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# Constructing characters: a revised cognitive stylistic approach to characterisation.

Sara Ingham

A thesis submitted to Linguistics and Modern Languages at the  
University of Huddersfield  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2020

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# Abstract

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This thesis focuses on characterisation and how text and reader knowledge combine during this process. Specifically, I am interested in exploring the unusual and engaging uses of characterisation in Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Both narratives allow the author to alter and subvert traditional character roles within the text and question the processes by which characters are modelled. In order to do this, I extend and apply Culpeper's (2001) and Schneider's (2001) models of characterisation, which currently lack detail regarding the specifics of text-driven processing. Although Culpeper gives much detail about the features of text responsible for characterisation in his wider discussion of the model, these features are not adequately represented in the model itself. In other words, the existing model needs adapting in order to better represent how reader knowledge is triggered by texts and how this affects the application of this knowledge during the characterisation process. Like Culpeper, I am interested in the textual cues for characterisation and the process by which readers assimilate these to form an overall idea of character. By expanding on and reworking these elements of the comprehension model, I am able to apply it more systematically to text analysis. In addition, focussing on the surface text and its links to reader knowledge allows me to explore the ways in which characterisation in these novels relies heavily on intertextual knowledge and how these links are made linguistically.

Once the relationship between prior knowledge and text is adequately explored, I apply my findings first to an extended analysis of Pratchett's witch characters, focussing especially on the way in which play with the norms of characterisation creates a unique mind style for these characters. I then expand the application of my model further by applying it to a very different example of characterisation using Atwood's Handmaids. My approach addresses two significant areas for further investigation noted by influential theorists in cognitive linguistics: Culpeper himself suggests mind style as a further application of his model, while Emmott & Alexander (2014) point out the need for further study of schemata (or frames, to use Emmott's more specific terminology) which are based on intertextual knowledge.

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# 1. Introduction

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Everyone, no doubt, has a character they remember fondly or particularly identify with from a story, whether read in a book or watched on a screen or stage. An impactful character, held in the mind long after reading, is likely to be a fairly well-rounded person, with likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams, and other familiar personality traits. We may have revisited this character at regular intervals over the years or we may have only encountered them once and, while many people probably give some thought to why a certain character makes such a lasting impression on them, fewer are likely to think about how this happens. In other words, what is it about the way a character is presented through language and action that allows us to form an impression of them as a person, real or fictional, and to be invested in what happens to them? The aim of this thesis is to address this question by refining and adapting existing models of characterisation to explain how words on the page become people in a reader's mind. In other words, to explore why 'character, and everything it entails in the way of deep insight into the minds of imagined others, their uniqueness of motive and difference of worldview, is often what most powerfully attracts readers to novels and stories' (Toolan, 2001: 80). I do this, firstly, by applying Culpeper's (2001) model of characterisation to a short character analysis in order to highlight areas of the model which need development or revision. Based on this, I introduce a revised model of characterisation which I then explain in the following chapters. Finally, I use my revised model in extended analyses of two character sets in order to test its applicability and robustness: the witch characters in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels and the female characters in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and its sequel *The Testaments*.

## 1.1 Modelling characterisation

This section summarises two influential models of character comprehension that my own model aims to develop: Culpeper's (2001) and Schneider's (2001). The two are similar, as they are based on the same theories and models of cognition. Schneider's is included in

addition to the initial focus of this thesis – Culpeper’s model – as he offers further textual, theoretical and contextual details.

### **1.1.1 Culpeper’s model**

With his model of characterisation (Figure 1.1), Culpeper explores how character impression is created in the text. He does this by focussing on the roles of textual cues, prior knowledge and inference in reading and provides significant insights into the processing involved in characterisation. He adopts a cognitive stylistic approach to exploring characterisation that utilises cognitive and textual aspects, emphasising the use of a multi-disciplinary approach that draws on pertinent elements of linguistics, cognitive and social psychology and stylistics (Culpeper, 2001: 1). This involves combining humanising approaches to characterisation that see the process as similar to that used in real-world interaction with de-humanising views that present character as purely textual or functional. This approach echoes Toolan’s (2001) view of character as an iceberg, which emphasises the inference of many aspects of character not made explicitly visible in the text.

Culpeper’s model of characterisation is based on van Dijk & Kintsch’s model of comprehension (1983), which stresses the interaction of text and knowledge in successful cognition. Both models include three levels. First is the surface text, representing the text itself, containing all linguistic features. The degree to which these features are retained or lost during processing is an area of much debate, with features such as pragmatic context and stylistic devices able to increase the retention of text features (as argued by Zwaan, 1996). This debate is a key focus of my own research. Next is the textbase, an abstract cognitive representation of the text based on propositions, which are defined by Graesser et al (1997) as theoretical units containing a predicate, such as a verb, adjective or connective, and one or more arguments, such as a noun or embedded proposition. They represent the semantic meaning of a given unit of text. For example, the last point is represented in propositional form below, with additional detail about the object given as an embedded proposition.

DEFINE[AGENT = Graesser et al, OBJECT = proposition, [BE[OBJECT = proposition, ATTRIBUTE = theoretical]]

Finally, the situation model forms the gist of the text, including an overall model of character. Key to comprehension at this level is its socially-situated nature, meaning that readers include in their model of text pragmatic factors such as what the author intended them to understand. A combination of top-down and bottom-up processing allows reader knowledge to combine with text details at each level to provide inference and cohesion, making comprehension possible. Strategic comprehension is made possible by the control system, which uses reader goals to organise these levels and filter out less relevant information. As the control system is task-specific, this can be thought of as reading for character in Culpeper's model.

In his development and explanation of his model, Culpeper first takes a cognitive, followed by a linguistic, approach in order to illustrate his idea that character construction involves a combination of top-down, knowledge-based, and bottom-up, language-based, processes. The first area of cognitive focus, knowledge structures (specifically prototypes and schemata, including social schemata), allow the organisation and application of prior knowledge during comprehension. Schemata operate by providing skeleton structures with which to organise and understand new information by mapping it onto existing knowledge. Schema theory, Culpeper claims, is key to explaining how impressions of character are formed as it illustrates 'the way in which components relating to a person are combined to form an integrated impression' (Culpeper, 2001: 75). Another type of knowledge structure, prototypes, is used to judge the degree to which a character belongs to certain categories. According to Culpeper, these carry information of three main types: personal, social and group membership. Culpeper further illustrates the relevance of these structures to characterisation in his discussion of social schemata ('high-level cognitive structures that contain links between social categories' - Culpeper, 2001: 76), which he describes as being synonymous with stereotypes due to the interconnected network in which category-based knowledge exists. These knowledge structures are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 of this research as they are essential to a thorough understanding of how prior knowledge contributes to characterisation.

Building on the idea of social schemata, Culpeper suggests that attribution theory, an area of social psychology that explores how inferences about the causes of behaviour are inferred from actions (Culpeper, 2001: 115), is a useful approach to the socially-based

elements of characterisation. Attribution theory is concerned with the degree to which a behaviour can be ascribed to a person's disposition or character trait and has two central approaches. The first, Correspondence Inference theory, places the cause of behaviour firmly within the person and emphasises the role of consistency, with frequently-observed behaviours being attributed as traits. The second approach, Covariation theory, seeks to rule out person-based causes and highlight contextual factors as explanations of behaviour, claiming that distinctive behaviours are more attributable as traits (Culpeper, 2001: 127). Culpeper is quick to point out the clash between these two approaches, as the former emphasises consistency and the latter irregularity, and seeks to reconcile this apparent difference using foregrounding theory - a central tenet of literary stylistics based on the tendency for humans to perceive figure, or foregrounded elements, against ground, or background elements (van Peer, 1986; Stockwell, 2002). Foregrounding theory, Culpeper claims, can help us to see the two approaches to attributing character traits as 'different sides of the same coin' (Culpeper, 2001: 133), as foregrounded information in texts can be unexpectedly regular, using parallelism to present foregrounded patterns, or unexpectedly irregular, known as deviance. This deviance can be primary (against general linguistic norms), secondary (against literary norms, for example of genre or author) or tertiary (against textual norms). While attribution theory is not an area of characterisation modelling I seek to develop in this research, the use of foregrounding in text to control impressions of character is central to my exploration of the role of surface text in characterisation.

In his discussion of the linguistic features of text relevant to characterisation, Culpeper (2001) draws our attention to the prominence of certain aspects of literary texts. Firstly, explicit cues for characterisation may be given by the character themselves (alone or with other characters), or one character may be described directly by another. Alternatively, implicit cues may be used. These include conversational structure & implicature, linguistic features including lexis, syntax, accent and dialect, paralinguistic features, visuals and context (specifically, the company and setting we find a character in). Finally, authorial cues can be given. These include the naming of characters and narrative commentary (Culpeper's work focuses on stage direction, as it is largely concerned with plays also notes stage direction, but he points to the applicability of his comments to narrative as a future

direction of study). Culpeper links these linguistic features to areas of language attitude research, citing insights from language and gender research and attitudes towards regional dialects as particularly significant.

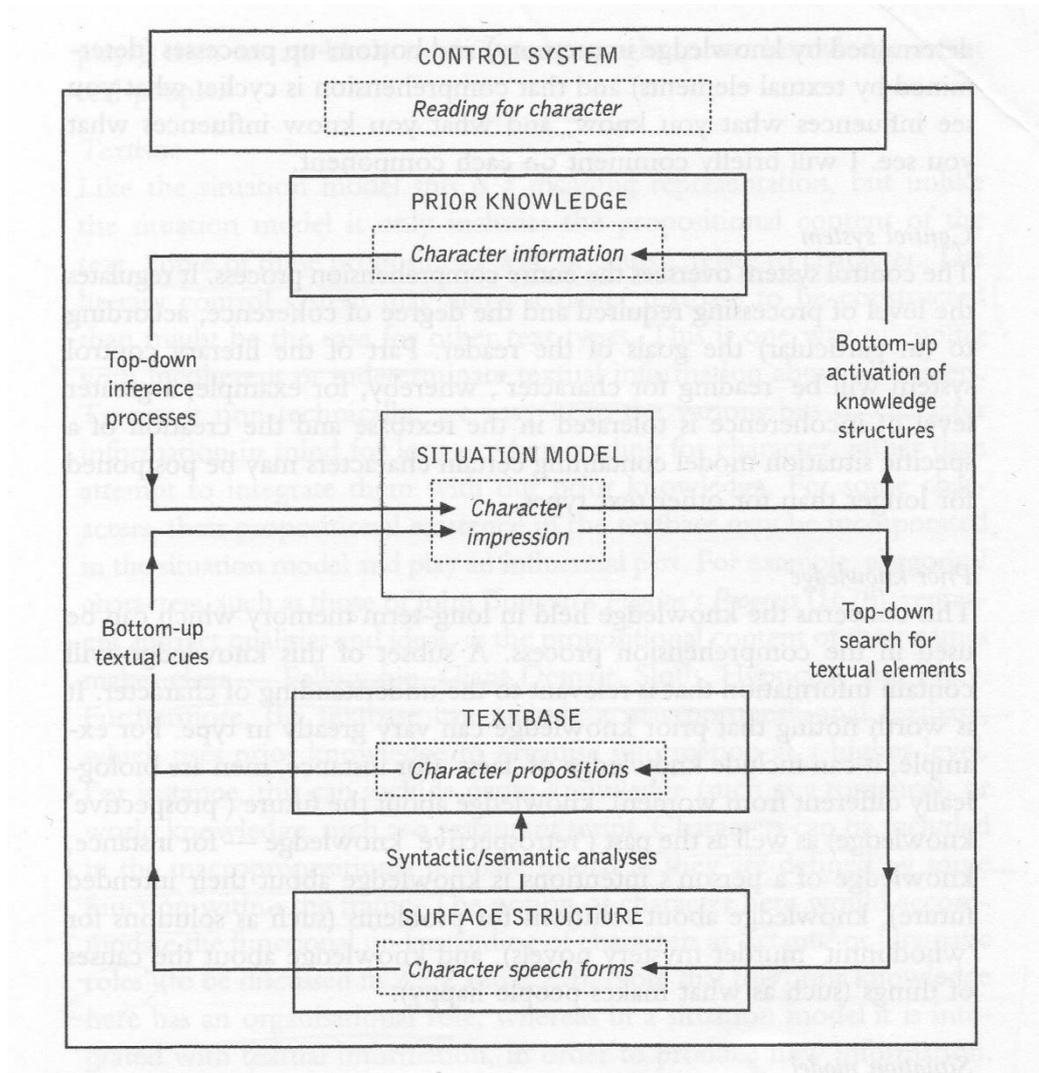


Figure 1.1: Culpeper's model of characterisation (Culpeper, 2001: 35).

### 1.1.2 Schneider's model

Schneider's (2001) model is similar to Culpeper's in structure, combining the same three levels and focussing on how impressions of character are formed through the combination of prior-knowledge and text as part of the mental model of the text created by the reader. It is an attempt to explain the dual nature of character as both grounded in real-life experience of living people and as the result of literary construction. He explores the seemingly opposing structuralist and dynamic approaches to characterisation, as the former

waits to present a fully modelled character until the whole text is read, while the latter emphasises the interactive nature of processing character during reading. Like Culpeper, Schneider emphasises the role of text and language as ‘an instruction to construct mental models’ (Schneider, 2001: 609).

Despite these similarities, Schneider’s model focusses on characters in narrative text, rather than in plays as Culpeper’s does. In doing so, it provides some useful ideas that are missing from Culpeper’s model, as is clear from the added complexity in Schneider’s model (Figure 1.2). This added complexity includes the addition of character consciousness and mind style. The construction of character consciousness refers to the stylistic techniques used to represent characters as fully-realised individuals with minds of their own, rather than flat textual constructs. Mind style is an extension of this and involves character world views ‘observed through formal construction of language in terms of grammar and lexis’ (Leech & Short, 2013). These elements of the characterisation process are explored further in Chapter 4.

Schneider also emphasises the role of emotion and empathy in the characterisation process as part of the reader’s real-world knowledge and experience. This is used, in part, to explain the differences likely to occur in the models of text and character built by different readers based on their differing experiences. Emotion and embodiment can also be used, Schneider points out, to highlight the importance of perceiving characters in relation to each other, rather than focussing too much on them as individuals, as it allows us to explore their relationships and embodied positions within narrative. This echoes the significance Culpeper attributes to social and pragmatic theories and their applicability to character. Finally, Schneider outlines the key factors in the perceived likeability of a character, a further affective element of the character-modelling process. Likeability, according to Schneider, is a combination of judgements made using the reader’s own value system (in combination with any value system created in the text), the narrator’s evaluation of a character and the character’s own judgements. Schneider offers the notion of foregrounding as an explanation of this role of emotion in the characterisation process (a different use of the idea than Culpeper’s more pragmatic approach, detailed above), as it explains reader response to some stylistic text elements over others.

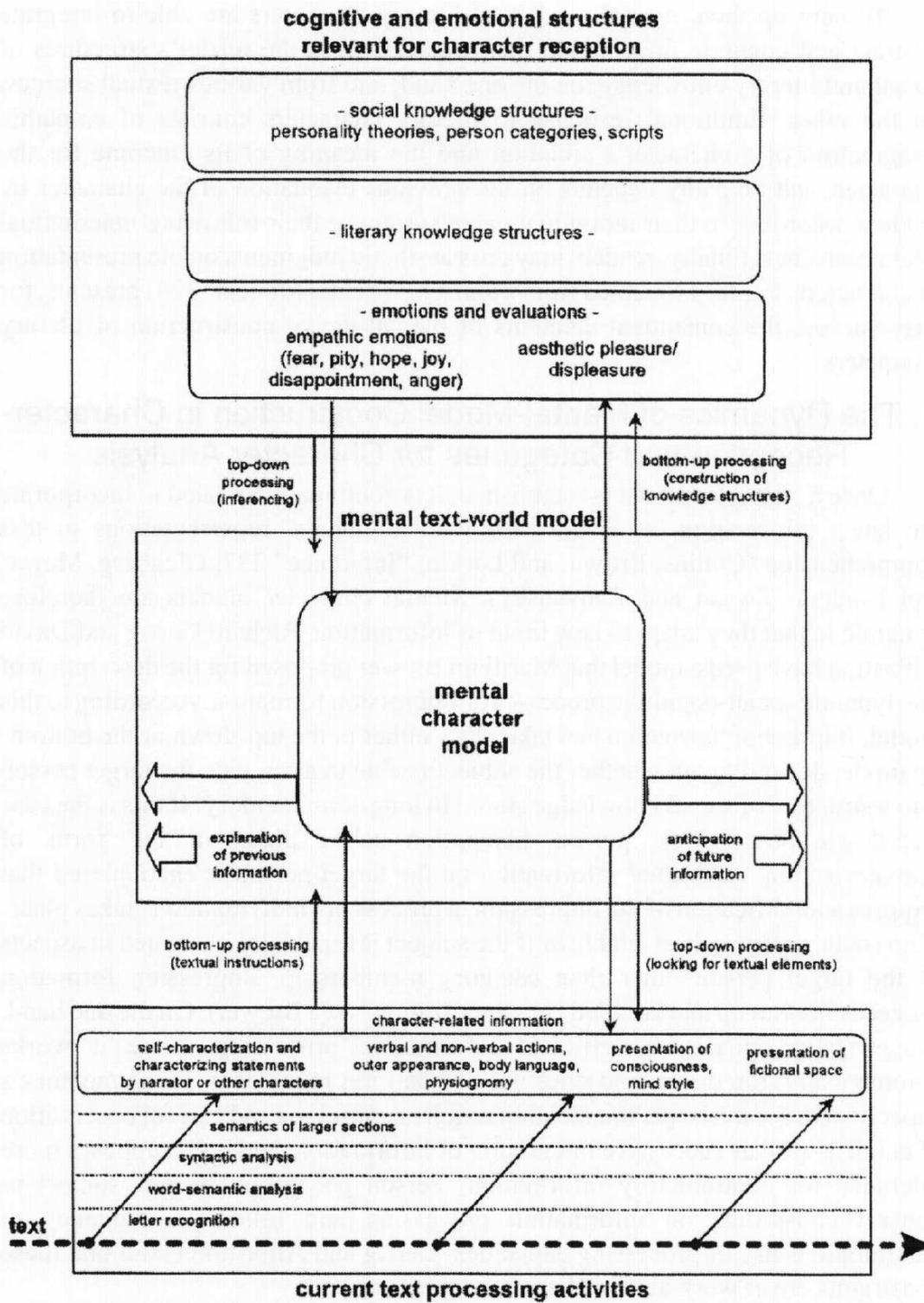


Figure 1.2: Schneider's model of characterisation (Schneider, 2001: 618).

A particularly useful element of Schneider’s model is the diagram he provides of the process of characterisation via categorisation or personalisation (Figure 1.3). This provides a visual representation of how the process of inferring character from text may be effectively modelled at a more granular level.

