dark Wood, the underground is a dark, secluded place, unknown and full of danger. The traps and poisons threaten the rats, and in the middle of the maze of tunnels and cellars lies the rat king, the monster in the forest and

the embodiment of pain, rage, hate, and destruction. On another level, the Dark Wood refers to the wild instincts and emotion in one's mind, or "the darkness behind [the] eyes," as is often called in the story (250). However, instead of shunning the Dark Wood, the Changelings choose to confront and conquer it. In one of his pep talks to the rats under him, Darktan states, "Well, we're in the Dark Wood now. Oh, yes. There's something else down there. Something terrible. It hides behind your fear. It thinks it can stop you, and it's *wrong*. We're going to find it and drag it out, and we're gonna make it wish we'd never been *born*!" (252). And later he declares, "We *love* the Dark Wood! It belongs to us!" (253). Here the term Dark Wood refers more to the actual underground of Bad Blintz and its dangers. However, in a later speech, its reference to one's mind is clear: "we're in the heart of the Dark Wood now, and we've found the Dark Wood in our hearts" (282). Here the Dark Wood becomes the symbol for the dark recesses of one's mind, where dwells a terrible thing, the embodiment of one's instincts and negative emotions such as fear, anger and hatred. Instead of running away, Darktan calls for the rats to conquer and overcome those things, and thus take the Dark Wood as theirs. He does not say anything about killing the monster. Instead of shying away from one's dark side or denying its existence, it is suggested that one should look it in the eye, control it and even learn how to use it and channel it for one's benefit.

2.3 The Use of Wordplay in *The Amazing Maurice*

In addition to the use of juxtaposition and parody, Pratchett also uses wordplay to challenge his readers in *The Amazing Maurice*. As Schwab mentions, "[l]iterary nonsense uses the excess of the signifier over the signified [. . .] in order to disturb and to recreate the relation between words and worlds and to fold language back upon itself" (49-50). In *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett explores the relation between signifier and the signified by playing with names, puns, figurative language, and obscure words.

In the novel, Pratchett often plays with the relation between names and objects. One of the most interesting instances of this is the way he names the Changelings. According to Keith, after the Change, the rats learn to pronounce the sound of words before they learn the meanings. Therefore, when the Changelings name themselves with words from labels and packages they found on the waste dumps, they base their choice upon the sound of the words instead of the meanings. Hence they have strange names like Big Savings, Peaches, and Nourishing, words that are cut from context and significance. The little white rat who names himself Dangerous Beans, for example, is neither dangerous nor a bean. This random collage of sounds and connotations upsets the usual process of meaning-making, and achieves a comical effect. In spite of the seeming randomness of names, however, there are some tenuous connections between some of the names with the rats they designate. For example, the name Hamnpork can refer to the head rat's occupation with the body over the mind. This kind of connection, which may or may not be accidental, entice readers to consider various ways the names can make meanings and be linked with the designated.

Aside from names, Pratchett also plays with puns in the novel. Instead of maintaining an one-on-one relation between signifier and the signified, puns remind readers of the possibility of multiple meanings for one signifier. In this situation, meaning becomes unstable, and interpretation becomes a creative process in which readers are challenged to come up with and keep in mind various layers of signification. An example of the use of puns can be found after one of Malicia's extensive monologues, when the narrator observes that "Maurice was always on the lookout for what people wanted. And what Malicia wanted, he felt, was a gag" (73). Here the word "wanted" is a double-entendre meaning both to desire and to lack. When reading the first sentence, one would expect the word "wanted" to mean to desire. This

interpretation is unsettled when in the second sentence, the word turns out to mean to

lack. This kind of surprise disrupts readers' mental habit of forming one-on-on relations

between words and meanings. Instead, this prompts readers to think of different possible

meanings and form multiple connections, encouraging creativity and flexibility.

Aside from the use of puns, Pratchett also plays with figurative language.

According to Anderson and Apseloff, the play with figurative language "reveals the

creative side of language and teaches a child that words when in use are alive and

acrobatic" (67). In some ways, the play with figurative is similar to the use of puns.

Both prompt readers to contemplate the multiple meanings a word can have. An

example of the play with figurative language in *The Amazing Maurice* can be found in

one instance where a rat catcher uses a series of idioms about cats. Believing that their

scheme is about to be discovered, Rat Catcher 1 plans to get out of town while Maurice

and his friends look on undiscovered:

"[. . .] Time to move on! The jig is up, the bird has flowed, and the

cat is out of the bag! The—Did you say that?"

"Say what?" said Rat Catcher 2.

"Did you just say 'I wish I was?'"

"Me? No." (202)

And later a similar situation occurs again:

"[. . .] What's in the kitty—What did you say?"

