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## (Post)Modern Marlowe in Hard-Boiled Victorian Age: Generic Classification of Terry Pratchett's City Watch Cycle

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## (POST)MODERN MARLOWE IN HARD-BOILED VICTORIAN AGE: GENERIC CLASSIFICATION OF TERRY PRATCHETT'S *CITY WATCH CYCLE*

The rejection of strict norms governing genre, initiated by modernism and furthered by (post)modernism, allowed for a dissection, re-evaluation and eventual re-definition of characteristics, and roles associated with particular literary genres. The freedom of form stemming from this departure from structurally and conceptually binding frameworks gave authors license to propose mixtures of genres previously unthought of. Such intermingling of literary forms can be observed in British writer's, Terry Pratchett's, body of work. It is difficult to perceive his novels as drawing from anything other than the ideas of (post)modernist eclecticism. A collage of genres and styles, Pratchett's works are the embodiment of the notions of freedom of form and from form, a characteristic visible, inter alia, in his crime fiction series.

In his writing Pratchett pursues different paths of what can be perceived as (post)modern analysis: first de-constructing a genre, dissecting it to a point in which he has all the elements comprising it distilled and then moving on to rearranging them according to his own scheme, incorporating elements of different kinds of fiction. Pratchett's crime fiction is an amalgam of 18<sup>th</sup> century novel, 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction, and hard-boiled fiction, as well as, heroic ballad, the picaresque novel, and socio-political satire. However, despite bearing certain (post)modern characteristics, Pratchett's crime novels cannot be classified as (post)modernist or even modernist. Pratchett arranges his rather poignant mixture of different elements around a not-so-obvious core, which, upon closer inspection, and despite its (post)modern accretions, proves to be an example of essentialist detective fiction in which the detective is the society's guardian, preserving and re-instating the established world order.

### DEFINING (POST)MODERNISM

In the introductory remarks to *Sceptical History* Helene Bowen Raddeker calls (post)modernism an umbrella term<sup>1</sup>. That is an accurate description of a critical category, which has become increasingly influential over the years, yet, which somehow defied attempts at providing a clear definition. Some, as literary theorist David Harvey, consciously fail to recognize the difference between modernism and (post)modernism<sup>2</sup>, others, such as French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard, consider the two categories ideologically separate<sup>3</sup>. Whatever the connection between modernism and (post)modernism, no attempt at defining the latter can omit even a slightest mention of the former.

Walter Benjamin, German theorist of culture and literary critic, characterized the modern as that which is known, always returning in new guise<sup>4</sup>. Modernism emerged at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a highly aestheticized response of the intellectual elites to the ideological crisis

<sup>1</sup> H. B. Raddeker, *Sceptical History*, London 2007, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> S. Giles, *Theorizing Modernism. Essays in Critical Theory*, London 2008, p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> S. Giles, *op cit*, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, Cambridge 1985, p. 36.

instigated, inter alia, by the experiences of World War I. The foundations of Modernist theory were built on the premise that in view of the atrocities of the Great War, reality has lost its logical structure and, therefore, mimetic representation was no longer valid<sup>5</sup>. Mimesis was substituted with abstraction, which, in art and literature, allowed experimentation with form. The result was rejection of consistent narration in favour of fragmentarity, which symbolized the decomposition of a coherent world-view, and rejection of traditional symbolism of language, which symbolized the alienation of the individual in a breaking-down reality. However, despite operating within a dogmatic "waste land"<sup>6</sup>, modernists attempted to somehow substitute the rejected "grand narratives" of the old days with new ones<sup>8</sup>.