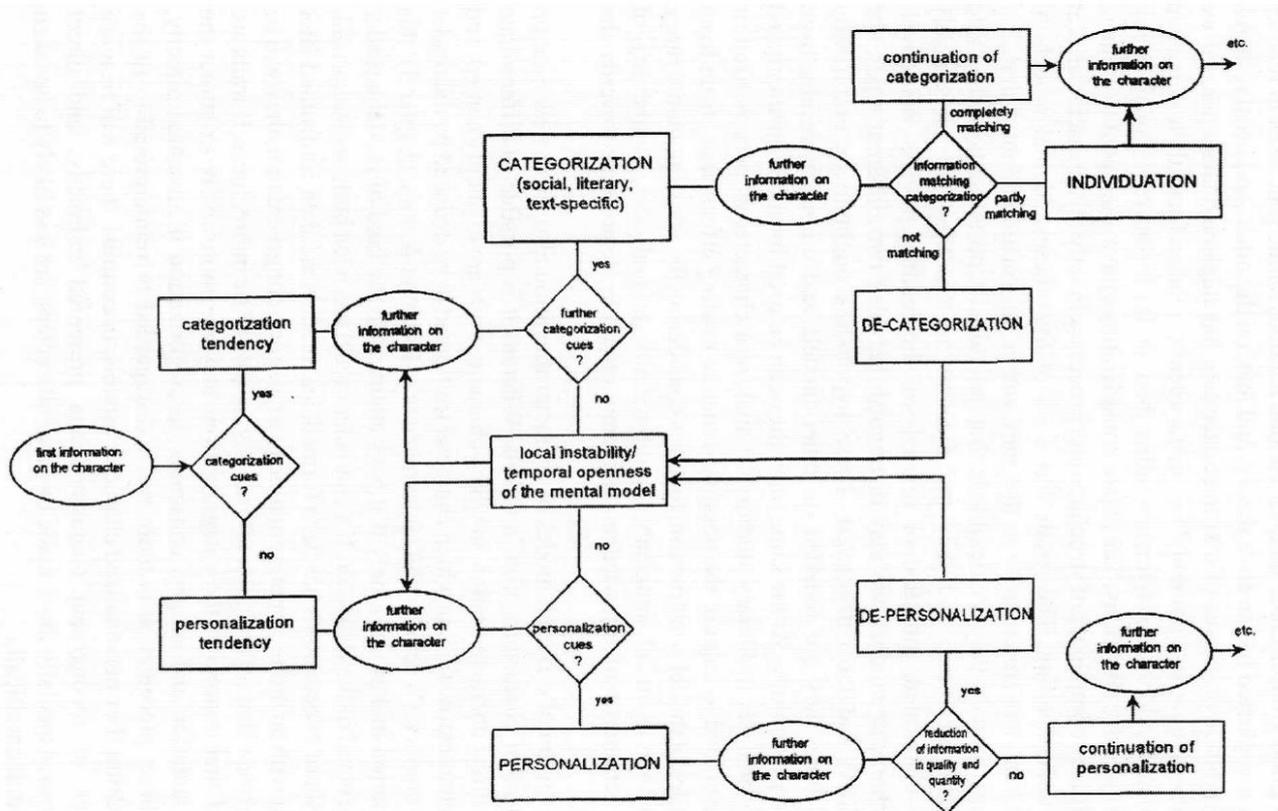


Figure 1.3: Mental model construction in characterisation (Schneider, 2001: 627).

## 1.2 Initial analysis

In order to outline the features of existing characterisation models that are the focus of development in my revised model, I apply Culpeper’s model (as the initial focus of my research) to this short extract from the beginning of Pratchett’s *Wyrd Sisters*:

In the middle of this elemental storm a fire gleamed among the dripping furze bushes like the madness in a weasel’s eye. It illuminated three hunched figures.  
 As the cauldron bubbled an eldritch voice shrieked: “When shall we three meet again?”  
 There was a pause.  
 Finally another voice said, in far more ordinary tones: “Well, I can do next Tuesday.”  
 (*Wyrd Sisters*, 5)

The analysis presented here is based on my own comprehension of the text combined with an assumed knowledge of readers approaching the text from a non-critical perspective. This is justified as some degree of uniformity regarding the linguistic, cognitive and attitudinal viewpoint of readers can be assumed due to shared social and cultural contexts (Carter & Nash, 1990). I refer to other research only when necessary to fill in gaps in my own knowledge that are not detailed in Culpeper's work in order to allow an accurate representation of the characterisation process as suggested by the model.

### **1.2.1 Surface structure: character speech forms**

Culpeper's model is the more detailed of the two characterisation models, as it is more firmly grounded in cognitive linguistic theory and is therefore more falsifiable. As such, I try to draw most analytical guidance from Culpeper. However, it should be noted that I focus here on a narrative extract, whereas Culpeper's model is constructed to analyse character in plays. This makes little difference at surface level to the two models considered here, as can be seen in Figures 1.1. and 1.2. However, it does mean that the role of narration needs to be taken into account as a factor in characterisation. While the role of a narrator in some ways simplifies the task of analysing narrative characters, as it removes the issue of variability in performance of character (Culpeper, 2001: 39-42), it should also be noted that narration adds complexity to modelling character in terms of discourse structure. Whereas the discourse structure of a play has two levels and four participants, the discourse structure of narrative text has three levels and six participants, as illustrated in Figures 1.3 and 1.4. As Culpeper notes that the single additional discourse level in plays leads to 'a much stronger assumption that behaviour will be interpretatively significant' (Culpeper, 2001: 145), the addition of two discourse levels in narrative text is presumably able to add yet further significance to descriptions of character.

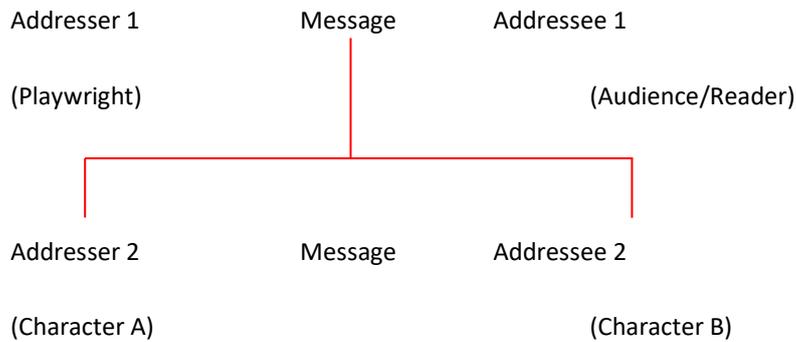


Figure 1.4: Discourse structure of plays (Short, 1996: 169)

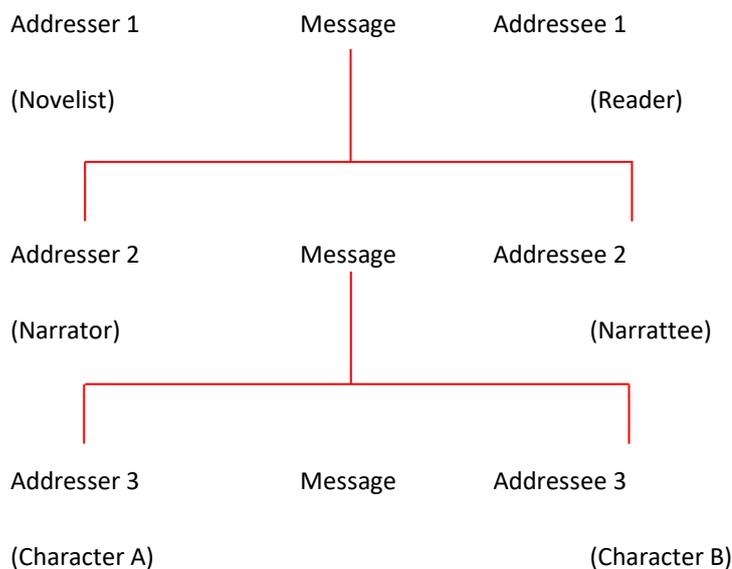


Figure 1.5: Discourse structure of narrative (Short, 1996: 257)

The role of the narrator is exemplified in the *Wyrd Sisters* extract by the comments on voice style before both instances of character speech. These provide the only explicit cues to characterisation in the extract. The first voice, and eldritch shriek, is contrasted with the second, *far more ordinary* speaker. Through these comments, the reader's perception of the characters is guided before they have even spoken using dialect and tone. The narration also highlights the contrast between expected and received response in this exchange, with the pause mentioned between speech instances indicative of the second character's

surprise at the question posed, or its style, and their consequent thought about the form of their own response.

The speech instances themselves, foregrounded by their obvious difference in style (the first formal, archaic and literary, the second colloquial), add to the character impression already set up by the narrator via implicit characterisation cues. Specifically, the speech of the first voice is foregrounded due to its unusual lexis and syntax when contrasted with the response of second voice. Following Culpeper's use of corpora to analyse such features, I include relevant data to support this claim here (unlike Culpeper, who uses key word analysis, I have picked specific linguistic items to check against a corpus as this better suits my purpose and text length). *Eldritch* and *shrieked* seem like uncommon choices in this extract. This is confirmed by data from the BNC. *Shriek* appears 154 times in the data, 26 times as a verb, 128 as a noun. Of the overall instances, 153 are found in the fiction section of the corpus. This suggests that it is more common as a noun, though not uncommon as a verb. The verb form *shrieked* appears 177 times in the data, but appears with *voice* only once (*inner voice shrieked*) and never with *eldritch* in the two slots before the verb. Only four adjectives appear in the two slots before *shrieked* (*possessed, locked, inner* and *fat*), each appearing only once, so no significant semantic associations can be made based on this. The data also contains 16 instances of *eldritch*, 5 of which are proper nouns (a surname). Of the 11 remaining instances, 10 appear directly before a noun, as in the *Wyrd Sisters* extract. Of these, three are semantically associated with *voice*: *shriek, screech* and *cry*. One appears with the noun *shriek*, hinting at some (uncommon) association, but none appear with *voice*. However, it is common for the noun *voice* to be modified with an adjective (2298 instances of this are cited in the BNC). This suggests that the *Wyrd Sisters* extract uses syntactical patterns, foregrounding with more unusual lexical groupings, and relies on language almost entirely associated with fictional writing to do so.

The setting in which we find these characters also provides characterisation cues. The opening lines describing a storm and *three hunched figures* may trigger certain character types for the reader. These impressions are then heightened by the use of reference in the extract. Firstly, *the cauldron* is introduced using a specific reference to an item that is not actually mentioned in the preceding text (either in this extract or before it), foregrounding the cauldron and its activity by suggesting that the reader should expect its existence in the

scene being described. In doing so, the reader is required to apply knowledge of character stereotypes. This need to employ assumptions about character is heightened in the indefinite referents *an*, *we three* and *another*. The characters are not described at all in this opening extract – all characterisation rests on the inferences the reader is able to make using their own knowledge triggered by the scene described.

### **1.2.2 Textbase: character propositions**

Culpeper notes that the textbase is formed via syntactic and semantic analysis of the surface text. This produces propositions, as outlined in Section 1.1.1. However, Culpeper admits that not all surface text is necessarily lost during this process. Particularly salient to his own extended analysis, and to my initial analysis due to the links I and other readers perceive to Shakespeare (evidenced in Chapter 5 of this research), is the significance of surface style to many Shakespearean characters. In such cases, ‘character speeches are rhetorical showpieces in their own right’ (Culpeper, 2001: 38) and consequently form an important part of the overall character model. What is problematic about this observation is how to apply it when modelling character: is it merely remembered elements of style that are carried forward in processing, specific syntactic features, or the whole section of speech? Moreover, whatever choice the analyst makes, how can this be justified beyond merely noting foregrounded style? Figure 1.5 represents my attempt to model the textbase for the *Wyrld Sisters* extract based on the explanation of propositional content detailed in Culpeper’s work, alongside my own judgements on character-significant surface features that may survive the propositionalising process. The Macroproposition numbers refer to the macrostructure of the extract given in Figure 1.6.

| Macroproposition no. | Atomic proposition no. | Proposition                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------|--|
| M1                   | P1                     | GLEAM[AGENT = fire, LOCATION = among bushes] |
|                      | P2                     | DRIPPING[OBJECT = bushes]                    |
| M2                   | P3                     | ILLUMINATE[AGENT = fire, OBJECT = figures]   |
|                      | P4                     | THREE [OBJECT = figures]                     |
| M3                   | P5                     | BUBBLE[AGENT = cauldron]                     |
| M4                   | P6                     | SHRIEK[AGENT = voice, P6]                    |
|                      | P7                     | <i>When shall we three meet again?</i>       |
|                      | P8                     | AS[P4, P5]                                   |
|                      | P9                     | BE[OBJECT = pause]                           |
| M5                   | P10                    | SAID[AGENT = voice, P11]                     |
|                      | P12                    | ORDINARY[OBJECT = voice]                     |
|                      | P12                    | <i>Well, I can do next Tuesday.</i>          |

Figure 1.6: Propositional representation of the *Wyrd Sisters* extract

The first difficulty that becomes apparent from this exercise is that of representing scene-setting language in propositional form. The first part of the extract – *in the middle of this elemental storm* – is difficult to propositionalise without confusing this overall location with the specific location of the fire ‘among the dripping furze bushes’. This is because prepositions are not given in Culpeper’s explanation of proposition formation as a possible predicate, so the potential proposition IN[LOCATION = storm] cannot be placed at the beginning of the table on Figure 1.4 independently to reflect the fact that all action ultimately takes place within this initial setting. One could argue, of course, that this is reflective of the surface text itself, where we have no previous mention of the storm for *this* to refer to. Consequently, this detail is indeed less significant than if we had read from the very beginning of the novel, which does give detail about the storm. Regardless of the view taken, the problem with propositional representation here stands.

The second difficulty illustrated by this basic analysis is the difficulty of representing figurative language. The detail of the fire gleaming *like the madness in a weasel’s eye* cannot be represented by a verb, adjective or connective predicate and so it is difficult to include it in the sequence. To do so would require an embedded sequence of propositions asserting the truth of the statement (beginning, possibly, with HAS[OBJECT = eye]) which seems entirely unnecessary to the semantic meaning of the extract. What is lost, however, is the sense of scene-setting for which such figurative language is used and which is an inherent part of reading narrative. Unlike the character speech, which I have retained in the textbase

due to its significance to character, the same argument of character relevance cannot be made for the fire-related simile, and so it is lost in this modelling process.

The other aspect of the textbase is the macrostructure, which Culpeper briefly notes 'establishes global coherence over longer stretch of text' (Culpeper, 2001: 30) using the theme of the text or schematic knowledge of events sequences. Culpeper makes no further mention of how a microstructure may be modelled. Kintsch & van Dijk (1978) suggest that a macrostructure is formed when the reader generalises and deletes propositional information as appropriate to form a hierarchy of macro-propositions which represent a coherent gist of the text. The role of macropropositions in text processing highlights the notion that comprehension works in cycles (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983; Kintsch, 1998; Fletcher, 2012), as macropropositions from each cycle are held in working memory for processing in the next cycle, allowing coherence between text sections. Le (2002) helpfully suggests specific relations to help model the macrostructure: coordination, consisting of the opposing pairs elaboration ( $\rightarrow$ )/opposition ( $\leftrightarrow$ ) and parallelism ( $=$ )/contrast ( $\neq$ ), superordination ( $\uparrow$ ) and subordination ( $\downarrow$ ). These are based on Hobbs' (1985) principles of discourse structure, which he outlines as relations of elaboration, explanation, parallelism, contrast or temporal sequencing. These relations provide necessary detail regarding how macropropositions form a hierarchy (Culpeper merely highlights the role of reader knowledge in organising such structures). Figure 1.6 outlines a macropropositional textbase for the *Wyrld Sisters extract* using Le's (2002) advice on how to approach this.

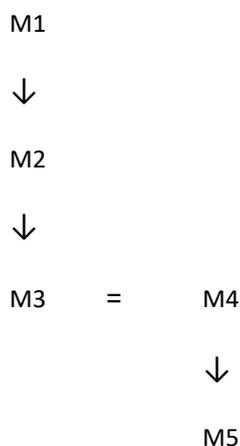


Figure 1.7: Macrostructure of *Wyrld Sisters extract*

### 1.2.3 Situation model: character impression

Unlike the textbase, which is grounded largely in the text itself, the situation model is referential and relates discourse events to existing knowledge. At this level, the reader uses inference and presupposition to build a fuller picture of the situation within the discourse, including the characters. As Kintsch (2013) explains, ‘the situation model represents the information provided by the text, independent of the particular manner in which it was expressed in the text’. Following the approach to situation modelling outlined by Culpeper, the situation of the *Wyrd Sisters* extract considered here is illustrated in Figure 1.7. The bold text represents the links formed between items in the text and the reader’s prior knowledge (here based on my own knowledge as reader). As Culpeper provides no suggestion as to how to visually represent the situation model, I have borrowed a suggested representation from Kintsch. Of course, being visual in nature, a working situation model is likely to be image-based. The representation used here is used merely as a descriptive tool.

| Prior knowledge  | Information provided by the text                                       |
|--|--|
| Cauldrons are often associated with <b>witches</b> .   | A <b>cauldron</b> bubbles.   |
| Eldritch is an <b>uncommon</b> adjective.<br>Eldritch means <b>strange</b> or <b>unnatural</b> .<br>A shriek is a <b>loud, sudden</b> and <b>wild</b> cry.<br>Unusual &/or descriptive language used in literature to create <b>atmosphere</b> and draw <b>attention</b> . | An <b>eldritch</b> voice <b>shrieked</b> .                             |
| This question is a quotation from <b>Shakespeare’s Macbthe</b> .<br>Three <b>witches</b> ask this question.<br>The witches in Macbthe are <b>bad/immoral characters</b> .  | A question is asked: “ <b>when shall we three meet again?</b> ”.       |
| A pause often indicates <b>confusion</b> , or an <b>unwillingness</b> to reply.  | There is a <b>pause</b> before the response.                           |
| <i>Well</i> is a discourse marker that often signifies <b>informality</b> .  | A more ordinary voice replies: “ <b>well</b> , I can do next Tuesday”. |

Figure 1.8: A situation model for the *Wyrd Sisters* extract (modelled on Kintsch, 2013: 814).

### **1.2.4 Prior knowledge: character information**

The range of prior knowledge that any reader may bring to a text is potentially huge. In this analysis, I use selected aspects of my own prior knowledge to provide an example of its application in the characterisation process, according to existing models of characterisation. It is by no means an exhaustive analysis.

As detailed above (section 1.1.1), prior knowledge relevant to characterisation comes in many forms, from prototypical knowledge about people and character types to trait attribution based on real-world interaction. The connecting factor in all the types of knowledge that may be brought to bear when forming impressions of character is that they are schematic in structure. Therefore, I explore some likely schemata and prototypes for the *Wyrđ Sisters* extract in order to outline their dynamic role when reading for character.