"What, me? Nothing. Cup of tea? You always feel better after a

cup of tea."

"Didn't you say 'kitty yourself?'" Rat Catcher 1 demanded. (203)

In this scene, the idioms mentioned by Rat Catcher 1 take on double meanings. On the

one hand, the phrase "the cat is out of the bag" has the metaphorical meaning of "the

63

secret is out." On the other hand, Maurice uses the literal meaning of the phrase, the idea that the cat (himself) has escaped. A similar thing happens in the second passage, though in this case, the word "kitty" is used as a pun, which can mean both "cat" and "a sum of money made up of several people's contribution," as in the sum of betting money for a game of rat coursing, for example.

Aside from the instances of wordplay mentioned above, Pratchett exhibits a delight in hard, obscure words. For example, when the three are discussing the supposed rat tails shown by the rat catchers, Maurice asks Malicia whether she has noticed the "aglets" on them (86). The fact that Maurice then proceeds to explain what an aglet is shows that the use of hard word is deliberate. Interestingly, the use of the word "aglet" here is devoid of didactic intent or important connections to the plot. Pratchett does explain the word's meaning, but there is a sense that it is not strictly necessary to the plot. Rather, it is used solely for the delight of its shape and sound. A similar case can be found in a conversation between the mayor of Bad Blintz and a member of the Watch, in which they talk about how Malicia mistakes Mr. Vogel and Mrs. Schuman for smugglers and tied them up:

> [The mayor said:] "And [Mrs. Vogel] didn't deserve to be bound
> and gagged along with Mr. Vogel, who caught quite a chill as a result! I
> had complaints from him and from her, *and* from Mrs. Vogel and from
> Mr. Schuman, *and* from Mr. Vogel after Mr. Schuman went around to his
> house and hit him with a last, *and* from Mrs. Schuman after Mrs. Vogel
> called her a—"
>
> "A last what, sir?" said the sergeant.
>
> "What?"
>
> "Hit him with a last what?"

The mayor stared at the sergeant's honest but puzzled expression.

"A last, man!" he said. "It's a kind of wooden foot shoemakers

use when they're making shoes!" (290)

This case of wordplay is a combination of an obscure word and a pun. On the one hand, Pratchett provides the little known name for a shoemaker's tool. On the other hand, Pratchett makes use of the fact that "last" can refer to the shoemaker's tool or to the antonym of "first", and creates the sergeant's comical misunderstanding.

Aside from the instance above, there is also one scene in which Pratchett play with long words. In one case, Maurice answers the mayor's exclamation that cats cannot talk: "[. . .] I can't pronounce difficult words like 'marmalade' and 'lumbago'. But I'm pretty happy with basic repartee and simple wholesome conversation" (308-09). These sentences invite readers to read out loud the words "marmalade" and "lumbago" together with Maurice, and appreciate the more complex sounds of these words, unmindful of their meanings.

In this chapter, I have shown how Pratchett uses devices from literary nonsense to draw attention to the artificiality and arbitrariness of literary conventions and language. His juxtaposition of the conventions of fairy tales/children's literature with the logic of everyday life creates a new space in which two systems of meanings clash, and neither dominates, leading to an uncertainty in meaning-making. The narrative of *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure* is a parody of children's animal fantasy. Read together with the main plot of the novel, it becomes a warped mirror image of the main text, from which the main story achieves multiple layers of significance by carrying on a dialogue with it and deviating from it. Finally, in the novel, Pratchett uses different kinds of wordplay to disrupt the relation between signifier and signified, and to appreciate the beauty of the forms and sounds of words.

Chapter 3:

"A Story About Stories"－Reading and Storytelling in *The Amazing Maurice*

In the previous chapter, I have discussed how Pratchett reveals the arbitrariness of language and literary conventions through the use of elements and conventions of nonsense literature in *The Amazing Maurice*. In this chapter, I would like to examine how Pratchett metafictively explores the subject of stories in *The Amazing Maurice*, hence the phrase "a story about stories," a quote I took from the novel to use as the title of this chapter.

Stories are an important concern in Pratchett's novel. The term is used to refer to the narratives and discourses people construct to structure their experiences and perceptions of the world. Pratchett has used "stories" to include narrative forms such as fairy tales, nursery stories, folklore, myths, and, as can be seen in the case of *The Amazing Maurice,* children's literature. Pratchett's exploration of the workings of stories and their relation with people can be found in many of his novels, including but not limited to *Witches Abroad*, *Hogfather*, the Tiffany Aching novels, and *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*[12].