Literary critic Steve Giles recognizes the problems in distinguishing between modernism and (post)modernism, by saying it stems from terminological and conceptual confusions<sup>9</sup>. Sociologist Frederic Jameson proposed a diversified multi-layered definition of (post)modernism<sup>10</sup>. According to Jameson (post)modernism is either a rejection of high modernism's aesthetic sophistication in favour of pop-cultural influences; a dead-end of modernism, which has run its course; an extrapolation of some of the more extreme modernist movement; or an intensification of modernist tendencies<sup>11</sup>. The first part of the definition is supported by Helene Bowen Raddeker in her *Sceptical History*, where she writes: "Postmodernism [...] encourages »relativism,« »tentative beliefs« and »playfulness,« [...] challenging the certitude and authority of traditional conceptual norms and hierarchies"<sup>12</sup>. (Post)modernism is free from axiological responsibility, that weighed heavily on modernism. The (post)modernists do not strive to create new "grand narratives", they embrace the decomposition of reality and also introduce populist subjects the modernists rejected, as being too base<sup>13</sup>.

Thus (post)modernism may be defined, for the purpose of this article, as a critical category rejecting modernism's attempts at substituting old 'grand narratives' it considers obsolete with new ones. Instead, (post)modernism embraces the relativity and ambiguity, which result from the axiological void caused by rejection of traditional ideologies. (Post)modernism also opposes the high aestheticism of modernism by introducing elements of popular culture.

Working within the provided definition, it is impossible to classify sir Terry Pratchett, as a (post)modern writer. He does use the freedom granted by (post)modern tenets, incorporating elements of various genres in his work, as well as elements of pop-culture, and introducing fragmentation via a dynamically shifting narration. However, his novels lack the nihilistic streak of true (post)modernism. The conservative core of his works is clearly visible in his crime fiction.

### THE GENRES OF CRIME FICTION

Crime fiction, although commonly perceived as past-time literature, can serve the purpose of social critique and, indeed, social discovery. According to Stowe, a prominent theorist of crime fiction, this genre of writing should be given "a symbolic rather than symptomatic reading,

<sup>5</sup> S. Giles, *op cit*, p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> Reference to T. S. Elliot's *Waste Land*.

<sup>8</sup> H. B. Raddeker, *op. cit.*, p.2.

<sup>9</sup> S. Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>10</sup> F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham 1984, p. 59.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> H. B. Raddeker, *op. cit.*, p.2.

<sup>13</sup> S. Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

a reading that considers the text as the product not only of a particular time and place, but also of a conscious attempt to represent – to symbolize – an understanding of that time and place”<sup>14</sup>. By depicting the process of uncovering a crime the crime fiction presents a society’s convictions on the nature of good, and evil, and the social responsibility or irresponsibility for criminal tendencies of individuals. The way in which a society decides to perceive and punish a transgression is emblematic of its morality, and the foundations on which it was built. The punitive aspect of each judicial system, together with the will to take responsibility of failed socialization of certain individuals are an indication of just how advanced in its development a society is. For the sake of clarity, this article shall limit the analysis of crime fiction to three genres: 18<sup>th</sup> century novel, 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction, and hard-boiled fiction. All the cultural contexts shall refer to England and the English society, as they are the referents in Pratchett’s fiction.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century was devoid of any official crime genre, however, elements of crime fiction were present in the novels of the time. The authors’ perception of crime was influenced by the socio-political situation they lived in. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century England there existed no effective police force<sup>15</sup>. That is why the state relied on what was known as *the Bloody Code*. The role of the Code was to prevent crime through fear, as even the slightest misdemeanours were punished with death. *The Bloody Code* did not reassure the society of the state’s ability to defend it. It was aimed at terrorizing the citizens into complacency<sup>16</sup>. When laws did get broken, the investigation was usually conducted from the initiative of the injured party<sup>17</sup>. The law was in “private hands”, i.e. it was enforced by hired men, i.e. vigilantes, on the behalf of the victim. This practice was the origin of private detection of crimes. It also bred vigilantism – private, non-statutory enforcement of subjective justice. At the time, crime was already associated with rapidly expanding cities. The dark, individualist, and immoral character of the urban landscape was juxtaposed with the serene, pure, and communal character of the rural areas<sup>18</sup>.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of detective fiction. Similarly to the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel, detective fiction is a reflection of the class system and the standards of morality of its age. In England, 19<sup>th</sup> century was the age of Queen Victoria’s reign. The Golden Age of the Empire, it began with hope for the future and belief in scientific progress and changing social situation, which also affected society’s view on the penal policy. Lyn Pykett, lecturer specializing in Victorian Studies, writes of a: “change in the cultural meaning of crime and the criminal, and a movement from a society controlled by the spectacle of punishment to one morally managed by discipline”<sup>19</sup>. That is the age when words such as re-socialization begin to enter the sphere of public concern. The growing awareness of the need to reform *the Bloody Code* is accompanied by the formation of an effective institutionalized police force. Law is no longer the subject of private interpretation, but becomes executed by the state.