#### **Schemata**

A useful addition to Culpeper's (2001) comments on the schematic structure of prior knowledge is Cook's (1994) classification of schemata at various levels when applied to text analysis. Specifically, world schemata apply to reader knowledge based on the real-world, text schemata to knowledge of structure, and language schemata to the linguistic form of a text. This allows a more accurate modelling of potential knowledge-structuring schemata and how they may be questioned and refreshed by a text. For example, a world schema constructed during the processing of the extract may be a FANTASY schema (small capitals are used here to title schemata as per convention). In other words, a schema that reflects the events, characters and settings possible in a world in which witches exist. Possible content for such a schema is outlined in Figure 1.8. I use Mendelsohn's (2008) definitions of the four main types of fantasy (immersive, intrusion, portal-quest and liminal) to verify the setting types I identify. A text-level MACBETH schema (or a more general SHAKESPEAREAN PLAY schema, depending on specific reader knowledge) may also be constructed for readers with relevant knowledge (Fig.1.9). A language schema is likely to be constructed to aid processing in the form of a DIALOGUE script (represented in Fig. 1.10 with relevant elements from the text filling slots for agent, time and place).

From the MACBETH schema we can begin to see the various expectations and inferences that may be created from the intertextual associations at the beginning of *Wyrđ Sisters*. This

includes the character types we may encounter and the course of events. Despite the fact that the witches are quickly allowed to move away from the prototypical actions expected of them based on the schema, the associations are likely to remain in place until replaced with other text-based information. All expectations of the DIALOGUE schema, based on knowledge from the MACBETH schema, are met in the extract. The characters, time and place are all suitably witch-like, and the event sequence is followed. It is the context of the event sequence – what is said and how – that breaks expectation. Specifically, the *Wyrd Sisters* extract features a dispreferred response, a term used by Sacks (Sacks & Jefferson, 1995) to describe a conversational response (specifically in an adjacency pair between two speakers) which is generally best avoided in conversation (as opposed to a preferred response). This allows a clearer picture of how the MACBETH schema is refreshed in the extract at the language level, rather than the text or world level.

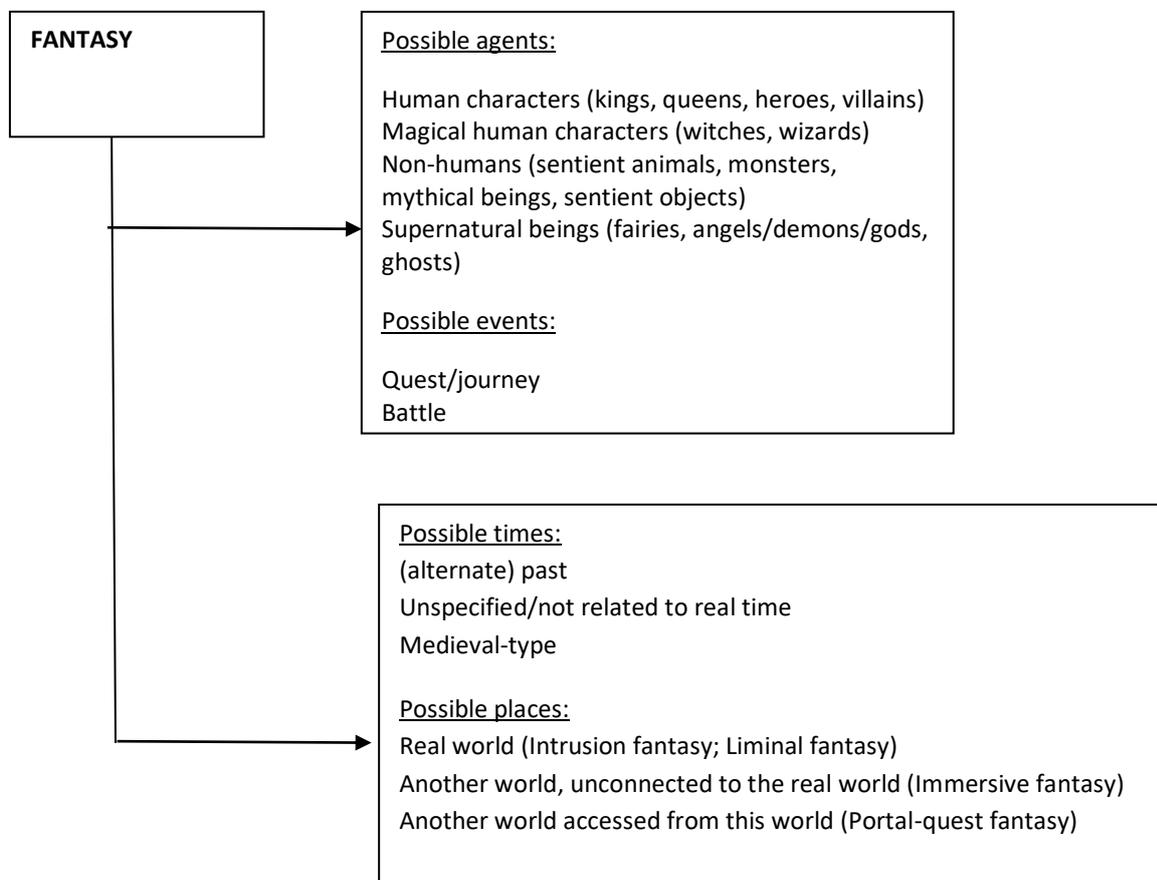


Figure 1.9: FANTASY schema

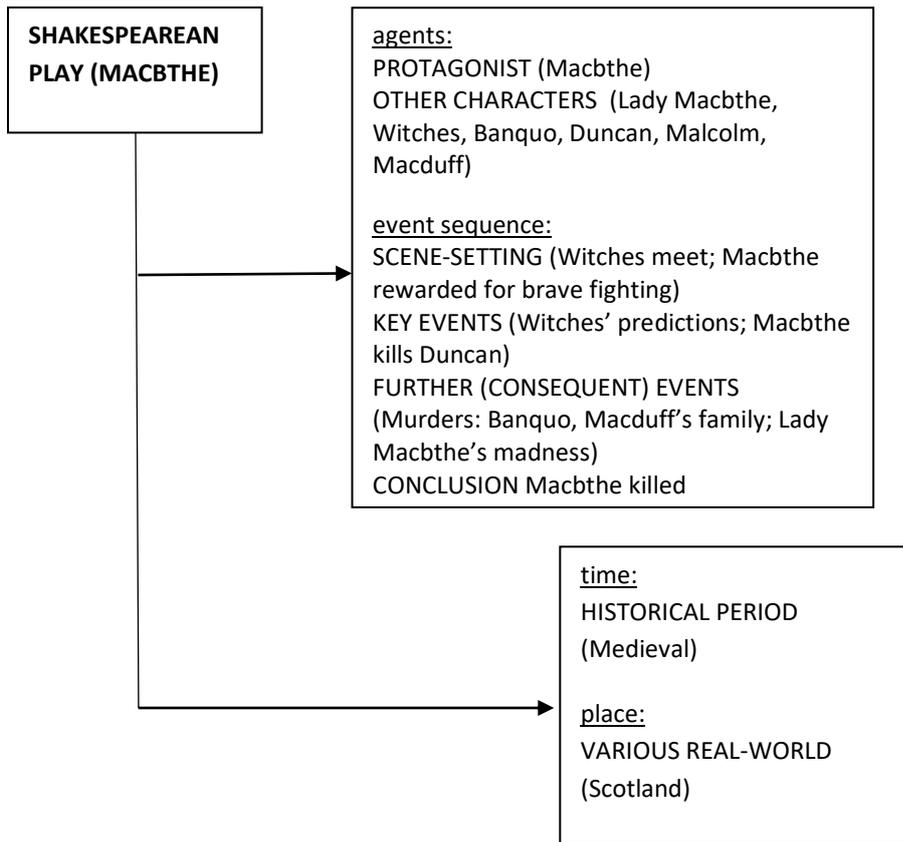


Figure 1.10: MACBTHE schema

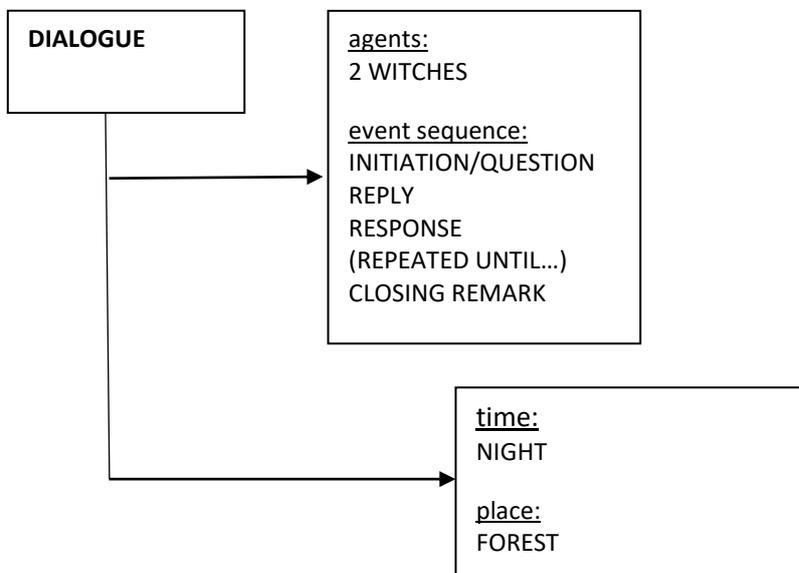


Figure 1.11: DIALOGUE script with text-specific agents, time & place

## Updating and refreshing schemata

The interaction of text and schemata for the *Wyrd Sisters* extract is outlined in Figure 1.11.

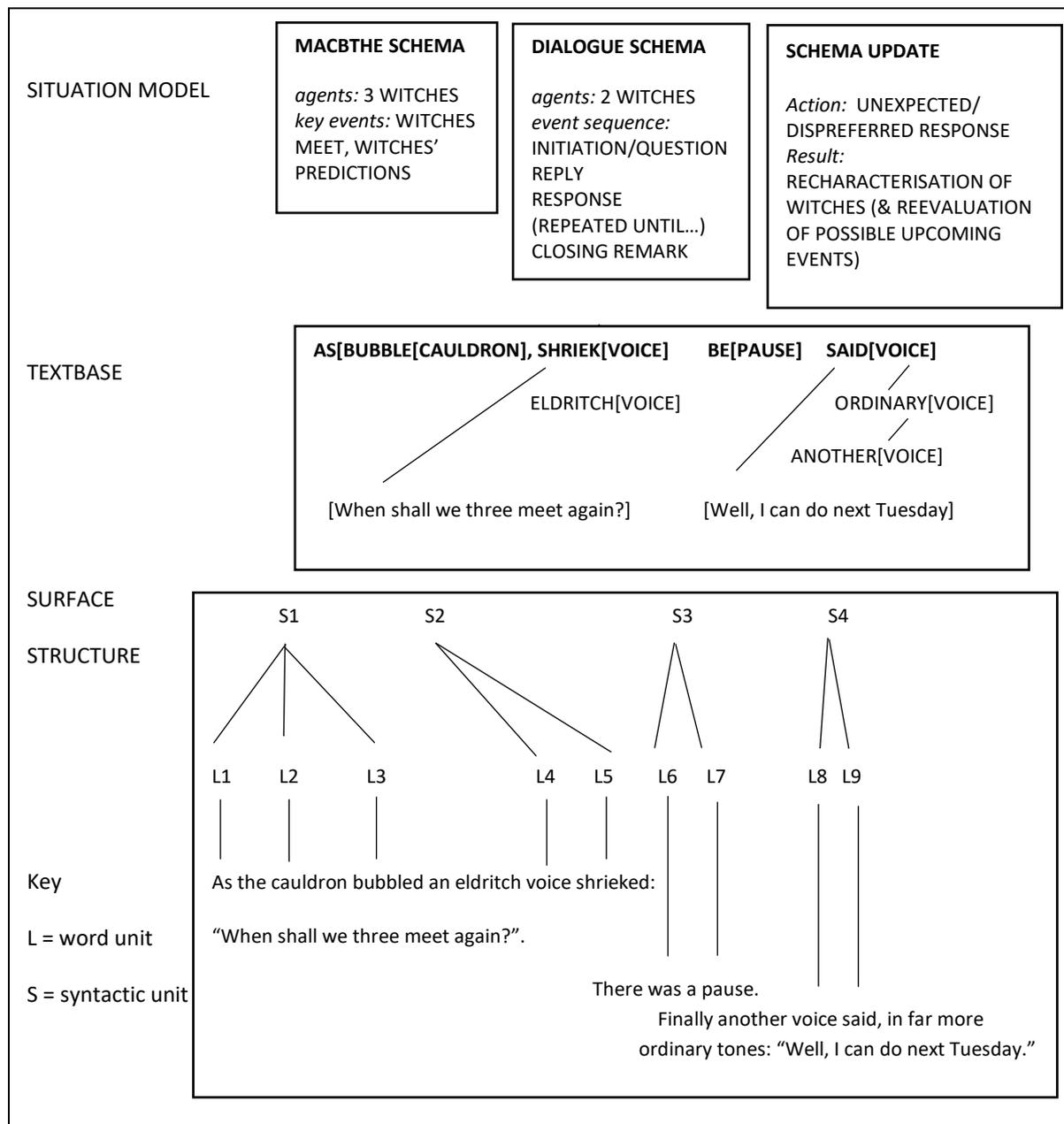


Figure 1.12: Surface structure, textbase and situation model for *Wyrd Sisters* extract (based on Schmalhofer, McDaniel & Keefe, 2002, in Kintsch, 2013: 821)

All three levels of the original model – surface structure, textbase and situation model - are reproduced here for the *Wyrd Sisters* extract. The MACBETH schema in Figure 1.11 shows only the features specific to this particular extract (in other words, the appearance of the

three characters), and does not reflect all schematic information likely to be held about the text. However, links to the other characters and events in the full schema are implied and further inferences are likely to be made based on the full schema as the text continues and the situation model develops.

### **Social schemata**

The schema updates outlined in Figure 1.11 provide key information about the types of characters we may find in certain settings and plots, based on information in the text. More detailed character information is stored, according to Culpeper, in category-based social schemata. Once category knowledge about a person is triggered, it in turn activates a wider network. Culpeper calls these networks social schemata (Culpeper, 2001: 77). Category judgements are made first (for example, whether someone is male or female), followed by relevant schemata being activated to expand the social category. This is based on Fiske & Taylor's observation that 'before you can apply schematic prior knowledge to social perception, you have to classify the person or situation as fitting a familiar category' (Fiske & Taylor, 1991: 105). Culpeper uses this link to explain how ideological, or evaluative, beliefs are involved in the categorisation of people. Within the more general FANTASY schema, and drawing on character roles from the MACBETH schema, a social schema for WITCH is likely to be triggered by the extract in question that includes updates to more general schemata. Culpeper offers a useful way of presenting the various elements of social schemata that are likely to be triggered by the witch prototype. This involves looking at personal traits (including interests, habits and goals), social roles (including family, occupation and relationships) and group membership (including gender, age, race, class, nationality and religion). Goals tend to be context or situation specific, whereas habits and interests are more general, and social role arguable has primacy regarding influence over inferences made about other roles (Culpeper, 2001: 75-76). He also notes that some models include the appearance. I have chosen to do so with the social schema suggested in Figure 1.12, although Culpeper does not.

|                         |                     | First voice   | Second voice  |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| <b>Person</b>           | <i>Goal</i>         | To create atmosphere; to receive a specific style of response | To arrange a meeting; to undermine the first speaker's goals  |
|                         | <i>Preference</i>   | Formal  | Informal  |
|                         | <i>Trait</i>        | Controlling   | Rebellious  |
| <b>Social role</b>      | <i>Occupation</i>   | Witch   | Witch?  |
|                         | <i>Relationship</i> | Friend or colleague   | Friend or colleague   |
| <b>Group membership</b> | <i>Gender</i>       | Female  | Female  |
|                         | <i>Religion</i>     | Pagan   | Pagan?  |
|                         | <i>Age</i>          | 50+   | 50+?  |
|                         | <i>Class</i>        | Lower/working?  | Lower/working   |
| <b>Appearance</b>       | <i>Hair</i>         | Grey  | <i>*Difficult to judge from this extract. Possibly different to the first speaker (ie young, bright colours, attractive?)</i> |
|                         | <i>Clothes</i>      | Black; pointy hat   |   |
|                         | <i>Face</i>         | Warts; unattractive; wrinkled                                 |   |
|                         | <i>Body</i>         | Hunched / elderly   |   |

Figure 1.13: A social schema for the *Wyrd Sisters* extract.

Even at this early stage in the novel, the reader has two encounters with characters presumed to be witches, from which to begin building character impressions. This evolution stems from the information presented in this social schema, much of which is not present in the text but is inferred from the characters' assumed social role of witch, and from the interaction and updating of schemata outlined in Figure 1.11. For example, the gender, religion, age and relationship of both characters are all based on role-based assumption. The rest of the information is extrapolated or confirmed from the content and style of the dialogue in the extract. Specifically, character goals and their level of formality are gleaned directly from speech. Likewise, assumptions about age are based on speech. The first voice is potentially older due to its formality, which fits with more central, stereotypical category-based knowledge of witches. The age of the second character is less definite. We could assume similar ages due to the relationship of friend or colleague, but these inferences are less certain than those for the first voice. The same is true of occupation and religion. The reader may assume that these are shared due to the shared setting of the extract, but has little to confirm the inferences at present. The same is true in reverse for the social class of the two characters. The second voice is more easily identifiable as working class due to their informality and colloquial speech. We may assume that this is also true of the first voice due to the shared setting, but we could also assume the opposite based on the level of formality. The pragmatic goals of the extract do little to clarify this. The first speaker is

clearly trying to control the situation in terms of dialogue content and style. Whether this is based on flaunting an upper-class role through her formal question, or a desire to play down a working class role, is unclear. Similarly, the second speaker could be seen as rebellious due to her dispreferred response, or simply pragmatic in trying to sensibly arrange a meeting.

### **1.3 Approaches and objectives: A revised model of characterisation in brief**

This thesis developed as a response to attempts to apply Culpeper's (2001) characterisation model to the analysis of the characters in Pratchett's novels, as detailed in the initial analysis in Section 1.2. It was clear to me that interesting things were being done with these characters, and I wanted to explore exactly how they were being done by analysing the language and style of the novels. However, there are several areas of the existing models of characterisation that would be more easily applied to analysis if they were revised or developed. The revised model of characterisation outlined in Figure 1.13 represents a more user-friendly approach to modelling characterisation. In order to achieve this, it utilises theories of language and style that allow for robust arguments regarding the significance of surface text and the ways in which it is processed. As a result, it is easier to explore which elements of the surface structure may be retained during processing and which may fade to propositional representation at a semantic level. The revised model preserves key elements of both original characterisation models, combining the detail of Schneider's model (the presentation of consciousness and mind style, and details of the text and knowledge features relevant at each level of processing) with the clearer structure of Culpeper's (specifically, the notion of a control system for reading for character, and the clear separation of the surface text from the textbase). In this section, I briefly outline the theories and frameworks used in my revised model, highlighting which problematic or under-developed areas of the existing models they aim address.