Critics discussing Pratchett's exploration of stories generally focus on the first three works I listed. Tiffin, for example, focuses mainly on *Witches Abroad* in her discussion of Pratchett and his exploration of stories. She argues that in *Witches Abroad*, Pratchett shows stories' power to shape people's perception of the world and their experience in it (163). Furthermore, she believes that in the novel, stories are shown to have the power to constrict and dehumanize, especially when people fail to recognize

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[12] Although all of the novels I list here deal with the subject of stories, they focus respectively on different genres. *Witches Abroad*, for example, focuses on fairy tales. *Hogfather* deals mainly with nursery tales such as tooth fairies and the Discworld version of Santa Claus. The Tiffany Aching novels address forms like fairy tales and myths. *The Amazing Maurice*, as will be discuss later, focuses on fairy tales and childen's animal fantasy alike.

the difference between narratives and reality. As Tiffin puts it, "In [Pratchett's] awareness, narrative is a political act, a powerful and dominant discourse, and its potential for entrapment is more than limiting on action, it is profoundly dehumanizing" (163). Similarly, in his discussion of the fairy tale subversions in *Witches Abroad*, Smith argues that in the novel, Pratchett shows how people structure their lives and perceptions of the world according to fairy tales (161). Also, he uses another of Pratchett's novel, *Hogsfather*, to demonstrate that despite their possibly constricting effects, stories are essential to human existence (162). In addition to Tiffin and Smith, Gruner also discusses the treatment of stories in Pratchett's novels. Her target texts are the first three of the Tiffany Aching books, *The Wee Free Men*, *A Hat Full of Sky*, and *Wintersmith*.[13] According to Gruner, in these three texts, Pratchett shows that stories have the power "to shape our reality, to inspire action" (226). With this knowledge, Tiffany, the child witch, gradually learns to recognize the power of stories, and to treat them critically (226-227). In this way, Tiffany is able to "make use of [the stories she knows] rather than being bound by them" (228).

From the brief review above, it is clear that Pratchett has addressed the subject of stories in many of his novels. What, then, makes *The Amazing Maurice* special in its exploration of stories? The answer, I argue, lies in the fact that the novel deals specifically with *children's* reading material, and *children's* response to these narratives. For example, although both *The Amazing Maurice* and *Witches Abroad* explore the subject of fairy tales, *The Amazing Maurice* explores the issue of fairy tales as children's reading material. This can be seen from one of Malicia's comments about the Sisters Grim: "'They were not big on tinkling little people. They wrote . . . *real* fairy tales. Ones with lots of bold and bones and bats and rats in them'" (88). Through this

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[13] The last book in the Tiffany Aching series, *I Shall Wear Midnight*, was published in September, 2010, while Gruner's article is published in 2009.

comment, Pratchett reminds his readers of the dark elements often found in fairy tales, and raises questions about some adults' quest for "proper" and "safe" reading material for children. Another example of *The Amazing Maurice*'s specific focus on children's reading material can be found in a comparison of this novel with the Tiffany Aching series. The protagonist of the series, Tiffany, is an avid reader, just like Malicia. However, as a girl growing up on a farm, she does not have much access to works of children's literature. Of the five books on the farm, only one is targeted at a child audience: *The Goode Childe's Booke of Faerie Tales* (10). And even this book does not have much importance in the novel, except as a reference book for mythological creatures. In contrast, in *The Amazing Maurice*, a wide range of children's reading materials is brought up, including fairy tales, animal fantasy, and adventure stories. What's more, there is an emphasis on the responses to these reading materials from children, such as Malicia, and from characters that hold a similar social position to children, such as the Changelings.

Now that I have established how *The Amazing Maurice* is special in its exploration of stories, I will go on to discuss the two issues concerning stories which the novel examines: reading and storytelling.

3.1 Reading in *The Amazing Maurice*

It has been pointed out by John Stephens that in the English-speaking world, a mode of reading that includes the effacing of the reader's subjectivity is promoted (4). It is assumed that in this mode of reading, the reader is situated inside the text, thereby leading to the effacement of his or her subjectivity (Stephens 4). Stephens considers this mode to be problematic for two reasons. First of all, he believes that this way of reading leads to an emphasis on verisimilitude in texts (4). That is to say, this mode of reading attempts to equate linguistic representation with "the real world," thereby disguising

"the processes of textual production of meaning" (Stephens 4). Secondly, this way of reading leads to the idea that children should identify totally with "a principal character and its construction and experience of the world" without question (4). According to Stephens, both these reasons would leave readers unaware of the ideologies and manipulation behind the texts (4). Therefore, instead of total immersion in the text, Stephens opts for a critical way of reading.