This atmosphere of social and judicial reform gives rise to a new character, who will become the most well-known feature of crime fiction - the detective. This character was “an agent of consolation or security”<sup>20</sup>. His role was to preserve the existing social order by “counter[ing] and

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<sup>14</sup> W. Stowe, *Critical Investigations: Convention and Ideology in Detective Fiction*, “Texas Studies in Literature and Language”, 1989, p. 571.

<sup>15</sup> M. Priestman, *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, Cambridge 2003, p.8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p.7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p.8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p.12.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p.34.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p.8.

revers[ing] the actions of the criminal, restoring matters to their proper state, making straight what the criminal made crooked"<sup>21</sup>. In order to achieve that goal, the detective employed scientific and rational methods. He was, first and foremost, the product of an age of reason and technological progress. Despite growing belief in state institutions, the detective was rarely an official of the law<sup>22</sup>. He was usually a private individual, but no longer a hired vigilante. The detective did not serve someone's subjective sense of justice. Instead he worked within the framework of established authority. The last feature of the detective character was a certain dose of eccentricity<sup>23</sup>. The detective did actively strive to preserve social order, but he himself functioned on its outskirts, in the same sphere as the criminals. The difference between him and them was his devotion to the society he served<sup>24</sup>.

The genre of hard-boiled detective fiction emerged in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century America and became the antithesis of the 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction. While Victorian detective novel was considered to be conservative, intent on affirming rather than questioning political, social and moral structures, the hard-boiled novel contested the existing social order, by bringing the corruption and imperfections of social and moral norms into the open. For the hard-boiled genre the one reigning machiavellian principle was that an individual's power and position determined their social responsibility, i.e. the more powerful and wealthy a person the more they were allowed, and the less they were liable to answer for their actions.

The hard-boiled detective novel criticized society by highlighting its darkest side. In hard-boiled detective fiction "the anxious sense of fatality is usually attached to a pessimistic conviction that economic and socio-political circumstances will deprive people of control over their lives by destroying their hopes and by creating in them the weaknesses of character that turn them into transgressors or mark them out as victims"<sup>25</sup>. The detective in hard-boiled novels is "a disabused, anti-authoritarian, muckracking hero"<sup>26</sup> living and operating in a "lapsed, anything goes world of jazz age America"<sup>27</sup>. No longer is the detective a slightly eccentric gentleman with a pipe upholding the existing order. The hard-boiled detective is a disillusioned "man of honor"<sup>28</sup>, who does fight for justice, however, it is a justice stemming from his internal moral code and not the failing social code<sup>29</sup>. The hard-boiled genre rejected the idea of preserving the existing social order and instead postulated its out-datedness, without, however, giving any propositions for reforms.

### INVESTIGATING THE GENRE: GENERIC CLASSIFICATION OF PRATCHETT'S CRIME FICTION

Within his Discworld universum Terry Pratchett entertains various interchanging story lines. One of them, known as the City Watch series, depicts the antics of the members of the police force of the biggest city on the Disc, the independent republic of Ankh-Morpork. The series consists, to this date, of eight volumes: *Guards! Guards!*, *Men at Arms*, *Feet of Clay*, *Jingo*, *The Fifth Elephant*,

<sup>21</sup> J. A. Hodgson, *The Recoil of 'The Speckled Band': Detective Story and Detective Discourse*, 1992, p. 316.