### **1.3.1 Issues from the initial analysis**

Firstly, Culpeper's model provides a broad set of tools for discussing the elements of character speech and surface text that contribute to characterisation, as evidenced by the lack of additional theory needed to complete an initial analysis of the surface text here. Analysis at this level could, however, be made more informative and robust using a theory which allows the discussion of surface text as coherent chunks of meaning. This would better allow for a discussion of how reader knowledge is triggered by recognisable linguistic patterns, especially those which prompt intertextual connections to be made, which are clearly at work in this extract. It would also align more closely with natural language processing.

Such a focus would also address the problems at textbase and situation levels highlighted by my initial analysis. Culpeper's model and the comprehension models on which it is based suggest that the formation of a textbase involves omitting much of the stylistic content of the surface text in order to form micro and macro level summaries of the text and its events, settings and characters. Such disregard for the stylistic content of a text once it is read seems unlikely, especially when dealing with characters in literary fiction. Zwaan & Radvansky (1998) suggest that the surface text is crucial during the formation of a situation model, as language provides instructions for the construction of a mental representation of the text. Therefore, the language in which a situation is described can affect reader memory of it, as this language governs the construction of the situation model in memory. As construction of a successful situation model is the basis for comprehension, according to these authors, the style of the surface text is crucial to comprehension. While Culpeper agrees that it is unlikely that all surface content is propositionalised when processing character (Culpeper, 2001: 37), he does not offer details regarding which parts of a text should or should not be propositionalised and which elements of style may be retained. A focus on how readers actually process language, rather than one which prioritises proposition formation based on syntactic structure, is better placed to explain the central role of language in text and character modelling.

Further issues appear when applying the idea of schemata to the construction of a situation model. Specifically, there are several common questions posed of schema theory that require investigation in order to accurately model character comprehension using these

structures. These questions relate to the activation and assignation of schematic structures, how we can conceptualise their form and content, and at what level they work (for example, in my analysis, do I have Shakespearean play schema with *Macbeth* track, or a individual schema for *Macbeth*)?

The final issue highlighted by my initial analysis is that of the knowledge of other texts and their characters in constructing character impressions – three of the four central schemata considered in this analysis would be inaccessible without such knowledge. Therefore, as already suggested in relation to the role of prior knowledge in the situation model, a more detailed and robust way of exploring the role and significance of intertextual knowledge is needed. In addition, detail regarding how schematic structures combine during processing would allow for a more clearly modelled analysis of the characterisation process, along with a more accessible way of understanding links between real world and text.

### **1.3.2 Additional theories**

In order to address these issues, I take the significance of linguistic features in the characterisation process as a starting point to address the ways in which a model of characterisation can more thoroughly account for the role of the surface text. In other words, rather than accepting this stage of character modelling as relatively transparent (or at least readily explicable via the concept of foregrounding alone), I apply the idiom principle (Sinclair, 2004) as a way of more robustly explaining the key role of the surface text in a character comprehension. This posits, in short, that text is primarily processed as chunks or units of meaning rather than being parsed according to syntactic rules. These units of meaning are recognised by their use of common lexical and grammatical structures (known as pattern grammars - Hunston & Francis, 2000), which readers acquire through a process of linguistic expose known as lexical priming (Hoey, 2005) and store in a mental lexicon (Taylor, 2012). As such, the idiom principle provides a concrete theory with which to argue for the primacy of text in characterisation.

Despite this initial aim, I am certainly not questioning the essential role of reader knowledge in the characterisation process. The dynamic interaction of top-down and bottom-up processes in character modelling, along with the social, pragmatic and linguistic theories

outlined by Culpeper and Schneider, are not the focus of this research. My aim is, rather, to recast these models of characterisation in the light of two key frameworks which allow for a more rigorous discussion of the role of style and language in characterisation. These are the Rhetorical Processing Framework (Sanford & Emmott, 2012) and the Narrative Interrelation Framework (Mason, 2019).

Firstly, the Rhetorical Processing Framework (RPF) provides a cohesive account of the role of surface style with its Rhetorical Focussing Principle, of reader knowledge with its Fundamental Scenario Mapping and of contextualised reader response with its emphasis on the role of emotion and embodiment. In a development of Sanford & Garrod's (1981) original attempts to find a common model through which to explore text comprehension, the RPF deliberately steps away from the establishing of basic meaning from text in order to understand the comprehension of fictional narrative. Specifically, Emmott & Sanford state that their aim is 'to specify the kinds of psychological mechanism that support the comprehension of narrative' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012). In exploring this, the authors develop the ideas on which many comprehension models are based for the study of narrative, making the model particularly useful for studying characterisation. Crucially, this framework emphasises the essential role of style in controlling reader attention in a way that is not emphasised in either Culpeper's or Schneider's model (although both undeniably adopt a stylistic approach, without labelling it as such). Consequently, this element of the RPF further supports a central role for the surface text in character analysis. Furthermore, the notion of Fundamental Scenario Mapping provides an additional, comprehensive way in which to model the interaction of text and knowledge.

Secondly, the Narrative Interrelation Framework is a ground-breaking piece of research which addresses the central role and mechanisms of intertextuality in the reading process. It is particularly useful for my purposes as it allows for a robust account of the role played by intertextual knowledge when modelling character and an exploration of how such knowledge is triggered by text. This is briefly touched upon by Culpeper and Schneider in their discussions of the application of character categories during the comprehension process, outlining how knowledge carried between texts is utilised to model character. Schneider emphasises this as he notes that 'a special case of literary characterisation can occur when a character is connected to a specific character in another literary work by way

of intertextual reference' (Schneider, 2001: 620). My revised model emphasises the innately intertextual nature of characterisation by illustrating the way in which intertextual mappings work at all levels of character comprehension. Specifically, they are found in elements at surface level that reference the style of other texts, in representations at textbase level that draw parallels with semantic information about characters from other works, and in mental models that map models of specific characters or generic types onto the text being read.

Finally, in addition the two models outlined above, I apply Conceptual Blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 2003) to the characterisation process in order to reach a more detailed understanding of how the schematic structures detailed in the above frameworks combine in practice to allow the detailed development of character information.

# READING FOR CHARACTER

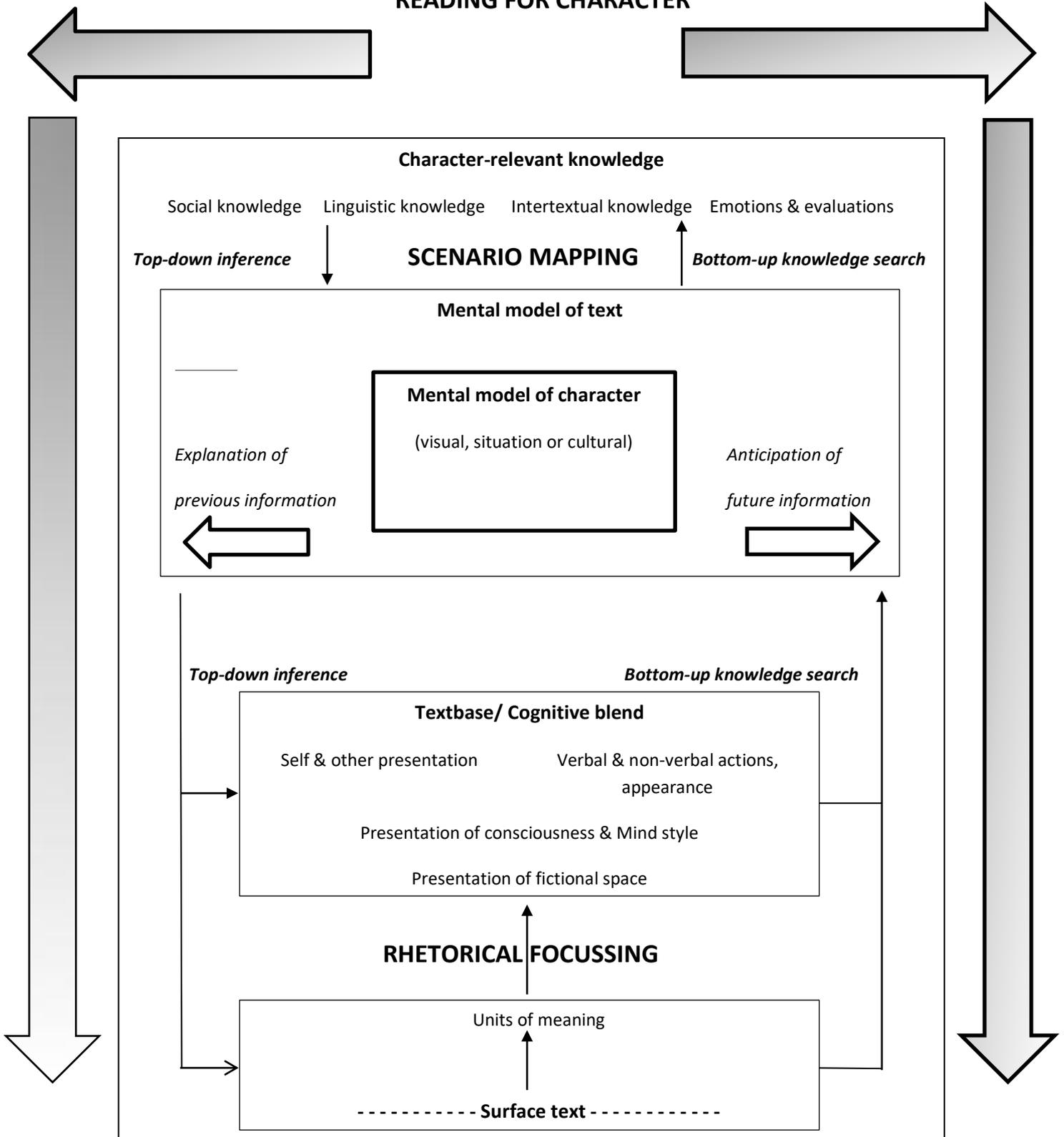


Figure 1.14: A revised model of characterisation (based on Culpeper, 2001 & Schneider, 2001).

## 1.4 Research questions & foundational assumptions

Throughout this thesis I explore four research questions (RQs) in order to refine the ideas in the existing models of characterisation detailed above and introduce new theoretical approaches:

1. To what extent and in what ways do existing knowledge structures and mental models influence and interact with the processing of surface text in characterisation?
2. How is information from different sources combined to form an impression of character and how this can be modelled?
3. How can the role of surface text in character comprehension be effectively modelled?
4. How can intertextual reference be included in the characterisation model to reflect its central role at all levels of processing?

These address elements of the character modelling process that I found confusing, unhelpful or impossible to model in my initial attempts without further research. The assertion behind RQ 1 is that these existing models lack detail on this element of character comprehension beyond the kinds of inference prompted by such mental structures, and that detail needs to be developed regarding the restriction and overriding of language processing based on existing structures. I propose that Fundamental Scenario Mapping can shed light on this aspect of characterisation. RQ 2 aims to address the lack of detail in existing models regarding the role of intertextuality in characterisation; Conceptual Blending can provide detail about this process. RQ 3 is based on the assertion that the role of surface text is not effectively featured in existing models, which provide no detail on how to model this element of comprehension beyond propositionalising unspecified amounts of text. I suggest that the Idiom Principle and Rhetorical Focussing Principle can provide a useful starting point from which to answer this question. Finally, RQ 4 is grounded in the assumption that intertextual reference features in existing models as a peripheral aspect of a reader's knowledge, with little or no clear links to the style and language of a text. The

Narrative Interrelation Framework can be usefully applied to expand this aspect of characterisation.

## **1.5 Thesis structure & originality**

In Chapter 2 I explore the theories that underlie the cognitive models of comprehension on which Culpeper's and Schneider's work on character impression is based. These include the ways in which reader knowledge is stored and accessed via schema and prototype theory and the notion of mental models and the forms they may take. This allows me to highlight any shortcomings in these theories and provide theoretical developments that clarify their role in comprehension. In addition, I suggest that Conceptual Blending is a useful way of modelling the complex interactions of the structures and models at work during the characterisation process.

Chapter 3 explores ways in which greater emphasis can be placed on the importance of surface text and stylistic features in character comprehension. This chapter develops the argument by introducing several complementary theories to the character comprehension model. Firstly, it uses the Idiom Principle (Sinclair, 1991 & 2004) to justify the primacy of surface text features in processing character and as a means by which the role of surface text in comprehension can be more accurately modelled. Secondly, in order to reflect the central role of surface text in triggering collocational, pragmatic and intertextual associations for the reader, the significance of intertextuality to characterisation is outlined using the Narrative Interrelation Framework (Mason, 2019). Finally, the Rhetorical Processing Framework (Sanford & Emmott, 2012) is suggested as a relevant theoretical framework with which to link these theories and gain a clearer understanding of their potential role in the comprehension of character.

Chapter 4 situates the characterisation model within existing psychological and literary theories of character. These take the form of traditional theories of characterisation in which characters are seen as either well-rounded or flat, person-like or trait-based, sociological theories of real-world person-perception and trait attribution, and cognitive

stylistic theories of mind attribution and mind style. The exploration of the roles of emotion and embodiment outlined in the RPF is key to understanding how the reader relates to the text and its characters in light of these theories and frameworks. This chapter seeks to address the more character-specific question of how linguistic features at the level of surface text trigger associated knowledge of real and fictional people and, in doing so, contribute to the characterisation process.

In Chapter 5, I undertake an extended text analysis in which I apply my revised model as outlined in the thesis to the construction of witch characters by readers of Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels. This aims to illustrate the applicability of the model to the characters that initially inspired the research, characters that are formed through overt exploration of stereotypes and intertextuality. Chapter 6 extends the application of my model beyond its starting point to a further case study of Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale*. This second analysis provides a further test of robustness for my model. Finally, Chapter 7 reviews the findings of the thesis and outlines the extent to which the research questions outlined in this chapter have been answered. It also suggests future directions for my research and the implications and further applications of the findings.

In taking this approach to revising existing models of characterisation, I make several original contributions to the theory. Firstly, my application of the central ideas of the Idiom Principle to cognitive models of this kind is, as far as I am aware, a new approach and one that will expand understanding of the role of surface text in character comprehension. Secondly, the use of Mason's Narrative Interrelation Framework in a character-specific study is a new application of the theory (she does devote some space to such discussion, but not in combination with the related theories present in characterisation models). Finally, the suggestion that conceptual blending can offer insights into how knowledge and inference of character types are combined when constructing characters is, to the best of my knowledge, an original approach that employs existing cognitive theory to better understand character processing.

## 1.6 Methods

Culpeper's work focuses on characterisation in drama, as he claims this is an underexplored area and one of particular interest as characters are not filtered by narration. My focus applies an expanded model of characterisation to narrative text for several reasons. Firstly, the characters that interest me and initially prompted this research appear in narrative fiction (although there is opportunity to explore how they are presented in plays as well with the adaptation of Pratchett's work for the stage). Secondly, I wish to apply the model to narrative to test its robustness across discourse types (as Culpeper has already argued robustly for its applicability to drama). Narrative, as Culpeper points out (Culpeper, 2001: 287), involves an extra level of information filtering and character inference through narrator and I hope to contribute to the work that he felt was still to be done on this.

The first area to note regarding my methodology in this research is why I have chosen Pratchett and Attwood texts as my data source. I mentioned this briefly at the start of the chapter, in reference to the metafictional approach to character that Pratchett often takes. The advantage of analysing characters that are often aware of the person- and text-based stereotypes and expectations that govern their reception is twofold. Firstly, it means that many of these primary (and perhaps even automatic) knowledge-based assumptions are challenged and refreshed. Examining the ways in which these challenges are made can reveal the mechanisms by which such judgements of character operate. Secondly, in applying a theoretical framework to examples of text which often deal with the process of characterisation overtly I can be more assured of the robustness and effectiveness of the principles I propose. If and when such twists and parodies become more complex, I can ensure, as Culpeper himself suggests when revisiting his own model of characterisation, that I use my analysis 'to validate cognitive models and theories in the light of complex and messy literary data' (Culpeper, 2009: 151), rather than simply assuming their validity. The choice of Attwood's handmaid characters for the second analysis further extends this challenge by removing the more explicit parody of character types in a more serious approach to similar issues. This is salient due to the parallels between Attwood's Handmaids and Pratchett's witches. Specifically, both texts use intertextual fairy tale references to associate strong female characters with types and traits that they eventually break and

both, consequently, have been described as displaying feminist tropes to a greater or lesser extent.

Secondly, in order to analyse and argue for the primacy of surface text in comprehension using the Idiom Principle, I will initially use my own intuitions. These can then be confirmed or challenged using corpus data where possible, or with linguistic theory if necessary. As Hoey (2005) points out, any intuitive analysis will reflect our own individual knowledge about the common collocations and consequent semantic meanings of linguistic items (he calls this lexical priming). As a result, intuition can be a useful tool for exploring the meaning imparted by surface text. Such analysis will only be valid, however, if it can be verified by more objective means. As Sinclair (1997) suggests, while intuition is an important asset regarding word meaning and sentence well-formedness in isolation, 'it is not, however, reliable about the way words and sentences are combined in actual communication' (Sinclair, 1997: 32). Therefore, intuitive analysis needs to be checked against corpus data to compare it with actual language use. This will avoid the pitfalls common to approaches based on intuition alone, including reflecting personal dialect, not being reflective of typical language use and not being verifiable, and possibly identify features which intuition may not (McEnery et al, 2006). In addition, it will avoid the risk of a highly subjective picture of a text's language and meaning caused, the authors claim, by the fact that most people overlook ordinary structures but notice unusual ones. Corpus analysis is therefore necessary as 'the corpus represents both a resource against which to test such intuitions and a motor which can help to generate them' (Partington: 1998: 2). Therefore, the two approaches work best together, rather than being mutually exclusive, and 'the key to using corpus data is to find the balance between the use of corpus data and the use of one's own intuition' (McEnery et al, 2006: 7). I will use the British National Corpus (BNC) for this purpose, as it has been designed to be representative of a variety of spoken and written English produced in the latter half of the twentieth century (when most of Pratchett's work was written). As it can be narrowed to section-based searches, for example fiction or spoken English, it is particularly useful for comparisons of language use across different types of discourse and communication.

An intuition-based approach is also helpful in order to highlight the individual nature of the reader and their responses (especially the narrative interrelations they make). Any analysis I

carry out can only be based on my own responses and expanded to likely responses of other readers. To attempt to do otherwise would not only be impossible, but disingenuous. This is true not only of the analysis of the language of a text, but when discussing the narrative interrelations it may trigger. Of great significance to this research is the notion that, regardless of the intertextual intention of the author, 'readers read holistically and interrelate freely. A lifetime's gathering of narrative experiences across contexts and mediums provisions readers with a library of potential contacts which can be activated impulsively and cannot always be bridled, even by the strongest of steers from a text' (Mason, 2014: 193). This is a useful way of foregrounding the role of the reader in the characterisation process, and emphasising caution when suggesting possible narrative interrelations. Having said this, some empirical data illustrating the response of other readers can be accessed via reading websites such as Goodreads and Librarything. These sites provide a range of responses from reading enthusiasts who can, on this basis, be assumed to be reasonably well-read (or, at the very least, enthusiastic) compared to the general population. I will make use of these when evidence of common responses to certain texts and characters is needed. This approach is increasingly seen as a robust method for investigating reader response to text in a natural context, rather than in a research environment with texts produced for investigative purposes. Mason uses book reviews for a preliminary study on intertextuality, as 'it is an increasingly common practice to examine book reviews in stylistic and cognitive poetic research, especially as a first step in triangulating personal introspection' (Mason, 2019: 33). Likewise, Gavins notes that using reader reviews and responses from online reading forums can take investigations 'beyond the limits of partial impressionism' (Gavins, 2013: 7). It also has the advantage of yielding 'voluntarily produced and often highly detailed accounts of habitual literary interaction, unaffected and unaltered by the analyst' (Gavins, 2013: 8). Finally, this approach also avoids ethical issues of participant identity, as all users of the sites I will use have the option to remain anonymous. Both Pratchett and Attwood also make good data sources based on the availability of a breadth of reader reviews for analysis of reader response to characters, as Pratchett is widely read and reviewed, while *The Handmaid's Tale* has been made accessible to a wider audience due to Hulu's TV adaptation (2017).