With *The Amazing Maurice*, Pratchett takes a similar stance to Stephens's. Portraying his child characters as capable of discerning between reality and discourse, Pratchett envisions his young audience as being able to read in a distanced and critical manner. In order to prompt his readers to such a way of reading, he employs two strategies. The first is the use of the devices of nonsense literature, which exposes the artificiality of language and literary conventions. The second is the exploration of the themes of reading and storytelling in *The Amazing Maurice*, which exposes the processes behind both acts and invites readers to reflect upon their experience of the novel critically.

In *The Amazing Maurice*, there are two main examples of reading. The first is the Changelings' reading of *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*, and the second is Malicia's reading of fairy tales and children's literature. In the case of the Changelings, Pratchett highlights the constructed nature of texts, and especially of those seemingly innocent works for children. He shows that behind such texts lie the conventions and ideologies that seek to shape and mold their readers' thoughts. Therefore, it is problematic to immerse oneself in a text and accept everything in it without question. Instead, a critical stance is needed to escape the manipulation of the texts. In the novel, the Changelngs are shown reading *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*. Unaware of the conventions of animal fantasy and of the idea of fiction, the rats take the events in the book literally. They

marvel at how the animals in the book never eat each other, how the animals all wear human clothing, and how the humans and the animals converse and live together in peace. They wonder at how humans can write stories about Ratty Rupert and then kill rats in real life. These questions stem from the rats' lack of knowledge concerning the conventions of animal fantasy. They do not understand, for example, that animal characters in children's animal fantasy are not accurate portrayals of animals in real life. They do not know that in animal fantasy, these animal characters are anthropomorphized beings with a few animalistic traits who act as masks for children, as I have mentioned in the first chapter. The fact that the animals in *Mr. Bunnsy* are not mimetic depictions of real animals but children in disguise answers most of the rats' questions: why people would appreciate characters like Ratty Rupert while routinely killing real rats, why the animals do not eat each other, and why they have a cordial relationship with humans. In addition, the fact that the animal characters are children in disguise points to the ideological assumption that children are animal-like and inferior, which explains why the animals are treated like "smaller humans," that is, like children in the picture book.

Another example of the rats' lack of knowledge about the conventions behind animal fantasy can be found in their experiments with wearing clothes:

> Some of the younger rats had suggested that perhaps clothes were more important than everyone thought. They'd tried wearing vests, but it had been very difficult to bite out the pattern, they couldn't make the buttons work, and frankly, the things got caught on every splinter and were very hard to run in. Hats just fell off. (51)

Here the rats wrongly assume the depiction of clothes-wearing animals in *Mr. Bunnsy* to be accurate to reality. Their mistake comes from the fact that they do not know that

clothes-wearing animals are a common trope in animal stories designed for several

reasons. As Nodelman and Reimer point out, in animal stories, clothes are a sign of the

animal characters' humanity, but also a restriction of their more natural, spontaneous

side (194). Therefore, in animal stories, animals wearing clothes often symbolize

children who move between their animality and the order of civilization. Thus, the

clothes are in fact a symbolic detail in animal stories.

Aside from the Changelings, another reader in the novel is Malicia. Her case is

more complicated in that she is at once a reader and a storyteller. Although there is no

scene showing her reading in the novel, Malicia's extensive reading in the field of fairy

tales and children's literature is hinted at through her constant references to those texts.

In the novel, Malicia constantly refers to fairy tales and children's literature, and tries to

impose these onto everyday life. For example, within moments of her first meeting with

Keith and Maurice, Malicia begins to construct a story about Keith's background in

terms of the conventions of fairy tales and children's literature:

> "You're new, aren't you? Come here looking for work, have you?
>
> Probably sacked from your last job, I expect. Probably because you fell
>
> asleep, and things got spoiled. That was probably what it was. Or you ran
>
> away because he beat you with a big stick, although," [Malicia] added, as
>
> another idea struck her, "you probably deserved it of being lazy." (41-42)

In this passage, Malicia constructs her story by reiterating several plots of fairy tales and

folktales, including the lazy protagonist, the loss of a job due to carelessness, and the

seeking of fortune in a new land. Instead of asking Keith about his life, she simply

pieces the things she read into something that fits the patterns of stories. Aside from this

example, a starker instance of Malicia's imposition of stories on real life can be seen

from a conversation between the mayor and one of the town's watchmen:

"[. . .] Remember last month? When she tracked down the Mysterious Headless Horseman?"

"Well, you must admit he *was* a horseman, sir."

"That is true. But he was also a short man with a very high collar. *And* he was the chief tax gatherer from Mintz. I'm still getting official letters about it! Tax gatherers do not as a rule like young ladies dropping on them out of trees! And then in September there was that business about the─the─"

"The Mystery of Smuggler's Windmill, sir," said the Sergeant, rolling his eyes.