<sup>22</sup> M. Priestman, *op. cit.*, p.34.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p.44.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p.44.

<sup>25</sup> L. Horsley, *American Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction, 1920s – 1940s.*, <http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Hard-Boiled.html>, 04.05.2012

<sup>26</sup> M. Priestman, *op. cit.*, p.96.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p.96.

<sup>28</sup> R. Chandler, *The Simple Art of Murder*, New York 1999, p.533.

<sup>29</sup> M. Priestman, *op. cit.*, p.100.

*Night Watch, Thud!* and *Snuff*. While *Jingo, The Fifth Elephant, Night Watch, Thud!* and *Snuff* depart from the basic genre of detective fiction in favour of a more politically-oriented story lines, the initial three of the series remain within the genre of detecting. In order to determine which tradition sir Terry's crime novels belong to one needs to analyse three elements: the triad city-society-law, the figure of the adversary, and the figure of the detective.

### THE (UN)HOLY TRINITY: CITY-SOCIETY-LAW

The setting of the crime novels is Ankh-Morpork, a bustling metropolis, which is plagued with such problems as overpopulation and resulting social problems such as inequality, warring classes, and ethnic<sup>30</sup> conflicts. In *Guards! Guards!* we read that the city is grubby with "[a] thin drizzle dripping from the grey sky [...], rjats of various species [going] about their nocturnal occasions. Under night's damp cloak assassins assassinated, thieves thieved, hussies hustled. And so on"<sup>31</sup>. This passage introduces the reader into a world, which is quite obviously corrupt and depraved, in which crime is a part of everyday life. Such atmosphere is emblematic of the hard-boiled genre. However, the reader soon learns that the assassins, thieves, and prostitutes are members of legally recognized guilds<sup>32</sup>. This makes them an accepted element of the social scene, which belies characteristics of hard-boiled genre, where crime may be present but is not legalized.

The city is populated with so-called "ordinary people". As the Patrician, the ruler of Ankh-Morpork, states at one point in *Men at Arms*, all the citizens want is stability and assurance that life will continue relatively interrupted<sup>33</sup>. They do not care much for the notion of justice, as long as it does not affect them personally. Vimes himself says: "the common people? [...]They're nothing special. They're no different from the rich and powerful except they've got no money or power"<sup>34</sup>. The population of Ankh-Morpork is clearly stratified and segregated. The fact these divisions are not contested is a clear reference to the Victorian Age and 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction.

Victorian society was characterized by belief in its own greatness. The notion of the Empire is also present in Ankh-Morpork, which, similarly to England, used to be the greatest military force of the Disc and still holds great financial influence<sup>35</sup>. Also, the society displayed a strong sense of moral propriety, which was accompanied by strict repression of desires, such as homosexuality, substance abuse, and lechery. Indulgences and weakness of character were considered ungodly and immoral. Those desires were to be hidden and satisfied in secret, hence the existence of double standards – the private and the public. However, even the private indulgence was controlled by socially enforced standards. Echoes of these rules can be found in Ankh-Morpork, i.e. the Assassins' Guild, the Gamblers' Guild, the Seamstresses' guild<sup>36</sup>. These places, symbolizing indulgence in the most darkest desires, are not given free reign, as hard-boiled genre would have proposed, but they are, just like in Victorian England, controlled by a set of rules, in this case set by the state.

The law, by which this city and these people are governed is an interesting amalgam of the ideas from two crime genres: the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel and 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction. Ankh-Morpork is ruled according to a half-authoritarian, half-democratic system, with a single elected official, the

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<sup>30</sup> Actually racial, Pratchett uses traditional fantasy races such as troll, dwarves, vampires, werewolves to defamiliarize the existing real-world conflicts.