## 1.7 Chapter conclusion

Existing models of characterisation (Culpeper, 2001 & Schneider, 2001) provide a useful starting point for exploring how readers build models of character. However, they do not provide enough detail regarding the role of surface text and style in this process, which I argue plays a much more significant role in forming impressions of character. In order to address this, this thesis explains and applies the revised model of characterisation introduced in section 1.3.1 (Figure 1.14). Chapter 2 outlines and expands theories already present in the existing models of characterisation and suggests Conceptual Blending as a suitable method of illustrating the complex cognitive interactions at work during characterisation. Chapter 3 places greater emphasis on the role of surface text character comprehension using the Idiom Principle (Sinclair, 1991 & 2004), the Narrative Interrelation Framework (Mason, 2019) and the Rhetorical Processing Framework (Sanford & Emmott, 2012). Chapter 4 outlines theories of character in order to accurately define the object of investigation and provide a structure for my analyses. The applicability of my revised model of characterisation is then verified in chapters 5 and 6, which present extended text analyses of two character sets: Terry Pratchett's witches and Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale*.

## 2. Foundations: modelling comprehension

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter address the question of to what extent and in what ways existing knowledge structures and mental models influence and interact with the processing of surface text in characterisation. In doing so, it expands areas of theory already present in Culpeper's (2001) and Schneider's (2001) models in order to highlight salient and problematic elements of each theory, and to increase their usability when modelling character comprehension. I first consider schema and prototype theory and the information they provide regarding how knowledge is structured and stored in the mind. I then suggest the Construction Integration model as a way of more accurately modelling this aspect of the comprehension process. The second area of theory considered is that of mental models and the light they can shed on the role and formation of the situation model in existing models of characterisation. Finally, I consider the theory of Conceptual Blending as a useful way of detailing how such structures work together during comprehension. I begin here, rather than at the surface level of text analysis, as schematic structures underlie all levels of comprehension and all new theories that I introduce in my revised characterisation model. As Stockwell points out, schema theory can be used 'to explain bundles of information and features at every level of linguistic organisation, from the meanings perceived in individual words to the readings of entire texts' (Stockwell, 2002: 78). Therefore, an understanding of such structures is needed before progressing further.

### 2.2 Knowledge structures

Culpeper's and Schneider's characterisation models (both 2001) and the earlier model on which they are based (Kintsch & van Dijk: 1978, 1983) rely heavily on the notion of

knowledge structures known as schemata to account for how reader knowledge interacts with the text during the comprehension process. However, there are several areas within the various concepts which make up schema theory which are not fully accounted for in any of the models. Therefore, a thorough understanding is needed of how these cognitive mechanisms control and organise reader knowledge and interact with the surface text. This includes what exactly constitutes a schema and what its role in the comprehension process is. By presenting a clearer picture of what schematic structures are and how they operate during comprehension, the role of surface text in triggering the relevant knowledge governed by such structures is also clarified. In order to achieve this, I argue for a different, text-driven way of visualising the formation of schemata, referring to the Construction Integration model. This addresses issues with schema theory itself, and realigns the use of such knowledge structures with a more text-driven approach. In this section, I outline the central ideas of two main types of knowledge structure: schemata and prototypes, including their application within a Construction Integration approach.

### **2.2.1 Schema theory**

As noted briefly in the discussion of Culpeper's model in Chapter 1, schemata are basic structures which organise new information by mapping it onto existing knowledge. In fact, schema theory is an umbrella term for several connected theories (Schank, 1982; Rumelhart, 1980; Minsky, 1975) about the role of prior knowledge in comprehension and how it interacts with the text during comprehension. They are a superordinate concept, with specific instances known as elaborations, instantiations or subcases (Tuggy, 2007). Schemata have variables, they can be embedded within one another (as subschemata) and they represent generic concepts (so are flexible and can allow for deviations) (Rumelhart and Ortony, 1977). Although schemata are not necessarily universal in themselves (many are subject specific), the key concept here is schematicity (Tuggy, 2007) – the level of specificity with which new information is mapped to set structures or vice-versa – which is universal in cognition. Crucially, this schematicity exists at every level of text processing, from lexical and grammatical rules at surface level to cultural knowledge used at higher levels. Using abstracted prior knowledge and relating it to texts means that schemata are hugely influential in dictating how we view and infer things about the information we

receive; expectations based on active schemata influence the inferences made from that information (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977; Culpeper 2001). Therefore:

In a sense, we see things we are prepared to see. Or, in other words, we see things in terms of what we have already experienced. The structures that one has available in memory are the embodiment of one's own experiences. We understand in terms of the structures that we have available. And, the structures we have available reflect how we have understood things in the past. (Schank, 1982: 79).

### **Types of schemata**

The term schema has been much used and redefined in its history. However, there are three main concepts which have explored the structure of prior knowledge storage and so give detail regarding what a schema may be composed of: schema, frame and script. A schema is a more general term, frames are related to concepts/combinations of concepts and scripts are related to events and embedded within frames. As de Beaugrande explains, 'frames and schemas are more oriented toward internal arrangement of knowledge, while [...] scripts reflect human needs to get things done' (de Beaugrande, 1980: 164).

Of particular relevance to characterisation is Rumelhart's (1975) exploration of schemata in relation to story grammars. These govern expectations of a typical story narrative and the causal relations between the events portrayed. Rumelhart (1980) uses the term schema throughout his work and suggests that schemata contain slots for information which are filled with default values for any unknown variables, reducing the degree of specificity and thus allowing the same schema to be applied to varying contexts. A schema's variables are governed by constraints which restrict the values that can be assigned to them and suggest appropriate variables (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977). It seems clear, then, that schemata, whilst generalising events, are not rigid; they can be adapted and added to with further experience. This is made possible via accretion, tuning or restructuring. These terms refer respectively to binding an existing schema to a new instance by replacing slot defaults with specific information, refining an existing schema to fit a new experience to improve accuracy or to generalise, or creating a new schema to fit a new experience (Rumelhart & Norman, 1978; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977).

Another significant development of the schema idea suggests that prior knowledge is stored as scripts (Schank, 1982; Schank & Abelson, 1977). Scripts allow inferences about events using abstracted and generalised information from multiple experiences of causal event chains (Schank, 1982). Situation-specific scripts (a lecturer's office) are embedded within more general scenes (offices in general). This, Schank claims, explains how prior knowledge can be both specific enough to provide relevant expectations and abstract enough to account for confusion and linking between various scripts. In this new conceptualisation, a scene is defined as having a setting and a goal; a script contains the actions that take place within the scene. Like schemata, scripts are composed of slots, props, roles, entry conditions and results. A combination of scripts is needed for a whole view of any situation. The relevant script is assigned using key words. A meaningful interpretation of the text or situation then becomes possible if the script matches. People and objects in text are then assigned to roles & properties from the script and missing text components are filled by referring to the script. The temporal order of text is also determined by the sequence of the script. In addition, scripts have different tracks running through them related to the various scenes they may be part of which allow them to be applied to different versions of a setting. Key to script development is the perceived differences between the stereotypes of an instantiated script and the specific situation. These differences will be stored in memory, whereas script elements which match the previously stored structure will not be remembered (Schank, 1982). Enough instances of particular differences adjust the script structure and thus new information becomes the norm. For example, in the case of the DIALOGUE script in my initial analysis, we see a fiction track instantiated. The unexpected response in the *Wyrd Sisters* extract fails to meet stereotypes of dialogue as it is given in a notably different style. This provides the first instance in the novel of the development a character-relevant script, a development which becomes normalised as the novel presents further similar instances (potentially carving out a specific track within the script for Pratchett's characters).

Finally, the concept of frames has perhaps had the widest application to this research. Proposed by Minsky (1975), schematic frames are selected for new situations and adapted to reality by changing necessary details. They represent stereotyped situations, with fixed details at the top frame levels (things always true in that situation), and slots (terminals) for

specific information at lower levels. As with all major strands of schema theory, these slots contain default values for places, people, actions and props until new suitable data replaces them. This allows for the significant role played by expectation and assumption in comprehension. Related frames are linked by a frame system and can co-ordinate information within the system as they share terminals (slots for specific types of information). When we consider the initial analysis in Chapter 1, Shakespearean plays (or perhaps more general literary references, depending on reader knowledge and purpose) would form the frame system, with higher-level frames representing abstracted or stereotypical instances (what we think the settings, people and events are in certain instances of Shakespeare plays, perhaps not based on first-hand experience) and lower level terminals filled by specific information in the same way as variables are filled for schemata, above. The concept of frames has also been developed in relation to cognitive linguistics and literary comprehension, discussed in section 2.3, and forms the basis of conceptual blending, outlined in section 2.4.1.

### **Problems with schema theory**

Schemata have been argued by numerous theorists to guide behaviour, facilitate encoding of information and allow efficient recall and application of knowledge (Rumelhart, 1980; Ghosh & Gilboa, 2014). However, there remain several key questions regarding their form and application which need to be explored if such structures are to be applied to modelling the characterisation process in order to address my first research question. These questions concern how schematic structures are activated and assigned (according to some principle or ad hoc), and their form (their edges and constraints). A final question, regarding how theories of prototypicality impact on schema theory, is dealt with in section 2.1.2.

A significant criticism of schema theory is the lack of clarity regarding how schemata are activated and assigned (Culpeper, 2001; Semino 1997). It is relatively simple to see that a schema is instantiated once information has been assigned to slots based on memory, new information or using a default (Rumelhart & Ortony 1977; Brewer & Natamura, 1984), and to appreciate how this leads to comprehension (or lack of comprehension if variables do not fit enough slots). However, it is less clear how a schema is selected in the first place. The

suggestion that schemata, as a key part of active processing, are responsible for their own selection and use in comprehension (Rumelhart & Norman, 1975) seems a somewhat circular and undeveloped argument. Schank & Abelson provide the most detail here, though it is still an area which needs exploring. They suggest linguistic triggers for scripts, referred to as 'headers' (Schank & Abelson, 1977: 46). Script headers can be preconditional (for example, describing someone as hungry may activate a restaurant script), instrumental (for example, travelling to a restaurant is instrumental of the restaurant script), locale-based (the place where the script usually occurs – a specific restaurant or simply reference to restaurants in general) or internal conceptualisation (for example, referring to a waiter triggers the restaurant script in which this role exists). While the concept of headers begins to explore the initial activation of schemata, in isolation it does not specify exactly what linguistic items may act as headers and which may not.

Another key factor in explaining schema activation is the importance of goals in comprehension. Schank and Abelson (1977) suggest the ideas of plans, goals and themes, referred to in other theories as simply higher-level schemata (Rumelhart & Norman, 1978; Rumelhart, 1980), as a way of understanding how unfamiliar situations are negotiated using the abstraction of prior knowledge. They are more flexible and more general than scripts, so can use decontextualized knowledge of actions and motivation and can be predicted or accounted for based on themes. Goals have also been suggested by other theorists as an important trigger for schematic knowledge. Semino (1997) refines this, suggesting that relevance theory can be used to make the claim that we only activate a schema if it is relevant enough to our goals to balance the cognitive effort used in the activation, thus explaining why we do not needlessly apply any number of schemata in order to understand a text. Likewise, Culpeper (2001) claims that goals, along with situational context and frequency of use, dictate the strength and relevance of headers, both of which are key factors in schema activation. Van den Broek et al (2001) expresses a similar but more detailed idea, suggesting that reader goals affect the degree of coherence required during processing (and the subsequent coherence strategies used), which in turn influences the inferences made and the exact combinations of knowledge and text input used to build mental models. This goal-oriented activation of prior knowledge is also highlighted in Kintsch and van Dijk's (1978) model of comprehension. This gives the clearest illustration

that headers (or triggers, or cues, as they are labelled by different theorists) do not exist intrinsically within a text, but are selected by the reader based on specific goals.

The second question to be addressed here concerns the form and formation of schemata. Schank developed this area of his script theory with the concept of the Memory Organisation Packet (MOP) (1982). Knowledge is stored in MOPs which can then be organised into relevant scenes as required (this also echoes Minsky's (1975) idea of an information retrieval network which links frames and allows analogy, though Minsky admits his idea is sketchy). Unlike scripts, which are limited to a particular sequence of actions in a particular setting, MOPs and their scenes can be applied to any setting, explaining how prior knowledge is successfully applied to different contexts. Schank points out that MOPs themselves do not organise specific memories; these are organised in scenes (defined as actions grouped by shared goals and time) which contain scripts, both of which are organised by MOPs. MOPs are also subject to higher-level organisation, being organised by meta-MOPs. MOPs, like schemata, give rise to expectations and are "viewpoints imposed by an observer on the world" (Schank, 1982: 101). They store the basic beliefs which lead to expectations, which each situation will either meet or fail to meet. Failure leads to development of basic beliefs and renewed expectations, and so on as new information requires. What makes this concept particularly attractive when modelling active comprehension processes is the idea that MOPs and meta-MOPs are assembled based on processing needs, rather than being stored in set forms (Semino, 1997: 144).

Also at work, Schank claims, are Thematic Organisation Packets (TOPs), which are independent of context, unlike MOPs. TOPs allow situational information to be generalised across various contexts, for example detecting similar themes in different texts. For example, returning to the idea of the *MACBETH* schema discussed in Chapter 1, a MOP would contain all basic beliefs about the play (or all Shakespeare plays for a broader schema) gained from any setting, while a TOP would link these elements to other settings (for example, allowing comparisons to be drawn between the original play and a text like *Wyrld Sisters* that draws upon its themes and characters).

### **Construction Integration: a potential solution**

Although Schank's (1982) idea of MOPs is questionable (he himself notes that it is difficult to detail what does and does not constitute such a structure), the suggestion that they are constructed during processing provides a parallel between the on-line formation of higher-level schemata and the on-line formation of knowledge networks outlined in Kintsch's (1988, 1998) Construction Integration model. As an attempt to clarify the role of prior knowledge within previous data-driven models of comprehension, this theory also addresses the problem of how schematic structures are activated as it suggests a more detailed representation of how reader knowledge is cued by surface level features. This model proposes that comprehension is, initially, an entirely bottom-up, data driven process in which knowledge networks are constructed via the spread of node activation (nodes consist of concepts or propositions) over a network. This occurs at the level of textbase formation to construct a general overview the text. Textual information is then combined with reader knowledge which is retrieved to integrate text and prior information in the situation model. Nodes are related positively, negatively or not at all. One or more nodes then act as a retrieval cue for further nodes, thus allowing activation to spread. This spread of activation is, Kintsch claims, a constraint satisfaction process in which elements that fit together or are related are selectively activated whilst other elements are deactivated. Processing in this model does not lead immediately to the construction of correct meaning as initial processing is context insensitive. Rather, processing produces several contradictory possibilities to be explored which are then 'cleaned up' (Kintch, 2013: 817) when integrated with prior and contextual knowledge. An activated knowledge network will therefore contain both relevant and irrelevant nodes which, through contextual constraint satisfaction, are refined to contain only relevant information.

Kintsch himself likens the Construction Integration model to MOPs, pointing out that both MOPs and the knowledge nets which are formed during Construction Integration can be used in the construction of context-appropriate schemata. The key difference between the Construction Integration view of schematic structures and those outlined so far is that in the CI model such structures are constructed out of associative networks during processing and have no fixed, pre-existing structure. In this model, the formation of schemata is an integral part of comprehension, rather than something that occurs only when a relevant pre-formed

schema is lacking. As such, the context-sensitive generation of schematic structures within a network ensures their relevance. In addition to allowing the online formation of schematic structures, the Construction Integration model presents schemas, frames and scripts as concept nodes within a knowledge net which co-ordinate concepts that are part of that net. In turn, associated knowledge networks themselves form a skeleton schematic structure. Because the building of a network is constrained after the initial intake of textual information, it is inextricably linked to context, so the form of any schematic structures constructed during this process will differ depending on contextual factors.

### **2.2.2 Prototypes**

As I illustrated in my initial analysis, the judgements we make about characters throughout the reading process are essential to our characterisation of them. These judgements are often based on prototypes: central examples of category membership. Prototype theory has been suggested by many researchers (Rosch 1978 & 2009; Mervis 1980; Lakoff 1973 & 1987; Taylor 2003) as a way of understanding the categorisation of concepts. While traditional, or classical, categories were seen as having well-defined boundaries, with all members sharing relevant attributes and having equal membership, prototype or 'best example' theory views categories as having fuzzy boundaries and being centred around a prototypical core (Mervis 1980). Items are categorised by similarity to these core examples, rather than by set boundaries (Taylor 2003, Rosch 1978). Categories are structured by a combination of family resemblance and contrast with other categories, where the best examples share more attributes with other members of the same category, and fewer with members of others. This means that the core of a category is as different as possible from other category cores (Mervis, 1980).

Like schemata, categories have specific functions (Mervis, 1980). Consequently, any judgements of prototypicality will be dependent on the individual functional needs and goals of the categoriser within their cultural context (Rosch 1978). According to Rosch (1978), the perceived prototypicality of an item affects processing speeds. In an example of this, Molinaro et al (2016) have even found that the prototype-based knowledge we use to form stereotypes is processed differently to other semantic knowledge, and has more

weight than other types of linguistic cue. As a result, they suggest that 'stereotypical knowledge strongly influences language processing functions' (Molinaro et al, 2016: 38) and may even reduce the influence of syntactic cues in a text. This is particularly salient when making person- and character-based judgements.

Prototypes can be determined by statistical means (for example mean and mode item occurrences), explicitly taught cultural ideals or goals and exemplars (the first category member learned or last encountered) (Rosch 2009). Lakoff (1987) suggests a further source of prototype effects and basic level category identification - the Idealised Cognitive Model (ICM). ICMs outline socially or culturally based relationships between categories and can form clusters in which an item is characterised by several models and defined by relation to an ideal/prototypical case. They are a more general, abstracted form of knowledge organisation than schemata. For Lakoff, the meaning of a concept is not found in a single word, but in the ICM cued by that word. In addition, ICMs are often shared rather than individual; these can more accurately be labelled Idealised Cultural Cognitive Models (ICCMs). Freeman (2002) suggests that as all ICMs are culturally determined to some extent, the term ICCM is more salient to any such model. Thus, any judgements of prototypicality we make are culturally based.