"Which turned out to be Mr. Vogel, the town clerk, and Mrs. Schuman, the shoemaker's wife, who happened to be there merely because of their shared interest in studying the habits of barn owls . . ."

". . . and Mr. Vogel had his trousers off because he'd torn them on a nail . . ." said the sergeant, not looking at the mayor.

". . . which Mrs. Schuman was very kindly repairing for him," said the mayor, not looking at the sergeant.

"By moonlight," said the sergeant.

"She happens to have very good eyesight!" snapped the mayor. "And she didn't deserve to be bound and gagged along with Mr. Vogel, who caught quite a chill as a result! [. . .]" (289-90).

In this conversation, the stories Malicia draws on stand in sharp contrast with what really happens, which indicates the extend of her unquestioning acceptance of the conventions of the texts she reads.

This assumption, however, becomes problematic when one considers her

critique towards some of the picture books she read. For example, she once criticizes the

Mr. Bunnsy series for its deviation from reality and for its blandness:

> "There's no subtext, no social commentary," . . . "The most
> interesting thing that happens at all is when Doris the Duck loses a shoe
> —a *duck* losing a *shoe*, right?—and it turns up under the bed after
> they've spent the entire story looking for it. Do you call that narrative
> tension? Because I don't. If people are going to make up stupid stories
> about animals pretending to be human, at least there could be a bit of
> interesting violence—" (196-97).

Here it is clear that Malicia takes a critical stance towards the Mr. Bunnsy books.

Instead of accepting the stories' content and the genre's conventions unquestioningly,

she criticizes the series for having unrealistic details such as clothed animals, and for

lacking suspense and depth. Her use of the words "social commentary" and "subtext"

especially, shows that she is actually capable of more in-depth criticism. As Pratchett

points out in an interview, "Malicia is a very knowing girl. She reads a lot. She's aware

of the things we try to foist on kids via their reading" ("Interview"). This, then, proves

that Malicia's imposition of stories onto real life does not come from an unquestioning

acceptance of the content and ideologies of the texts she reads. In fact, as some cases

show, Malicia deliberately chooses certain patterns and motifs from the texts she read,

and uses them to take control of her life and to empower herself. This will be shown in

the following section on storytelling in *The Amazing Maurice*.

3.2 Storytelling in *The Amazing Maurice*

As has been mentioned before, in his works, Pratchett often explores how stories

have the power to affect people's perception of reality. In his study of fairy tale

intertexts in contemporary fiction, Smith observes that fairy tales can act as "a schema,

or template into which the chaos of events can be fitted" (105). According to him, through the application of fairy tales, one is able to organize and make sense of the chaos of one's experience (105). Indeed, this very point is shown in *The Amazing Maurice*. One example of this can be seen when Maurice is convincing the townspeople to talk to him:

> "I can see it's difficult for you to talk to rats, but humans like talking to cats, right?"
>
> "Like in Dick Livingstone?" asked Hopwick the clockmaker.
>
> "Yeah, right, him, yeah, and—" Maurice began.
>
> "And Puss in Boots?" asked Corporal Knopf.
>
> "Yeah, right, just like in books," said Maurice, scowling. (315)

Here, faced with the prospect of talking to a cat, the humans immediately reach for the stories that contain talking cats as a point of reference. This shows how the stories people read become a common frame of reference through which people make sense of the world and their experience in it.

Similarly, the authentic piper in the story achieves authority and reputation through stories. He does so first by spreading around rumors of his magical abilities, and then letting other people perpetuate those stories and spawn new ones. This not only shows how stories affects people's take on reality but also how the frame built up by the stories is self-perpetuating. That is to say, with the frame of reference influenced by the stories, people tend to produce new stories to reinforce this construction. With this working process in mind, even originally disempowered people, such as children and the wandering piper, can manipulate stories to their ends.

To a degree, Malicia understands the power of stories to affect and change reality. This can be seen in how she attempts to use her storytelling to gain power and

control over her life. By fitting the random details of everyday life into stories, she is in fact trying to make sense of the happenings in her life and gain power by being the storyteller, the one in control of all the details. This can be seen in her account of her own life:

> "Well, you probably won't be surprised to know that I've got two dreadful stepsisters," said Malicia. "And I have to do all the chores!"
>
> [. . .]
>
> "Well, most of the chores," said Malicia, as if revealing an unfortunate fact. "Some of them, definitely. I have to clean up my own room, you know! And it's *extremely* untidy!"
>
> [. . .]
>
> "*And* it's very nearly the smallest bedroom. There's practically no closets and I'm running out of bookshelf space!"
>
> [. . .]
>
> "And people are incredibly cruel to me. You will note that we're here in a *kitchen*." (75)

From this passage, one can see that Malicia knowingly tries to make her life a story. By using patterns and motifs from the texts she read, Malicia seeks to add significance to her mundane life, and to gain control over it by being the interpreter of its events.