<sup>31</sup> T. Pratchett, *Guards! Guards!*, London 1989, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> T. Pratchett, *Men at Arms*, London 1993, p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p.71.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 281.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 162.

<sup>36</sup> The Guild of Prostitutes.

Patrician, at its helm. The central authority is subsidized with decentralized centres of power – the guilds. The city guilds are governed by their own individual law codes, which is a clear reference to a decentralization of judicial authority of 18<sup>th</sup> century crime novels. However, the ultimate judgement falls with the central figure of the Patrician. This adherence to a single authority removes the novels from the sphere of 18<sup>th</sup> century tradition. The law enforced by these structures is reminiscent of *the Bloody Code*, with a clear reference in *Feet of Clay*. In one of the scenes the reader comes across a wooden incumbent on a gibbet, which used to serve as a remainder of the harsh punishments, which awaited the perpetrators<sup>37</sup>. However, “[t]hese days the city had more private and efficient ways of dealing with those it found surplus to requirements”<sup>38</sup>. This passage suggests that the legal system of Ankh-Morpork is undergoing reforms, similar to those of Victorian England.

Despite possessing elements of both hard-boiled and 18<sup>th</sup> century fiction stemming from Pratchett’s fascination with (post)modernist freeform, the setting of Pratchett’s crime novels points to the tradition of 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction. In his novels, Pratchett depicts a world which is organised, with an effective police force enforcing laws established by a recognized, centralized authority.

### THE NAPOLEONS OF CRIME: THE CRIMINALS OF ANKH-MORPORK

The assigning of guilt is the second of the key characteristics determining a crime genre. 18<sup>th</sup> century novel saw crime as an irregularity, committed by an atavistic, i.e. primitive individual. No discourse on social responsibility for its criminal aspect was held. Within the 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction the fault has always been laid at the criminal, not the society. Crime was an irregularity, something outside the general norm, a transgression against law, which was perceived not only as a regulatory factor but more importantly as one of the self-imposed foundations of a society. To commit a crime was to commit an act of anarchy<sup>39</sup>. On the other hand, in the hard-boiled detective fiction crime is the norm, corruption is an accepted element of the scene and a result of the social and political environment, no longer the singular fault of an individual. Pratchett’s books defy easy categorization to any of these traditions, because they are not very explicit on their position on the guilt of an individual.

*Guards! Guards!* the first instalment in the City Watch series has two criminal antagonists: a dragon, which subjects the city to chaos and mayhem and an evil secret society planning to overthrow the Patrician, the ruler of Ankh-Morpork. The dragon is presented as a foreign entity with a wish to destroy the city. Its otherness is presented in a very explicit way, the creature being a reminiscence of *Beowulf’s* Grendel, a stranger living on the outskirts of the society, outside of social norms. However, the character’s actions take a turn and instead of destroying the city it usurps the power of a king. Thus, it becomes synonymous to the second antagonist of the novel, the secret society plotting to rearrange the society by restoring monarchy<sup>40</sup>.

In the end both the creature and the conspirators are represented as a deviation from the norm, a monarchist opposition to existing republican standards and convictions. The solving of the mystery, uncovering the culprits behind the plot and arresting the dragon for murder and public menace is emblematic of Victorian sense of justice – punishing the guilty, preserving the social and political order, and social elevation for the detective. Therefore despite possessing ele-

<sup>37</sup> T. Pratchett, *Feet of Clay*, London 1997, p. 212.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 212.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> T. Pratchett, *Guards! Guards!*, London 1989, p. 209.

ments of the 18<sup>th</sup> century atavistic notions of criminals, *Guards! Guards!* proves to be an example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century detective novel.