### **Modelling categorisation**

For prototype theory to be applicable to the analysis of characterisation, we need some idea of how it can be modelled. This provides detail on a more granular level of the processes involved in Schneider's model of character categorisation (Figure 1.3). Culpeper (2001) observes that four stages are involved in forming impressions of people (real and fictional): initial categorisation, confirmatory categorisation (if incoming information fits the original category), recategorisation (if incoming information does not fit the initial category) and piecemeal integration (if incoming information fits no category). This can be detailed using Barsalou et al's (1998) model of how categorisation assumptions are used and modified for accuracy. This is shown in Figure 2.1. The retrieval of only the most available information means that only a subset of information will be activated at one time. Figure 2.2 shows how this process can be modelled for the extract used in my initial analysis.

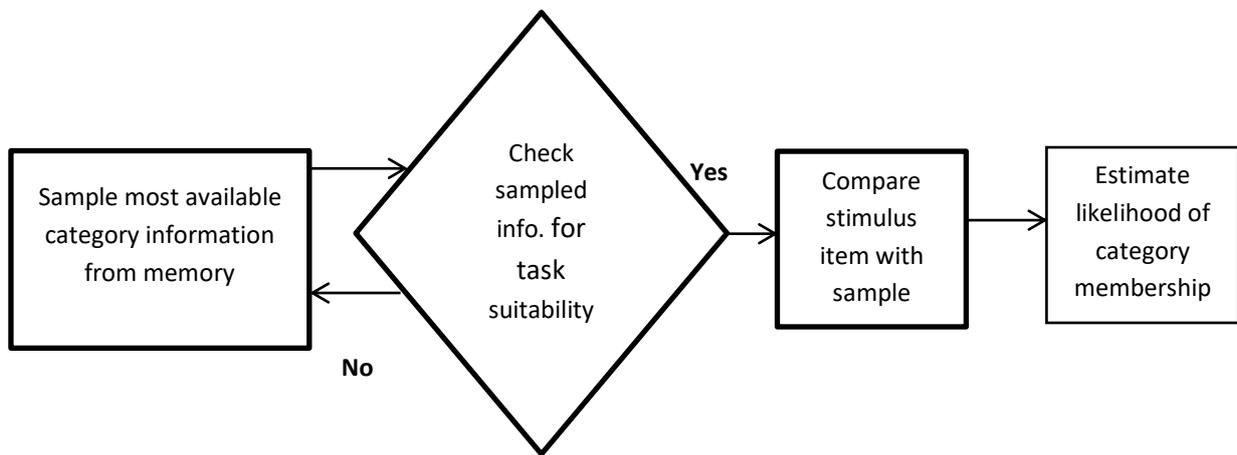


Figure 2.1: Categorisation assumptions (based on Barsalou et al, 1998).

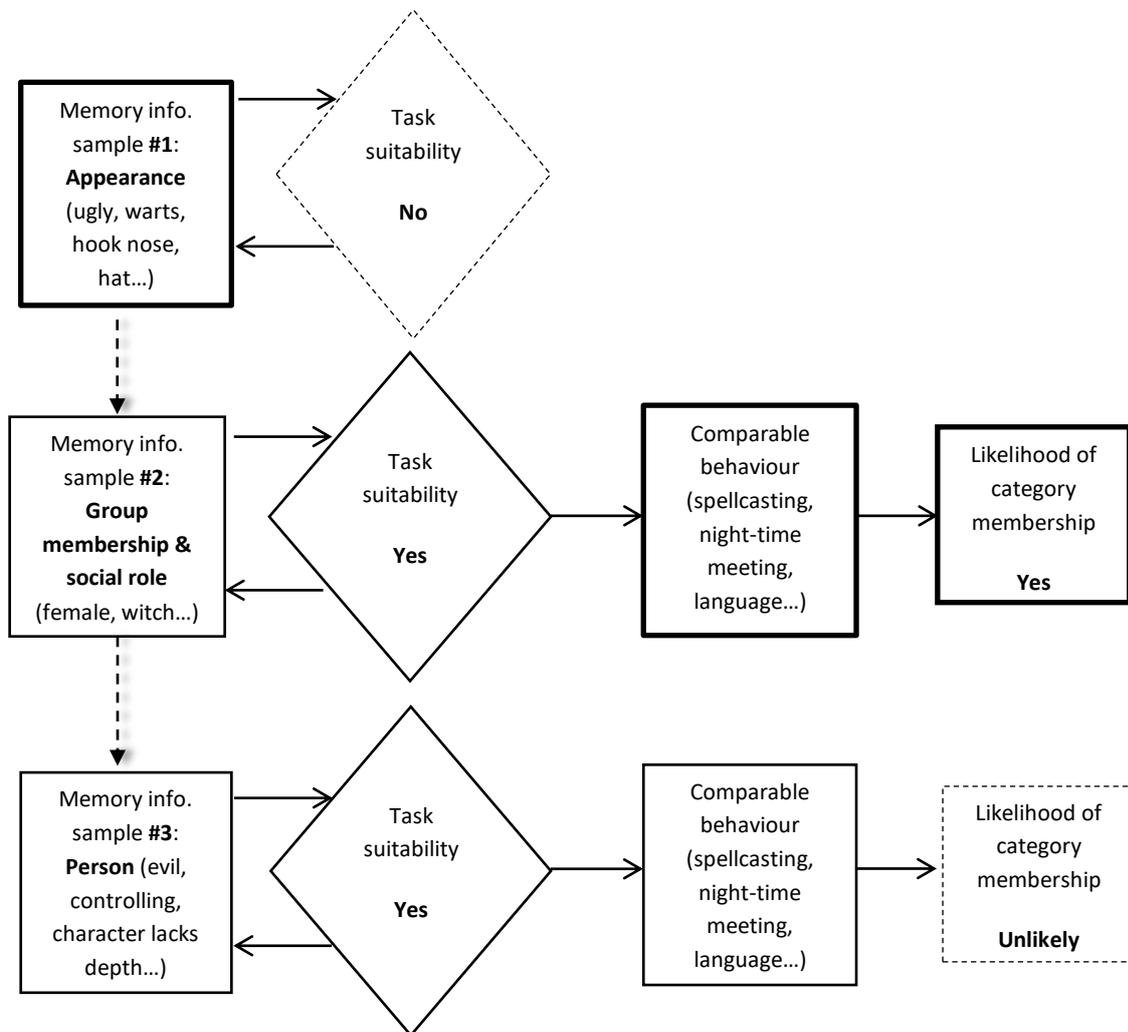


Figure 2.2: Categorisation assumptions for character in the *Wyrld Sisters* extract.

This process would be triggered by a stimulus item, as with any associated knowledge. This, and the first stage of sampling available information, is what Culpeper calls initial categorisation. If sampled information is not suitable, less available (and so less prototypical) examples need to be found. If recalled sample information and new input matches at the third stage, categorisation is confirmed at the end of the process illustrated. If not, recategorisation based on re-sampling of stored category information will be undertaken. The process of integrating or rejecting new information based on category requirements is also in line with the Construction Integration approach.

Barsalou et al (1998) offer a further way of modelling categorisation that is particularly relevant to characterisation, based on the learning that takes place after one or more encounters with the same person, or type of person. While the authors' example contains encounters with the same individual, there is no reason to think that the same model cannot be applied to types of individual, making it a more useful tool for describing categorisation and stereotype/prototype formation. For example, a reader may begin to form a stereotype of a witch character in the series of encounters in Figure 2.2, where elements I (individual), A (attribute) and V (value) combine to build a network for each encounter (E).

In this model, weighting is given in accordance with the number of repeated encounters with the same attributes and values across multiple encounters. For example, if all three characters encountered (I1, I2 & I3) are female (V11, the value of attribute A1 – gender), a reader may begin to form a stereotype that most witches are female. This is seen in the heavy weighting of A1 & V11 in diagram C. If witch 1 wears a pointed hat, but witch 2 wears a beret and witch 3 headscarf, clothing (specifically, headwear) becomes a heavily weighted attribute by after the final encounter, suggesting that there are certain items of clothing a reader is starting to expect a witch to wear. In this case, none of the specific value has extra weighting as they differ in type. Finally, if witches 2 & 3 both have a hooked nose, then the attribute facial features and the specific value of a hooked nose achieve a mid-level weighting by the final encounter. Although representing different people in this example, individuals 1, 2 & 3 have been weighted as repeated across all three encounters as they represent the same role, or type of person.

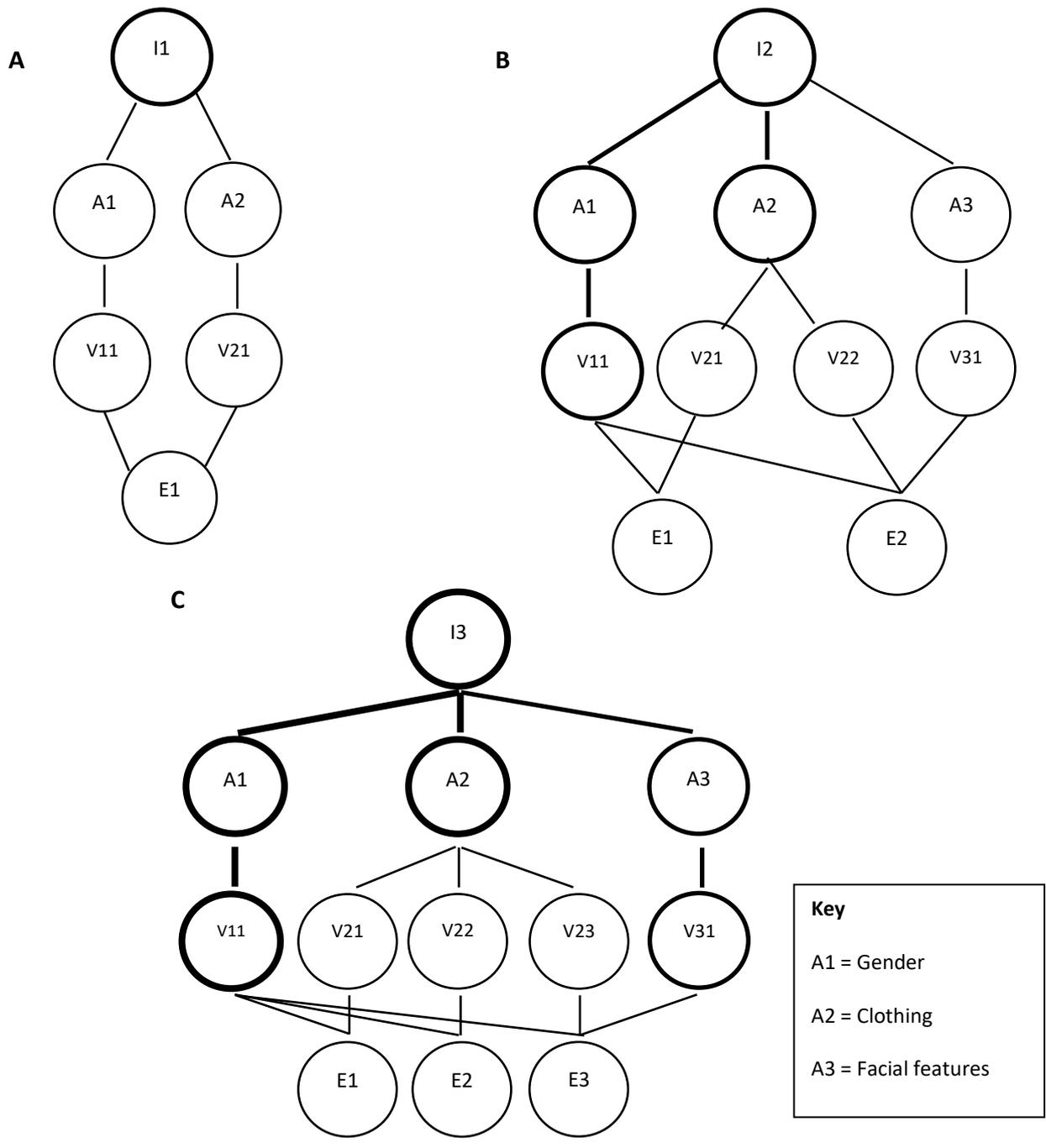


Figure 2.3: Evolution of knowledge net over 3 encounters (based on Barsalou et al, 1998)

### 2.2.3 Prototypes and schema theory

Prototype theory can enhance our understanding of how schematic structures operate. The constraints of schematic variables are governed by judgements of prototypicality in that certain types of information are more likely to fill certain slots, or to be activated, than

others (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977). Theories of categorisation can also help to explain the levels at which certain schemata operate, addressing the question of whether I have a play schema, a Shakespearean play schema with a *Macbeth* track running through it, or a specific schema for *Macbeth*. Although this question is also intricately tied to individual reader knowledge, prototype theory can provide some clarification. Rosch (1978) explains how scripts map to prototype theory, with a script at the superordinate hierarchy level and script elements at basic level. Nodes which form script elements thus map to prototypical objects. Taking this view, a Shakespearean play structure would operate at the superordinate levels, with elements related to specific plays at the basic level. Schank (1999) approaches this comparison from a broader angle, suggesting that our basic level script is usually a personal one, the prototypicality of which is then judged based on further occurrences of that script. For example, my personal script for a Shakespearean play is more likely to be *Romeo and Juliet* or *King Lear*, as I have seen more adaptations of these plays. Encountering instances of *Macbeth* in texts such as *Wyrd Sisters*, along with references to it in wider culture, may then alter my prototype of a Shakespearean play to *Macbeth* as the more common referent. Thus, far from being different cognitive processes, schema and prototype categorisation are simply different views of same complex cognitive structures (Tuggy, 2007).

However, some caution is needed when making this comparison. In the Construction Integration model, cues for the retrieval of schematic elements work unidirectionally. In other words, certain elements must be triggered in order for other elements to be associated with them and each element acts as a retrieval cue for the next. On the other hand, category-based knowledge retrieval is seen as multidirectional, with text items triggering prototypical categories and those categories creating expectations about the item, individual or text. In addition, Kintsch (1998) claims that category retrieval forms much smaller associative networks, as the initial processing cue quickly stagnates when new cues are not triggered by sequential activation as they are for schemata. For example, individual features of the stereotype of the witch suggested in Figure 1.2 may trigger associations with that type of person (a pointed hat, for instance). However, such associations are unlikely to trigger knowledge of other types of people, or of further knowledge related to witches, and so may be limited in associative scope.

## 2.3 Knowledge structures and reading literature

Having outlined the central role played by knowledge structures in all comprehension, it is also useful to highlight their role in the comprehension of language and narrative specifically. This allows for a more relevant application of theory when modelling the characterisation process. Therefore, this section outlines the idea of frames in narrative comprehension, and the concept of literature as a tool for schema deviation and refreshment.

### 2.3.1 Frames in linguistics

In addition to operating as general cognitive organisers, in the way that all schematic structures do, the concept of frames has been applied more specifically to the area of cognitive linguistics. Here, frames are used to explain how meaning is expressed by the words we read. Particularly influential here is Talmy (2000), who proposes that frames are used as reference points against which spatial information, in the form of figure and ground relations, is conceptualised. All language use, he argues, reflects such deictic relations. For example, *a fire gleamed among the dripping furze bushes* from the extract analysed in Chapter 1 places the salient, dependant figure of the fire against the less relevant, situation-independent ground of the bushes. The figure and the ground both exist within the implied reference frame of a FOREST.

The concepts of figure and ground and their relation to frames are also exploited as a way of explaining semantic meaning by Fillmore (2006) in Frame Semantics. Rather than focussing on spatial relations, Fillmore suggests that the figure represents a specific linguistic instance (a word or grammatical construction), while the ground refers to the frame of related meaning against which the figure is understood. Semantic frames include information about related words, meanings and possible grammatical constructions, situating specific instances of language use against schematic knowledge of the language as a whole. This idea of the significance of wider semantic meaning in language use is developed further in the concept of the Idiom Principle, discussed in Chapter 3. Because of their use of the deictic concepts of figure and ground within frames, both of these ideas are closely linked to the notion of embodied cognition, explored further in Chapter 3.

### **2.3.2 Frames in narrative**

Emmott (1999) explores the idea of contextual frames (sometimes simply referred to as frames) and their role in guiding the processing of character. Frames are 'a mental store of information about the current context, built up from the text itself and from inferences made from the text' (Emmott, 1999: 121). They include information about characters, location and time at specific points in the narrative. This is distinguished from representations of entity, character or location, which store information related to these drawn from throughout the text. Using the idea of frames in this more text-specific way, as opposed to Minsky's (1975) original use of the term as analogous to a stereotyped script, highlights the complexity of comprehending narrative. It also allows for a clearer understanding of the types of information carried in such schematic structures when comprehending character.

Frames are a useful tool in exploring characterisation as they allow episodic links between people and places to be made and stored; this is known as binding (Emmott, 1999: 123). A frame that becomes the focus of reader attention is known as a primed frame (Emmott, 1999: 123). Readers are aware of characters who are part of a primed frame regardless of whether they are mentioned in the text or not. This situational knowledge allows readers to infer information about characters and the settings in order to track contextual change. Emmott (1999) suggests that this can be done in several ways. Firstly, frame modification occurs due to explicit mention of the exit or entry of a character. When this happens in a primed frame, a character will then be primed in or out of the frame, with no other changes occurring to the frame details. An unprimed frame can also be altered in this way. For example, if a character is described as entering a primed frame, they are bound to this primed frame and, at the same time, inferred to have left the previous position in an unprimed one. This kind of frame modification is often retrospective, as the reader has to infer exit from one frame after the character enters another. Secondly, frame switching can occur. This involves the reader swapping the monitoring of one frame for a different one, often due to a change in setting or time. These switches can either be instantaneous, involving a sudden change of setting, or progressive, with the text describing the movement in space or time that causes the switch. Culpeper cites Emmott's contextual frame theory as a way of expanding his original work on the role of the situation model on characterisation,

which he claims did not sufficiently capture the complexity of character context and co-participation:

What this means is that in our understanding of a text we are constructing a mental representation not only of each character, but also a representation of each character's representation of co-present characters, and a representation of the co-present characters and their representation of the other characters, not to mention a representation of the time and space within which the characters appear, as well as a representation of what the writer of the text intends us to understand by the text' (Culpeper, 2009: 148).

Dancygier (2012) emphasises the importance of frames to the comprehension of all text and highlights the use of frames to process text at all levels:

Any text relies on pure reality-based knowledge of frames. Frames and patterns of frame evocation constitute a reality-based conceptual network which underlies any construal a narrative may come up with. Even a science fiction story has to rely to the same degree on accessible frames to understand how the imagined world questions the frames observed in reality (Dancygier, 2012: 201).

She suggests that language can evoke a frame for a specific story or character type. Significantly for this research, frames are often associated with specific lexical items. For example, dying is a shared, general concept, but *killing* and *murder* carry 'rich cultural framing' (Dancygier, 2012: 33). Consequently, an entire frame can be accessed when only one aspect is mentioned. This is known as frame metonymy, where one aspect of the frame is used to stand for/evoke the whole (Dancygier, 2012). The notion of constructional frames (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005) can extend the use of frames to grammatical meaning. The authors give the example of the present tense being used to predict without a conditional structure ('you miss one more meeting...'). These applications of frames to the processing of surface text are particularly useful for explaining the preservation of surface text during comprehension via the Idiom Principle.