Her attempt at gaining power through storytelling is however eclipsed by her disregard for what's happening in real life, and for other people's feelings. Her disregard for real events can be seen in her forceful imposition of stories on real life as evidenced by the examples above. And her inconsideration towards other people's feelings can be seen in her inability to listen and to empathize with other people. During her criticism on the Mr. Bunnsy books, for example, Malicia fails to notice that she has upset the

75

Changelings when she reveals that the picture books are just fiction for children. Even after Keith points the fact out, Malicia is unconcerned: "'You upset them,' said Keith. 'Look, shall we get out of here before the rat catchers come back?' said Malicia" (197). Because of her lack of concern with reality and people's feelings, Malicia's storytelling is dismissed and trivialized by people around her. According to her, she has been punished for telling stories by her father, who tells her that "you can't run a city on stories" and that "you have to be practical" (179). Here Malicia's storytelling is seen as impractical and useless.

In contrast to Malicia, Maurice, the master storyteller of the novel, is able to make full use of the power of stories. Though no less self-serving than Malicia, Maurice pays a lot of attention to people's desires and psychological workings. For example, Maurice tends to look out for what people want, because "[i]f you knew what it was that people really, *really* wanted, you very nearly controlled them" (19). This awareness of people's psychological workings is important because storytelling is never a one-person activity. A storytelling is a social process in which the teller, the story, and the listener interact with each other. And the stories that elicit the most response from their listeners are those that touch upon the listeners' feelings and desires. Maurice's understanding of this point is demonstrated in his story of the "lucky town" (315). Trying to convince the people of Bad Blintz to coexist with the Changelings in peace, Maurice chooses to appeal to these people by listing the rats' potential contribution to vermin control and the tourist industry of the town. When questioned about his approach by the rats, Maurice explains his reasoning: "Look, these people aren't philosophers. They're just . . . everyday. They don't understand about the tunnels. This is a market town. You've got to approach them the right way" (320). Here it is clear that Maurice is able to pinpoint economy as the main concern of the townspeople, and therefore, instead of

"appeal[ing] to the common bond between intelligent species," as Dangerous Beans suggests, Maurice chooses to go for the economic angle (320).

Aside from his appeal to people's desire, Maurice is also aware of how stories structure people's thought patterns. This can be seen in how he constructs his piper scams on the basis of the stories about pipers:

> Everyone knew about plagues of rats. There were famous stories about the rat pipers, who made their living going from town to town getting rid of plagues of rats. Of course there weren't just rat plagues—sometimes there were plagues of accordion players, bricks tied up with storing, or fish— but it was the rats everyone knew about. (28)

Aware of the expectations built into people's minds through these stories, Maurice knows that when faced with a rat plague, people will call in a piper and believe in his ability to lead rats away.

As can be seen from the examples above, because of his appeal to people's desires and thought patterns, Maurice's stories are more influential and convincing. The contrast between Maurice's way of storytelling and Malicia's is illustrated clearly in the following passage.

> "Anyway . . . So you really are a magical cat, then?"
>
> [. . .]
>
> "Oh, yes, that's right, magical," he said, with a yellow-white ring around his mouth. For two fish heads he'd be anything for anybody.
>
> "Probably belonged to a witch, I expect, with a name like Griselda or one of those names," said the girl, putting the fish heads on another saucer.
>
> "Yeah, right, Griselda, right," said Maurice, not raising his head.

"Who lived in a gingerbread cottage in the forest, probably."

"Yeah, right," said Maurice. And then, because he wouldn't have been Maurice if he couldn't be a bit inventive, he added: "Only it was a melba toast cottage, 'cos she was slimming. Very healthy witch, Griselda."

The girl looked puzzled for a moment. "That's not how it should go," she said.

"Sorry, my mistake, it was gingerbread really," said Maurice quickly. Someone giving you food was always correct.

"And she had big warts, I'm sure."

"Miss," said Maurice, trying to look sincere, "some of those warts had so much personality, they used to have friends of their own." (70-71)

In this passage, Malicia shows a lack of concern for real people and situations by imposing the pattern of well-known stories on Maurice without asking him about his background. The rigidity of her storytelling can be seen when Maurice deviates from the well-known pattern and claims that his witch has a cottage made of melba toast instead of gingerbread. With the familiar story pattern disrupted, Malicia loses her sense of control and is puzzled. In contrast, Maurice shows his sensitivity to people's desires and a streak of creativity in this quoted passage. On the one hand, he notices Malicia's desire for a certain kind of story, and therefore follows it. On the other hand, he tries to slip in a bit of his creativity. When his creativity is not appreciated though, he is flexible enough to backtrack. Even with his acquiescence to Malicia about the gingerbread cottage though, he makes sure to add a bit of his personal touch in his description of the warts.