The next novel in the series, *Men at Arms*, depicts the first firearm murder in Ankh-Morpork. Here the classification of the criminals in the story is made much more difficult as Pratchett is very ambiguous as to the identity of the murderer – according to him the culprit is not the human agent but the firearm, “the gonne”<sup>41</sup>. If the human agency is taken into consideration, then the Victorian views on the reason of guilt are represented. The first human agent of the gonne is Edward d’Eath, a representative of impoverished nobility intent on restoring the monarchy in the now republican city of Ankh-Morpork. D’Eath’s actions are presented as working towards returning a past social order. However, precisely because that order is a thing of the past, Edward is perceived as the Other acting against the acknowledged social order. The second human agent is dr. Cruces, the Lord President of the Assassins’ Guild, who also, upon taking possession of the gonne becomes intent on overthrowing the existing social order in favour of the monarchy, thus becoming the subversive within an orderly society.

Where the human agency proves Victorian ideas about ascribing guilt, the gonne, which is given its own agency by Pratchett, represents a different one. The gonne is not intent on overthrowing the existing social order, its agenda is merely subverting the existing order by offering to fulfil its wielder’s desires. This tendency to mayhem for mayhem’s sake is a reference to the hard-boiled genre. Following this track, the gonne is literally a product of the society, being designed and created by men, which again points to hard-boiled fiction. However, by being a unique object, the idea of which is foreign to the general population, the gonne is still perceived as the Other, existing outside of social norms. Therefore despite having a “socially acceptable agenda” the gonne is still considered an opposition to the society. The result of the investigation is, again, the preservation of the existing order, in line with notions of 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction. Despite being provided with sufficient evidence to restore the monarchy, Sam Vimes chooses not to act upon them.

*Feet of Clay*, the last of Pratchett’s detective stories in the series being just a detective story is reportedly the most hard-boiled of Pratchett’s detective novels with clear criticism of class society, the situation of the working class, and because of explicit statements regarding the socio-political causes, which led the criminal to committing the murders. *Feet of Clay* depicts the lowest working class of Ankh-Morpork – the golems, which are reminiscent of 18<sup>th</sup> century notions of atavistic criminals, but also of the Other of 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction. Created by men as slave labour, they nevertheless dream of freedom and social recognition as citizens<sup>42</sup>. Those dreams are literally embodied in the figure of the golem they make from their own clay and whose head they fill with notes of paper, on which they have written down all their hopes. The new golem is driven insane by the expectations placed upon him and commits a series of murders. The social responsibility for the actions of an individual, emblematic of hard-boiled fiction, is made very explicit in the novel. The murderer is the product of the society both literally, as an artificial creation, and figuratively as a result of the circumstances that led to its creation. It has no agenda to change the existing social and political order, an anarchistic streak of random murders, which points to the hard-boiled genre. However, despite the fact that the figure of the criminal and the character of the crime point to the hard-boiled tradition of the detective novel, the figure of the detective and the resolution of the plot point to the Victorian tradition. Sam Vimes, through his actions of tracking down and destroying the golem,

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<sup>41</sup> This neologism is emblematic of (post)modernist notions of defamiliarization, that are often present in Pratchett’s work.

<sup>42</sup> T. Pratchett, *op. cit.*, *Feet...*, London 1997, p. 151.



preserves and protects the social order. There is no revolution, no call for drastic social change. The golems decide to achieve their goals, by buying themselves out of servitude, in other words, the attempt to achieve freedom, by working within the boundaries of the existing order.

### CONVICTION OR WIT? PHILIP MARLOWE VS. SHERLOCK HOLMES

The crucial characteristic of any crime genre is the means, by which detection of a crime is carried out, or, to be more precise, the hands with which the detection of a crime is carried out. Pratchett centres the plot of his novels around an entire, continuously growing, police force. This would indicate a possibility of categorizing the novels within the 18<sup>th</sup> century tradition. However the actual detection always falls to one individual: Sam Vimes. This eliminates the aforementioned possibility, opening two different lines of inquiry: affiliation to either 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction or hard-boiled fiction. Analysing the detective will allow to determine, which line is correct.