### **2.3.3 Deviation, refreshment & reinforcement**

In their discussion of how notions of schematic knowledge can be specifically applied to literature (and therefore to the characterisation of fictional characters), Emmott et al explore the idea that 'schema theory is important not only because it explains a central

mechanism by which all reading takes place, but also because 'special effects' can be created by an author through the subversion, exploitation, alteration, or violation of a reader's schema knowledge' (Emmott et al, 2014: 268). This idea is based on Cook's (1994) notion of schema refreshment. Here, schema defamiliarisation and refreshment needs to occur at world (content), text (structure) and language (style) level. Literary texts, those 'removed from immediate practical and social functions' are best suited to affecting such change (Cook, 1994: 183), which Cook calls 'discourse deviation' ((Cook, 1994: 182). Other types of text are likely to be schema reinforcing or schema preserving. This idea incorporates the stylistic element missing from earlier schema theories (Stockwell, 2006). In doing so, it links the role of schemata in processing with the argument for the importance of surface features in processing literature and explains how

Literary texture often exploits everyday patterns and processes, foregrounds them, makes them appear odd, heightens readerly awareness so that we notice things we might not otherwise notice in a non-artistic setting. (Stockwell, 2006: 106).

Cook therefore sees much literature a schema refreshing. He does, however, point out that the reader plays an important role in this. Firstly, a reader's choice of schema for a particular text will influence the extent of schema change. Secondly, a reader may resist schematic change as it is too extreme, or because they simply do not desire it. Despite this caveat, Emmott et al (2014) counter Cook's idea of literariness and schema refreshment, pointing out that any schema refreshment would be dependent on the historical period of writing. Earlier literature, she claims tended to be more schema reinforcing. It is only in more modern texts that schema refreshment plays a part. Even when reading in modern contexts, schema refreshment may not always be desirable. Jeffries' (2001) notes the thrill of recognition a reader may feel when encountering familiar schematic patterns and features. The inclusion of parody allows writers like Pratchett to successfully highlight the recognition of familiar schemas, while questioning their applicability. In doing so, he plays schema recognition and schema refreshment against one another. Emmott et al (2014) note such use of schemata to examine intertextual links. Here, familiar schemata (for example story structure or character type) can be manipulated to trigger knowledge and expectation based on other texts. The more schema-consistent representations in a text are, the less noticeable they are. The retelling of tales, often a feature in Pratchett's work, often involves incongruity and interplay of intertextual and cultural knowledge.

A key aspect of schema use when applied to reading literary texts, Stockwell suggests, is the application of 'constitutive schemas' (Stockwell, 2002: 80) which govern the reading process. These can be likened to the control system outlined in Culpeper's model of character comprehension, as they outline the goals and strategies for reading a particular type of text. For example, they suggest the degree of alternativity (Stockwell, 2002: 80) from real-world people and events to expect when reading different texts. When applied to characterisation, constitutive schemata provide information about the type of character to expect in a text or setting, the roles and actions they may take, and for making judgements on the kinds of knowledge the characters themselves may have.

Schema theory is not only applicable to readers, but also to character inferences and assumptions (Emmott et al, 2014). Key to Pratchett's use of character is the play on both the reader's and characters' knowledge of real versus fictional people. Schematic and prototypical knowledge structures, and the way in which they are triggered by the text, allow insight into how 'textual cues may influence the balance of real people knowledge versus fictional character knowledge' (Culpeper, 2001: 36). As such, the modelling of knowledge structures facilitated by schema and prototype theory is essential to analysis of characterisation in Pratchett's work.

## **2.4 Cognitive models**

As Culpeper (2001) points out, a reader's overall idea of a character is held as a character model within the situation model. In this section, I present three approaches to representing such mental models in order to explore how they influence and interact with the processing of surface text during characterisation. Firstly, I explore some of the criticisms of the situation model in order to develop a more detailed understanding of how such models are formed. Secondly, I argue that visual models can offer a more accurate explanation of how readers model character. Finally, I discuss the idea of the cultural model as a way of emphasising the shared nature of the knowledge on which mental models are

based. All are applicable depending on the processing context, and it is likely that a mixture of all three is, in reality, what happens when a reader processes character.

#### **2.4.1 The Situation model**

As illustrated in my initial analysis (Figure 1.11), the situation model is seen as schematic in structure and combines information from the text with existing knowledge in order to make inferences about character. This process can be understood more clearly by analysing the knowledge structures at play in comprehension (section 2.2). However, the claim by some researchers that there is a lack of detail in Kintsch & Van Dijk's (1983) model regarding how situation models are constructed is still valid. Emmott suggests that the situation model is 'more of a theoretical justification of mental representation of entities and contexts' (Emmott, 1999: 109) than an explanation of how such a model is created. This is highlighted in Kintsch's (1998) comment that no rules can be stated for the formation of situation models as knowledge, inference and elaboration differ for each reader. This lack of knowledge regarding the construction of the situation model is addressed, firstly, by Graesser & Zwaan (1995), who suggest general types of inferences which are formed as part of the situation model (though they admit that their list is not exhaustive). These are superordinate goals, subordinate goals, causal antecedents, causal consequences, character emotion and character state (the latter is on-going and not related to plot as the other inferences are). These inference types are also divided into those that are made on-line during reading (superordinate goals, character emotions, causal antecedents) and those that are made after reading (subordinate goals, causal consequences and character state).

In addition to identifying the types of inference used in the formation of situation models, Zwaan et al (1998) suggest three distinguishable types, or stages, of situation model construction. Firstly, a reader creates a current model (the model currently under construction at any specific point in the reading process). This provides a spatio-temporal framework for text events. It is this type of model that is illustrated in Figure 1.11 in my initial analysis. Next, an integrated model is built, which links various smaller situation models formed during the reading process via features including linguistic reference, goals and temporal or spatial markers and inference. Such a model for the characters in *Wyrđ*

*Sisters* may be formed after several encounters with the witches. Finally, a complete model is constructed. Unlike the first two types of situation model, this is stored in long-term memory after all sentences in a given section of text are integrated, although it can still be updated and is not necessarily the final model. A complete model can be updated after formation (for example, after a reader thinks about a text). The authors expand this idea by suggesting that 'the long-term memory representation of the situation model is a network of nodes that code the events described in and inferred from the story' (Zwaan et al, 1998: 179). The strengths of links between these nodes will vary, they claim, based on the number of shared 'event indexes' (namely time, space, causation, motivation and protagonist). By drawing on the idea of a network of constructed knowledge as a basis for the situation model, the authors provide evidence of the applicability of the Construction Integration approach to modelling comprehension argued for in Section 2.1.

A final factor that is central to understanding how situation models are formed is the role of reader context and goals in the comprehension process. The significance of context in comprehension is developed by Zwann (1994), who expands the situation model with the idea of a separate pragmatic model. This represents the situation in which the text is processed (later called the communication level - Graesser et al, 1997), as opposed to the situation presented in the text. Inferences at this level include writer attitude and goals, narrator stance and appropriate reader reactions. In Kintsch & van Dijk's original model, Zwaan (1994) points out, such pragmatic concerns are part of the situation model. This creates few problems for non-fiction texts (they give the example of news articles) as the pragmatic information may be more similar to the situation. For example, we know (or at least assume we know) the purpose of writer and so can use an existing pragmatic model. However, in literature an author's purpose is often unclear and may need distinguishing from narrator and character purpose, and so pragmatic elements become more salient. For example, in the case of the initial analysis presented in Chapter 1, I have pragmatic knowledge of the satirical nature of much of Pratchett's characterisation. This inevitably leads me to an analysis that emphasises any clashes between character type and individual behaviour that a reader lacking this knowledge may overlook. The pragmatic model provides a bridge between textual events and the real world, and so is particularly useful when considering the comprehension of fictional characters.

The significance of reader goals in the comprehension process is also emphasised by Van den Broek et al (2001), who suggest that reader goals affect the degree of coherence required during processing. This influences the inferences made while reading and the combinations of knowledge and text input used to build mental models. In the case of my initial analysis, my analytical goal presumably leads to a deeper reading of the text, and therefore a more detailed character model, than someone who is reading for a less academic purpose. Zwaan expands on this idea with his development of the control system, which he calls a 'contextually enriched version of a schema' (Zwaan, 1993: 30), claiming that how we read a text depends on its genre and our goals. He uses the idea of prototypicality to explain how control systems are developed with prototypical examples of text types that can then be applied to peripheral examples. This provides a helpful explanation for how readers can usefully apply a control system containing knowledge of standard fantasy characters to a less-typical example like Pratchett.

#### **2.4.2 Visual models**

Kintsch reiterates the difficulty of modelling the construction of situation models, noted above, in later work, pointing out that 'even the form that a situation model takes is not fully constrained: Situation models may be imagery based, in which case the propositional formalism currently used by most models fails us' (Kintsch, 2013, 820). In this assertion, the proposed existence of a situation model echoes original work on the construction of mental models by Johnson-Laird (1980), who looks at whether they differ from propositional representations. Emmott (1999) cites this work as a possible solution to the shortcomings of the situation model. Johnson-Laird suggests that, rather than differing from mental models, propositional representations (the textbase, in van Dijk & Kintsch's original model) underlie mental models. For Johnson-Laird, the difference between the two forms of mental representation lies not in form or content, but in function. Mental models are analogous to the world and are the only way in which it can be comprehended, whereas propositions are an arbitrary representation of what is true or false as this truth value can only be ascertained in relation to a mental model of the world. A focus on propositions, he claims, merely obscures this reliance on mental models for comprehension.

This argument can be expanded using Sanford & Emmott's (2012) idea that understanding requires access not just to information represented in propositions, but to the information surrounding those propositions. They link this to the concept of mental models put forward by Johnson-Laird (1980) and use the following example as an illustration:

Andrew, Bill and Claire are sitting at a table. Andrew is to the left of Bill, and Bill is to the left of Claire. On which side of Claire is Andrew?

(Johnson Laird, 1983: 261, cited in Sanford & Emmott, 2012)

The key point here is that the answer is not in the propositional content of the text. If the table is round, then the answer is that Andrew is to the right of Claire. However, if everyone is sat along the same edge of a rectangular table, the answer is to the left. This provides convincing evidence that a visual model, of the scene is created in order to answer the question. In essence, this argument is in keeping with van Dijk & Kinstch's and Culpeper's model as they see propositions as merely detailing comprehension at a lower level than mental models. However, Johnson-Laird also argues that 'models can also be set up directly from perception' (Johnson-Laird, 1980: 108), requiring no propositional translation of the surface text. The theory of visual mental models is clear in its insistence that such models contain no reference to the language of the surface text. Once a model is constructed, whether via building a textbase or directly from perception, the language of the text is lost as it is no longer needed. This means that the model is more easily recalled than the text or textbase, as its construction is a more complex process.

### **2.4.3 Cultural models**

A final element of mental modelling that allows for a more complete picture of their construction from and interaction with the text is the cultural model (or cultural schema). These help to clarify how a mental model can incorporate both individual and shared knowledge. Strauss & Quinn observe that, based on shared life experiences, 'some understandings are widely shared among members of a social group, surprisingly resistant to change in the thinking of individuals, broadly applicable across different contexts in their lives, powerfully motivating sources of their action, and remarkably stable over succeeding generations' (Strauss & Quinn, 1997: 3). The authors view these cultural models as being constructed via a connectionist process, spreading activation across a network (as is theorised in the Construction Integration model). In this way, these cultural schemata

reconstruct past memories, determine cognition and meanings given to current experience, give expectations and fill in ambiguous or missing information. This provides a less rigid view of schemata in which the mental models they help to construct are shaped by context and individual knowledge, as well as the shared cultural knowledge they represent. By changing the patterns of interconnection between various units, these cultural models can be altered by contextual change and learning. However, Strauss & Quinn offer a word of warning regarding the extent to which we should view cultural models as a controller of comprehension: 'while it is true that our schemas may cause us to notice some things and overlook others and that schemas reproduce learned expectations when faced with missing or ambiguous information, there is no evidence that schemas, including cultural schemas, act as gatekeepers that bar perception of unexpected events' (Strauss & Quinn, 1997: 98). Despite this warning, cultural models are extremely useful for the analysis of characterisation as they can be used to explore the ways in which cultural norms and values are both reinforced and questioned by texts.

Also significant for this study is the role of language in revealing cultural models. According to Strauss & Quinn, cultural models are shared and reinforced in three main ways: they are expressed via metaphor, used for reasoning and/or represent shared hopes and expectations. In analyses of natural discourse about marriage, the authors point to the significance of recurring linguistic usage of metaphor and key words as these discourse features 'bear a heavy load of cultural knowledge' (Strauss & Quinn, 1997: 140). As with visual models, metaphor is thus a signifier of or trigger for cultural models. However, Strauss & Quinn are very clear that they view the role of metaphor differently to other thinkers in the field. Lakoff & Johnson's view of metaphor, they claim, 'understates the variability in the use of metaphors while overstating their role in constructing understanding' (Strauss & Quinn: 1997, 141). Unlike Lakoff & Johnson, who see metaphor as underpinning cultural models, Strauss & Quinn believe that cultural models underpin comprehension, and these are reflected by metaphor and language use (Kovecses, 1999). Kovecses attempts to resolve this chicken-and-egg argument as follows:

In Quinn's view, the basic experiences constitute cultural models [...] and the cultural models select the fitting conceptual metaphors. In my view, it is the basic experiences that select the fitting conceptual metaphors and the metaphors constitute the cultural models. (Kovecses, 1999: 185).

Kovecses justifies this by arguing that Quinn's view sees the language used to express concepts as literal, but that this is hard to argue systematically. This is because such a literal view of concept expression does not explain why we have a particular shared structure of a concept. Although the authors differ in their view of the basis for the comprehension process here, the outcome – the linguistic expression of culturally shared concepts – is the same. However, the basis for these processes is relevant when modelling comprehension, and it seems more valid to claim that shared metaphorical structures, based on embodied experience, underlie cultural models. If we claim the opposite, the only thing underlying cultural models is shared experience, which it would be more difficult to argue is shared and reinforced on such a significant scale.

## **2.5 Conceptual Blending**

Conceptual Blending (Turner, 1996; Fauconnier & Turner, 2003) is a highly creative process that is inherent to even the most basic comprehension. It is based on the concept of mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1994 & 2007) which represent different sets of information and are cross-mapped via the selection of common elements – these are known as input spaces. The common elements from each input space form a generic space, which then combines with new, inferred information to form a blended space. The blended space is then run and elaborated. In other words, 'conceptual blends are the mechanisms by which we can hold the properties of two spaces together, such as in metaphorical or allegorical thinking, scientific or political analogy, comparisons and imaginary domains involving characters from disparate areas' (Stockwell, 2002: 97-98).

The theory of Conceptual Blending is the only idea I introduce in this chapter that is not already present in some form in the original models of characterisation expanded in my revised model. Consequently, this section differs slightly from the rest of the chapter as it introduces, rather than expands, an element of cognitive theory. I have placed it here as it offers a helpful way of visualising more accurately the processes by which knowledge structures and mental models combine old and new information during the reading process.

### 2.5.1 Conceptual Blending, knowledge structures & mental models

In line with the nature of knowledge structures already outlined in this chapter, the input spaces which combine in a blend can be visualised as schematic in structure. Using the terminology of schema theory, we can then say that a blend is instantiated in order to fill the slots are filled with context-specific detail. According to blending theory, this assimilation of schemata is how we form more abstract or complex knowledge (Fauconnier & Turner 2003). An area of theory which highlights the schematic nature of the mental spaces within a cognitive blend is Construction Integration.

Coulson & Oakley (2001) present Conceptual Blending as simply an alternate term for Construction Integration, although research into the former provides a clearer way of modelling the process in detail. This approach is particularly helpful as it allows us to explain some of the complexity of the blending process. Specifically, blending involves the deactivation of previous connections made in specific mental spaces and the consequent reframing of these spaces (Fauconnier & Turner, 2003). This can be likened to the deactivation and reframing that takes place during the integration of activated knowledge with new input in the Construction Integration process. Blending can also shed light on the Construction Integration process, as it addresses the question of how exactly stimulus items combine to give integrated meaning. In addition, blending can help us to better visualise a Construction Integration network, as it is formed with a combination of input spaces and blended spaces. As Coulson & Oakley point out, 'blending involves the establishment of partial mappings between cognitive models in different spaces in the network, and the projection of conceptual structure from space to space' (Coulson & Oakley, 2001: 178). In other words, a Construction Integration network is simply a collection of mental spaces; blending is what happens between these spaces.

The concept of schematic frames is crucial to understanding how blending networks function, with input spaces often visualised as frame-based. Specifically, as Evans & Green (2006) suggest, there are four central types of blending network that can be identified from Fauconnier & Turner's original continuum of blending. These can be described in terms of frames. Firstly, simplex networks contain one frame-based input space that also structures the blend and one value-based input space (the authors give the example *John is the son of Mary*, which maps a family frame to name values). The second type, the mirror network,



## 2.5.2 Conceptual Blending and language

Fauconnier & Turner (2003) suggest that the goals of blending are broad-ranging and can include transfer of emotions, inference, counterfactual reasoning and conceptual change or creativity. However, it should be noted that my application of blending to the textual schemata involved in characterisation (as in Figure 2.3) - an approach that is carried forward throughout this research - differs from much of work on blending, which is focussed on metaphor. This is the first useful indicator of the linguistic application of Conceptual Blending theory. Unlike blending, metaphor is often viewed as having two domains (or mental spaces) – a source domain and a target domain (Grady et al, 1999). However, several theorists have applied the idea of blending to argue that even well-known metaphors can be analysed to reveal their hidden generic and blended spaces (including Turner, 1996 & Grady et al, 1999). They claim that we only see metaphor as mapping source directly to target because the target has become a default projection. The more novel the expression, he argues, the more noticeable the generic and blended space. He uses the examples ‘intellectual progress’ and ‘mental journey’ (Turner, 1996: 88), both linguistic expressions of the conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) THE MIND IS A BODY MOVING IN SPACE (conceptual metaphors will be discussed as part of the notion of embodiment in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3). The phrase ‘intellectual progress’ is a fairly common phrase which appears to map directly from source (bodily movement) to target (the mind) without the need for generic or blended spaces to elaborate complex meaning. The less common ‘mental journey’, Turner claims, may more readily reveal the complex spatial mapping involved in such underlying metaphors.