Maurice's way of storytelling, with his awareness of people's desire and thought patterns, his flexibility, and his creativity, is later learned by other characters in *The Amazing Maurice*. Even Malicia learns to adopt some of his techniques. During a recount of the story of Dick Livingstone, Malicia is careful to change a tale about killing rats into one about killing pigeons:

> "[. . .] Well, Dick Livingstone was a penniless boy who became Lord Mayor of Ü bergurgl because his cat was so good at catching . . . er . . . pigeons. The town was overrun with . . . pigeons, yes, and in fact later on he even married a sultan's daughter because his cat cleared all the . . . pigeons out of her father's royal palace－"
>
> "It was rats really, wasn't it?" asked Keith glumly.
>
> "I'm sorry, yes." (224-25)

In this conversation, Malicia shows consideration about her audience's feelings, and adapts her storytelling accordingly.

Aside from Malicia, other characters also learn to adopt Maurice's way of storytelling. Among the rats, Darktan uses this method of storytelling to his advantage. After a grueling battle with the rat king's rats, Darktan boosts his troops' spirits by telling a story: "Well, we're in the Dark Wood now. Oh, yes. There's something else down there. Something terrible. It hides behind your fear. It thinks it can stop you, and it's *wrong*. We're going to find it and drag it out, and we're gonna make it wish we'd never been *born*!" (252). There are several notable points in this passage. First of all, to boost the rats' morale, Darktan deliberately chooses *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure* as the material he works with, a book that is familiar to the Changelings, and one that is probably pretty influential to the rats due to its almost canonical status among the Clan. The second point worthy of note is Darktan's new interpretation of the material he uses.

79

Instead of treating the Dark Wood as the mysterious, dangerous place that should be avoided, Darktan urges his troops to go into the Dark Wood, and conquer the horror lurking in it. This new spin on old material not only exhibits Darktan's flexibility in storytelling, but also demonstrates the usefulness of transforming old materials into new forms. Darktan's mingling of new and old stories suggests that while new stories promote new ways of looking at the world, this does not mean that old stories are meaningless.

In fact, throughout the novel, Pratchett often harks back to old traditions and derive new stories based on the conventions of old ones. As is suggested before, people's views are structured by old stories, which makes them respond more readily towards old patterns and elements. Therefore, sometimes old materials are helpful in making people accept new ideas and concepts. The possibilities for transformation and change in old stories can be seen in Dangerous Beans's final evaluation of *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*. In one scene, after realizing the picture book as a work of fiction, several rats pronounced their judgment on the book:

> "It's a lie," said Peaches.
>
> "Maybe it's just a pretty story," said Sardines.
>
> "Yes," said Dangerous Beans. "Yes." He turned his misty pink
>
> eyes to Darktan, who had to stop himself from stepping back, and added:
>
> "Perhaps it's a map" (323).

Although *Mr. Bunnsy* ultimately proves to be a work of fiction, and reflect certain human biases, through the rats' unconventional way of reading, it still becomes a kind of inspiration for the Changelings. It provided the rats, and especially Dangerous Beans, with the possibility of speaking with humans instead of fighting them, and provides a vision of harmonious coexistence with human beings. It is this vision that ultimately

80

opens the way for the negotiation between the rats and the townsfolk of Bad Blintz, and in some sense, it is this vision that enables the true defeat of the rat king, the embodiment of the pain and hatred resulting from and perpetuating the war between rats and humans.