Sir Terry's detective is a tough individual. A middle-aged, streetwise man, he seems to be Philip Marlowe's<sup>43</sup> kindred spirit. He is introduced to the reader in *Guards! Guards!* when "drunken [...] stagger[s] slowly down the street, fold[s] gently into the gutter outside the Watch House and lay[s] there"<sup>44</sup>. This passage presents Sam Vimes in the guise of a hard-boiled anti-hero. However, the character quickly defies this categorization, when it is revealed that not only is he a city guard, but also a true servant of the city<sup>45</sup>. For, although Vimes may seem to the reader to be disillusioned and dejected, he remains true to the love he bears Ankh-Morpork. In *Feet of Clay* Vimes says: "The Watchman's helmet isn't like a crown. Even when you take it off you're still wearing it"<sup>46</sup>. He professes his devotion to the city and conviction of the supremacy of law<sup>47</sup>, certainly not something Philip Marlowe, living according to his own internal moral code, would do. The following passage from *Feet of Clay* proves Vimes' adherence to the existing law and order: "The Patrician relied on Vimes doing his job, *knew* he'd do his job, and that was the extent of his thought on the matter. Well, one day, Vimes would... would... would bloody well do his job, of course, because he didn't know how to do anything else"<sup>48</sup>. This theme of responsibility to "the job" and the city/society is emblematic of 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction. The interesting (post)modernist decision to merge the figure of the detective with a policeman only serves to underscore Pratchett's standing within the tradition of detective novel: the servant of the law truly is a lawman.

Affiliation of the aforementioned genre is deepened at the end of *Men at Arms*, when Sam Vimes is elevated to the position of nobility<sup>49</sup>. By making his character a duke, Pratchett has firmly grounded him in the tradition of classic detective fiction. Kayman wrote that the detective is an outsider, someone preserving the order but living beyond its boundaries<sup>50</sup>. Vimes' elevation has removed him from the familiar social context. As he himself says: "A jumped-up copper to the nobs and a nob to the rest"<sup>51</sup>. His newly elevated social position grants Vimes all the more power to effectively protect his city, not by personal enforcement of justice but by development of the city's police force.

<sup>43</sup> The heavy drinking, disillusioned detective figure in Raymond Chandler's hard-boiled novels.

<sup>44</sup> T. Pratchett, *Guards! Guards!*, London 1989, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 170.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 170.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 172.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 147.

<sup>49</sup> T. Pratchett, *op. cit.*, *Men...*, London 1993, p. 313.

<sup>50</sup> M. Priestman, *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, Cambridge 2003, p. 44.

<sup>51</sup> T. Pratchett, *op. cit.*, *Feet...*, London 1997, p. 14.

Classifying Pratchett's crime novels is not a straightforward task. Due to the author's continued fascination with artistic freedom offered by (post)modernism, all three of the presented novels have characteristics that are emblematic of the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel, 19<sup>th</sup> century detective novel, and hard-boiled detective fiction. From the first they draw privatized law of the guilds and atavistic otherness of the criminals. From the second, the figure of the detective and belief in the system. From the latter, the atmosphere of moral downfall and disillusionment, accompanied by constant rain. Such mixture would also point to the novels' belonging to the (post)modernist tradition.

Yet, despite the decentralization and invitation to vigilantism of the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel and the scenery and social awareness of the hard-boiled, the novels generically belong to the Victorian tradition of crime writing, because of their depiction of the detective figure and the outcome of the investigations. Raddeker argues that (post)modernists tend to question seemingly obvious implications and conclusions of known processes<sup>52</sup>. That is something that Pratchett does not do, a characteristic which excludes him from the (post)modern tradition, despite his utilization of the (post)modern methodology of composition. Pratchett's crime novels are an affirmation of the underlying implication of socio-political processes, he does not look to reject them. The theme of the detective's responsibility to "the job" and the city, which is the symbol of the society, is persistent in all the novels. Sam Vimes will always act in defence and preservation of the existing social and political order, and will provide security from the criminal Other, an individual threatening the peaceful existence of the society<sup>53</sup>. This adherence to existing rules and placing of the criminal individual outside of social norms and boundaries essentially categorizes Pratchett's crime stories within the tradition of 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction.