Aside from the stories told by the characters, *The Amazing Maurice* can also be seen as the product of a storytelling. In fact, in the novel, various metafictional elements remind the reader that what is going on in front of him/her is fiction. For example, the narrator of the novel draws attention to the textuality of *The Amazing Maurice* by announcing its beginning and its ending. In chapter one, the narrator starts the narration of the main characters' journey by saying, "It [the story] began—*part* of it began—[. . .]" (1). And at the end of the novel, the narrator comments on Maurice's ongoing adventures by saying, "Because some stories end, but old stories go on, and you gotta dance if you want to stay ahead" (340). Aside from the narrator's comments, some of the characters also make metafictional comments. For example, before the main part of the story begins, the narrator mentions the comments of some characters on their own adventures: "As the Amazing Maurice said, it was just a story about people and rats. . . . But Malicia Grim said it was a story about stories" (1). These metafictive references create the feeling that *The Amazing Maurice* is the result of a storytelling. And in this storytelling, just as the successful cases of storytelling in the novel, familiar elements and conventions are taken and transformed. As is discussed in the previous chapter, *The Amazong Maurice* refers to the genre of fairy tales, children's animal fantasy, and adventure stories. And yet with his new construction of children, his highlight of the artificiality of language and literary conventions through the use of literary nonsense conventions, and his metafictive exploration of the process of reading and storytelling, Pratchett is able to use these traditional elements to create something new.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have discussed how Terry Pratchett's *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* explores the ideas of childhood, children's literature, and the act of reading and storytelling. In the first chapter, I examined Pratchett's reconstruction of children and childhood by subverting the conventions of children's animal fantasy. As I have mentioned before, in children's literature, anthropomorphic animals are usually disguises for children, and this connection often reflects the ideas that children are animal-like, helpless, and needing adult-guidance. In *The Amazing Maurice*, however, both children and animals are released from the conventions of animal fantasy. In contrast to the construction of childhood in animal stories, the children in *The Amazing Maurice* possess the skills of "First Sight" and "Second Thoughts". The former allows children to distinguish between reality and the discourses people construct to structure their experience, and the latter enable children to observe their thoughts, actions, and relation with the world in a detached fashion. In addition to the children in *The Amazing Maurice*, the animals in the novel are also free from the conventions of animal stories. Instead of being thinly disguised human children, they are depicted as living genuine animals' lives before being transformed into sentient beings. This provides Pratchett with an opportunity to explore questions that comes from the clashes between animality and sentience. However, Pratchett also acknowledges of the animals' shared marginal social position with the children, and uses this to explore children's relation with social conventions without claiming access to children's mental processes.

In Chapter 2, I have shown how Pratchett highlights the artificiality and arbitrariness of literary conventions and language by using the devices of nonsense literature. I have shown how this is done through the juxtaposition of fairy tale/children's literature intertexts and everyday logic, through the parodic effect caused

by the interaction between *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*, the main narrative of *The Amazing Maurice*, and the conventions of animal fantsy, and finally through the use of wordplay.

After the discussion on Pratchett's reconstruction of childhood and his exposition of the artificiality of language and literary conventions, I examined the subject of reading and storytelling in *The Amazing Maurice*. I discussed how stories, or narrative, are depicted as a structuring force on people's views on the world, and how such narratives can bring undesirable results if accepted unquestioningly. Therefore, I argued that instead of total immersion in a text, one should approach narratives in a critical manner. Aside from the matter of reading, I have also discussed Pratchett's view on storytelling. For in keeping with the idea of critical reading, Pratchett argues in *The Amazing Maurice* that one should not accept and repeat stories unthinkingly. Instead, he suggests, one should tell stories in a flexible, creative fashion. That is to say, instead of imposing the stories one read upon the situation at hand, one should transform or create according to what the situation calls for. This ability to tell stories flexibly will in turn empower the storyteller.

The above are what I have discussed in my thesis. I am aware that there are still many questions and subjects I have not covered, for *The Amazing Maurice* is as full of ideas and layers of meanings as the best of Pratchett's novels. One good example of this is the question of whether *The Amazing Maurice* counts as a work of crossover fiction. According to Sandra L. Beckett, crossover literature refers to "fiction that crosses from child to adult or adult to child audiences" (4). In her study on crossover fiction, Rachel Falconer mentions Pratchett's first Discworld novel, *The Colour of Magic*, as an example of crossover fiction (14). And Beckett, as I have mentioned in the Introduction, also discusses the crossover tendency in Pratchett's works. She argues that there is little

distinction between Pratchett's works for adults and for children (146). What's more, she points out that no matter which audience his works ostensibly targets, they are read by both children and adults (147).

With the issue of crossover fiction in mind, an examination of *The Amazing Maurice* may yield different results than what I have gained in this thesis. For example, throughout my thesis, I assume that Pratchett is mainly addressing a child audience. However, the matter of crossover fiction brings out the question of whether Pratchett is addressing a double audience in the novel. If Pratchett is talking to an adult audience as well as a child audience, then the question arise as to which part is addressed to child readers, and which part to adult ones. The answer may very well lead to a different conclusion on Pratchett's reconstruction of children than what I reach in this thesis.

Questions like what I mentioned above, I believe, merit more critical attention. For with its critical and subversive exploration of childhood, children's literature, and the process of reading and storytelling, *The Amazing Maurice* is important not only to scholars who study Pratchett's works for children, but also to the studies of children's literature in general. Hopefully, through the writing of this thesis, I can draw more attention and efforts towards the study of this novel.

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