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#### CHANDLEROWSKI MARLOWE W (POST)MODERNISTYCZNEJ EPOCE WIKTORIAŃSKIEJ Streszczenie

Poprzez odrzucenie zasady czystości formy, postmodernizm umożliwił dogłębną analizę, rewaluację oraz ponowne zdefiniowanie cech charakterystycznych poszczególnych gatunków literackich. Dało to twórcom możliwość zabawy formą oraz tworzenia często nieoczywistych

<sup>52</sup> H. B. Raddeker, *op. cit.*, p.10.

<sup>53</sup> W. Stowe, *op. cit.*, p. 574

hybryd gatunkowych. Jednym z mistrzów owych międzygatunkowych chimer jest współczesny brytyjski pisarz, sir Terry Pratchett. Twórca z wszech miar przekorny i nie stroniący od eksperymentów literackich, w pełni wykorzystuje wolność gatunkową oferowaną przez tezy postmodernizmu. Efekty owej fascynacji postmodernizmem są dostrzegalne m.in. w serii jego powieści kryminalnych, które po zanalizowaniu okazują się być mieszaniną fantazy, powieści detektywistycznej, powieści policyjnej, kryminału *noir*, kryminału typu *hard-boiled*, ballady heroicznej, powieści łotrzykowskiej oraz satyry polityczno-społecznej. Ta wieloskładnikowa mikstura jest, pomimo pozornie chaotycznego doboru składników, tworzona wg starannie opracowanego klucza i zorganizowana wokół jednego głównego gatunku, którym na pierwszy rzut oka wydaje się być kryminał *noir*. Jednakże, oglądane z bliska, kryminały Pratchetta okazują się być, pomimo licznych współczesnych elementów, przedstawicielami klasycznej powieści detektywistycznej sięgającej tradycjami do epoki królowej Wiktorii i wywodzącej się od pewnego dzientelmena z fajką i szkłem powiększającym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** postmodernism, powieść kryminalna, Terry Pratchett, fantazy, intergatunkowość

### Summary

The rejection of strict norms governing genre, initiated by modernism and furthered by (post)modernism, allowed for a dissection, re-evaluation, and eventual re-definition of characteristics and roles associated with particular literary genres. The freedom of form stemming from this departure from structurally and conceptually binding frameworks gave authors license to propose mixtures of genres previously unthought of. Such intermingling of literary forms can be observed in Terry Pratchett's body of work. It is difficult to perceive his novels as drawing from anything other than the ideas of (post)modernist eclecticism. A collage of genres and styles, Pratchett's works are the embodiment of the notions of freedom of form and from form, a characteristic visible, inter alia, in his crime fiction series.

In his writing Pratchett pursues different paths of (post)modern analysis, first de-constructing a genre, dissecting it to a point in which he has all the elements comprising it distilled and then moving on to rearranging them according to his own scheme, incorporating elements of different kinds of fiction. Pratchett's crime fiction is an amalgam of 18<sup>th</sup> century novel, 19<sup>th</sup> century detective fiction, and hard-boiled fiction, as well as, heroic ballad, the picaresque novel, and socio-political satire. However, despite bearing certain (post)modern characteristics, Pratchett's crime novels cannot be classified as (post)modernist or even modernist. Pratchett arranges his rather poignant mixture of different elements around a not-so-obvious core, which, upon closer inspection, and despite its (post)modern accretions, proves to be an example of essentialist detective fiction in which the detective is the society's guardian, preserving and re-instating the established world order.

**Key words:** (post)modernism, Terry Pratchett, crime fiction, fantasy, inter-genre