Dancygier (2012) takes an approach which is more in line with mine by linking the importance of frames for surface text comprehension (outlined in section 2.2.1) to the notion of blending. She explains that blending inputs can be mental spaces (which are related to specific text input) or frames (which are more stable). Inputs can be activated by verbal and non-verbal prompts. For Dancygier, the mental spaces of narratives (whether inputs or blends) are structured by grammatical choices: ‘the mental space complexity of narratives creates a number of cross-space links which can then be manipulated or differently construed through the use of any referential form - a pronoun, a name, or a role-descriptor. Reference in narratives is thus a matter of emerging complex referential

systems' (Dancygier, 2012:1 17). Grammatical choices such as tense can also affect the relationship between various mental spaces, and therefore the way a text is processed. The argument echoes Fauconnier's (1994) reference to space-building lexis, in which language acts as guide for, not carrier of, meaning. This process of blending is what builds mental models, in whatever form we choose to depict them. The emphasis of the importance of language in building mental spaces reflects the significance of the surface text in cognition, as is argued in Chapter 3.

## **2.6 Chapter conclusion**

Knowledge structures play a central role in text and character comprehension at all levels. They are cued by features of the surface text deemed significant by the individual reader, dependent on their context and goals. Therefore, as with all comprehension, no consistent answer can be given to the question of what triggers the application of knowledge structures when reading for character without further exploration of how surface text is processed. Regarding the form taken by schematic structures, this is most usefully viewed as a process of online construction in which networks of schematic elements are activated depending on contextual features such as purpose and prior knowledge. Prototypes, the second type of knowledge structure considered in this chapter, not only provide a method of modelling how characters are categorised to aid processing, but also contribute to our understanding of how schematic structures operate at various levels of specificity. Again, an understanding of how prototypical structures are cued in complex cognitive processes requires a more robust method of modelling the role of surface text in character comprehension.

The construction of mental models can also be viewed as a process of spreading activation across a network of nodes. This activation is, like the activation of knowledge structures, heavily dependent on individual reader preferences, knowledge and goals, which govern the format of the model constructed (specifically, the degree of visual and cultural information included). The interaction of knowledge structures and mental models during processing

can be illustrated using Conceptual Blending theory, in which schematic structures form input spaces from which more complex mental models, in the form of blended space, are extrapolated.

# 3. Revisions: remodelling comprehension

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## 3.1 Introduction

In the model of comprehension on which both Culpeper's and Schneider's models are based (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978), the authors acknowledge that some surface structure may be retained during processing. They call this the zero macro rule, which they refer to in later work as citation (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Culpeper also acknowledges the role of surface features within his model. This chapter explores which surface features may be deemed relevant for such cognitive retention, and how greater emphasis can be placed on the importance of surface text and stylistic features in a model of character comprehension. It does so by introducing several complementary theories to the character comprehension model. Firstly, I use the Idiom Principle (Sinclair, 1991 & 2004) to justify the primacy of surface text features in processing character and as a means by which the role of surface text in comprehension can be more accurately modelled. Specifically, this theory emphasises the idea that 'our knowledge of language is not only a knowledge of individual words, but of their predictable combinations, and of the cultural knowledge which these combinations often encapsulate' (Stubbs, 2001: 3). Therefore, knowledge triggered by chunks of surface text is essential to comprehension in general and characterisation specifically. Secondly, in order to reflect the central role of surface text in triggering associations with other texts and characters, the Narrative Interrelation Framework (Mason, 2019) outlines the significance of intertextuality to characterisation. Finally, the Rhetorical Processing Framework is suggested as a relevant theoretical framework with which to link these theories and gain a clearer understanding of their potential role in the comprehension of character.

## **3.2 The Idiom Principle**

As outlined in my introduction to the Rhetorical Processing Framework in Chapter 1, foregrounding is a useful starting point from which to argue for the importance of surface text features in processing text and character. The significance of foregrounding as an element of text processing in stylistic theory and analysis reflects the importance of surface text. Consequently, any model of comprehension in general, and characterisation specifically, must take into account the style of the surface text and its impact on processing. In other words, it must explain how the role of surface text in comprehension can be modelled. Leech & Short's (2013) emphasis on the role of figures of speech in foregrounding features of text provides a lead here, as it highlights the role of recognisable phrases and chunks of text in processing. This can be explained in more detail using the Idiom Principle to examine the way in which language is processed as more than mere lexical and syntactic component parts. The Idiom Principle argues that language is processed in units, rather than as individual lexical items and grammatical structures. In doing so, it provides a more accurate way of modelling the role of surface text in the characterisation process. The theory was introduced by Sinclair (1991, 2004), and has been developed and consolidated with ideas of the mental lexicon (Turner, 2012), lexical priming (Hoey, 2005) and pattern grammar (Hunston & Francis 2000). These approaches are outlined below in order to give a complete picture of the Idiom Principle and its applications.

### **3.2.1 Sinclair's units of meaning**

Sinclair's (2004) discussion of units of meaning suggests that meaning is not held within a single lexical item but in commonly occurring chunks of language. He challenges the view that the meaning of words can be easily established by their definition, in isolation from their syntactic and semantic role, pointing out that

The decoupling of lexis and syntax leads to the creation of a rubbish dump that is called 'idiom', 'phraseology', 'collocation' and the like. If two systems are held to vary independently of each other, then any instance of one constraining the other will be consigned to a limbo for odd features, occasional observations, usage notes, etc. But if evidence accumulates to suggest that a substantial proportion of the language description is of this mixed nature, then the original decoupling must be called into question. (Sinclair, 1991: 104)

Sinclair provides evidence in support of the interdependent relationship between word meaning and syntax using corpus analysis. His ideas question the validity of models that view words as having clear propositional content that forms a knowledge base (as van Dijk & Kintsch's original model of comprehension does, and which Culpeper's model reflects in its adoption of the same levels of comprehension). When considering units of meaning, the message which may be encoded propositionally is only part of the overall meaning of a text. Sinclair argues that to fully understand a text, information relevant only to the current interaction needs to be discounted, whilst inferential information needs to be added. Thus 'the propositional content of an utterance may on occasion be of minor interest compared with other aspects of delivery of the utterance - its relation to the previous utterance, for example, or its prospection of the next one' (Sinclair, 2004: 158).

Most words, Sinclair (2004) claims, gain meaning from the structures in which they appear (Sinclair labels these citation forms). Specifically, lexical meaning is derived from the words with which an item appears (collocation), the grammatical structures of which they are part (colligation) and their associated meanings (semantic prosody). As a result, lexical and syntactic patterns are often inseparable. Partington (2004) provides clarification on the latter of these terms, pointing out that semantic prosody applies to units of meaning which frequently co-occur with items that carry a particular evaluative meaning. In addition to semantic prosody, he uses the term semantic preference to refer to units that share non-attitudinal semantic links. This is closer to lexical collocation, Partington claims, and simply denotes words that often appear with those from the same semantic set. Semantic prosody is therefore a more abstract term, and items may achieve additional meaning through showing cumulative preferences for semantic sets which themselves contain higher levels of words with a particular type of prosody (often, but not always, positive or negative). He summarises his ideas:

semantic preference is a "narrower" phenomenon – relating the node item to another item from a particular semantic set – than prosody which can affect wider stretches of text. [analysis reveals] how they interact: the former, preference, contributes powerfully to building the latter, prosody; conversely, the latter dictates the general environment which constrains the preferential choices of the node item (Partington, 2004: 151).

Finally, Partington sees prosody as a cline, with some units of meaning having stronger prosody than others.

The role of colligation here echoes arguments for the primacy of surface syntax in comprehension in general and as a basis for propositional content (Perfetti & Britt's, 2012). However, Sinclair takes this idea further, rejecting the usefulness of parsing as a primary method of linguistic comprehension with his suggestion that 'the realisation of meaning is much more explicit than is suggested by abstract grammars' (Sinclair, 1991, 108). He uses the term 'open choice principle' to refer to approaches like this in which grammaticality is the only factor in language use and comprehension. Conversely, the 'Idiom Principle' refers to Sinclair's own approach of integrated and dependent word meaning in which 'a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments' (Sinclair, 1991: 109). The conclusion is that it is not useful to use grammatical analysis for sections of a text which seem to be constructed on the Idiom Principle. The likely scenario, he claims, is that readers default to the Idiom Principle, only switching to rule-based analysis when necessary (for example in cases of ambiguity).

#### **'Not to mention'**

As an example of the Idiom Principle, consider the phrase *not to mention*. Data from the British National Corpus (BNC) shows 4457 instances of the word *mention*, in which mention is used as a verb 285 times (6.4% of the total number of uses). Of these 285 instances, 35 collocate with *not* in the two slots before the node word mention (12.3% of the total number of verb uses). This suggests that use of *mention* as a verb is relatively infrequent in the corpus as a whole. However, its collocation as a verb with *not* in the two slots before the node word *mention* is more statistically significant, based on an MI score of 3.72 (McIntyre & Walker, 2019, note that an MI score of more than 3 points to statistical significance). The only items which collocates more frequently in the search are *no* and *to*. I discount the first of these because all 48 instances of *no* are found in some form of the phrase *no mention is made*, in which *mention* is not performing the role of the verb within the sentence. There are 42 instances of *to*, 28 of which are in the structure *not to mention*, giving further support to the collocation of these items. In terms of colligation, 25 of the 28 instances of *not to mention* are followed by a gerund. Two examples of this prevalent colligation from the BNC data are given below.

1. not to mention behaving like a bear with a sore head.
2. not to mention being downright uncomfortable.

These examples also illustrate the semantic prosody suggested by the corpus data: 19 of the examples feature in an obviously negative context, only 8 in a positive context and 1 neutral. This prosody is a product of the wider context of the phrase, rather than being built on a particular semantic preference, as prosody often is. In the BNC data for this particular example, no notable semantic preference exists between items either before or after the phrase in question.

Sinclair insists that there is no joining together of the open choice and Idiom Principles - they are oppositional. The phrase not to mention can also be used to illustrate this opposition. When analysed using the Idiom Principle, the phrase adds emphasis to additional information, as in the following example from the BNC corpus:

3. To rebuild after the devastation, will require huge construction projects. Not to mention re-equipping their armed forces.

However, when a very different meaning is achieved when the phrase is analysed grammatically, prohibiting someone from speaking about a subject:

4. The only thing you have to be careful not to mention is...

Both meanings are equally valid, although the idiomatic use is clearly more common than the grammatical in this particular data set. What is significant to Sinclair's theory is the idea that both meanings cannot be applied to the phrase at the same time. Either the idiomatic or the grammatical meaning is understood, but not both simultaneously. The idiomatic meaning clearly illustrates Sinclair's claim that word meaning is often delexicalised and indeterminate, as it is difficult to pinpoint where in the comprehension process an accurate meaning is arrived at. In other words, the idiomatic use of *not to mention* is, in fact, opposite in meaning to the literal. The latter forbids speaking of something, whereas the former actively emphasises it. The meaning of the lexical item *mention* (defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'to refer to briefly and without entering into detail; to remark upon incidentally') is therefore lost in the idiomatic use.

A key distinction between the open choice and Idiom principles for Sinclair is that the open choice principle allows for variation within a phrase, whereas the Idiom Principle does not. This is seen in the example of *I must say* given by Hunston and Francis (2000). Similarly, the grammatical meaning of *not to mention* allows for variation (other possible structures include *not to speak of*, *can't mention*), whereas the idiomatic use is not flexible in this way (or at least should not be, according to Sinclair). In other words, *not to speak about* would not be recognised as the idiomatic, emphatic use (although *not to speak of* might, as I discuss later). The variability permitted when using the literal meaning of *not to mention* can be illustrated by an additional search of corpus data using a common synonym for the verb *mention* given in the OED ('speak'). In order to gain an overview of this phrase in use, I have taken the first 100 of 557 results as a random sample. Of these, 71 used the phrasal structure *not ... speak ...* in the literal sense. Thus the verb in the phrase *not to mention* has at least one variable when understood via the open choice principle. Of these 71 instances, only 12 use the extract phrase *not to speak of*, with variability seen in the second and fourth items of the phrase. Second item options include *even*, *often*, *just*, *usually*, *justifiably*, *always* and *simply*. Fourth item options include *so*, *to*, *at*, *without*, *with French*, *their minds*, *standing up*, *for* and *because*. Predictably, the items which occupy the second slot in the structure are usually adverbs. The fourth slot items, however, show a variety of grammatical structures in which the basic phrase structure may appear. Further examples of open-choice variability can be seen in a BNC search of the collocation *to mention*. Here, 26 of the first 100 results feature the phrase *not to mention*. Options for the variable first slot include *like*, *want*, *need*, *going*, *moment*, *forget*, *ought* and *points*. None of these are used in the idiomatic context, providing support for Sinclair's notion of the oppositional nature of grammar- and idiom-based language use and comprehension.

### **3.2.2 The mental lexicon**

The BNC results for *not to speak of*, discussed above, do not all support the strict Idiom Principle view that such phrases are not variable. Specifically, 28 of the examples analysed are used in the idiomatic sense of *not to mention*, suggesting that idiomatic phrases may allow more variation than at first thought. To justify such results and still use the Idiom Principle, the theory needs to be expanded. This is done by Taylor (2012). Taylor argues that

idioms, far from being merely fixed expressions (of which there are relatively few), can be subject to syntactic and even lexical variation. This allows for more linguistic flexibility than many definitions of the idiomatic would allow, and so expands the concept of units of meaning. The 28 uses of *not to speak of* as an idiomatic emphasis for new information support this view. Taylor himself uses idioms that refer to being frightened as an example of such flexibility. The structure is commonly *to V the N out of someone*, but these verb and noun slots can be filled by a variety of lexical items. For example, *scare the life...*, *scare the shit...*, *frighten the life...* are all common usages in the BNC corpus (Taylor, 2012: 77). Such structures are best understood as schematic in nature, having a generic structure on which to build varying content. The concept of schemata is explored fully in Chapter 5.

Like Sinclair, Taylor explores the notion that meaning is constructed from pre-encountered units, with parsing rules used only when needed. Taylor also takes the idea of the primacy of collocation further, claiming that ‘there is abundant evidence that speakers know, at least implicitly, the relative frequencies of the words, constructions, collocations, and all other elements of their language [...] it might even be argued that judgements of grammaticality reflect knowledge of language statistics’ (2012, 148). In addition, he suggests that units of language are learnt and stored at all levels of production and comprehension (phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic). He summarises his ideas as follows:

Knowledge of a language can be conceptualized in terms of the metaphor of the mental corpus. Language is acquired by a strictly bottom-up process, through exposure to usage events, and knowing a language consists, not in knowing a battery of rules, but in accumulated memories of previously encountered utterances and the generalizations which arise from them (Taylor, 2012: 263).

In other words, we learn language by encountering examples of it in use. Rules are then generalised once enough instances of a particular use have been acquired. This creates what Taylor labels a mental lexicon. Crucially, language in this mental corpus metaphor differs from that of a constructed corpus in three ways. These are content (context is recorded in the mental corpus), format (the mental corpus is envisaged as a hypertext, rather than a linear structure as with a standard corpus) and temporal dynamics (the mental corpus is constantly updated based on observed language use and older/unused entries may be lost). This idea allows for the inclusion of contextual and semantic factors in language

comprehension at all levels, which it has so far been difficult to illustrate using the models of comprehension considered in this research.

The crucial element of Taylor's theory is that it integrates the Idiom Principle with the everyday, often creative, use of language. He suggests that 'quite a lot of our linguistic activity consists in the "stitching together" of "bits of sentences" that we have learned' and that 'novel sentences are created by filling slots made available by phrasal or sentence patterns that we have picked up' (2012: 22). This is contrary to the view taken in many traditional models of language use (those which, to use Sinclair's term, use the open-choice principle). Taylor uses this idea to argue for the centrality of the idiomatic to everyday language, claiming that

The idiomatic reaches into every nook and cranny of a language, so much so that it might not be outrageous to claim that just about everything in a language is idiomatic to a greater or lesser degree and in some way or other. If anything, it is the fully regular, the fully compositional, that is exceptional. (Taylor, 2012: 72)

### **3.2.3 Lexical priming**

Like Sinclair and Taylor, Hoey also emphasises the 'pervasiveness of collocation' (Hoey, 2005: 1). He claims that this can only be explained using the notion of lexical priming. Specifically, we acquire words through encounters with their use, which also include the contexts in which those words are used and the words with which they frequently co-occur (an echo here of the relation between word and context outlined on Fillmore's Frame Semantics, discussed in Chapter 2). Priming is strengthened or weakened with each use of a word. Crucial to this theory is the idea that all language is primed. In addition to being primed to occur with other words via collocation and with grammatical roles and functions via colligation, as in the other theories discussed here, words are also primed for semantic associations. Specifically, Partington (2004) points out that it is through lexical priming that units achieve semantic prosody and preference. Priming also occurs regarding pragmatic function. Hoey (2007) calls these pragmatic associations and gives the example of *reason* being associated with the pragmatic function of denial (as in *there is no reason to suppose* – Hoey, 2007: 28). In my *not to mention* example, we can say that *mention* is pragmatically associated with giving additional information. Finally, the Idiom Principle is extended further

in the notion of priming to include type of discourse (textual collocations) and position within text (textual colligation) (Hoey, 2005: 13). In other words, 'language users have a set of mental rules derived from the priming process, alongside or integrated with the mental lexicon, of how items should collocate.' (Hoey, 2005: 132). Hoey (2007) also talks of negative primings, in which certain phrases are observed to never co-occur with certain items, structures or meanings.

To extend the example analysis used in this chapter, priming can be illustrated using the phrase *never mind*, which can be used as a less formal alternative to the idiomatic use of the *not to mention*. 1162 BNC results for *mind* used as a verb with *never* in the slot directly before it provide evidence that the two items are primed to collocate with each other for most people. This is an important caveat, as Hoey is careful to point out that corpora can only even be used to suggest likely primings: 'a corpus, even a general corpus, can only point indirectly to the relative likelihood of a language user being primed in a particular way' (Hoey, 2007: 9). This is because primings belong to people, not to words and phrases. Of the first 100 concordance lines in the BNC data, 14 use *never mind* in the idiomatic sense of *not to mention*. For example:

5. Indeed it is remarkable how little the question of any revision of a hedonist philosophy of life has even been raised, never mind taken seriously and discussed.

Consequently, *never mind* can be said to be likely to be primed for some, perhaps most, people in this idiomatic sense. It is notable that many more of these examples feature in spoken or informal written data such as emails, whereas the examples of *not to mention* are far more commonly from written prose and articles. This supports my earlier assertion that *never mind* is primed for less formal contexts when used synonymously with *not to mention*.

Hoey refers to changes in priming and language use as drift. In this context, *never mind* to add emphasis to further examples, as in example 5 above, would be seen as a relatively traditional use. A drift in priming means that *never mind* is now often used less formally in a dismissive or derogatory way either to disregard what has been said or to signal that the speaker thinks the hearer is too stupid to understand further explanation. Urbanfiction.com gives the following example:

6. Desi: Hey, do you know the real meaning of nevermind is?  
Jesse: What?  
Desi: You were too stupid to understand me the first time, so I gave up trying.  
Jesse: What?  
Desi: \*sigh\* Nevermind

There are fewer examples of this usage in the BNC data. The reason for this is likely to be that this is a newer use of the phrase, most people's primings having drifted from more traditional uses. The BNC does not contain data from the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so is less likely to feature more modern usages. What the BNC data can support regarding this drift in usage is that *never mind* colligates with discourse markers and conjunctions (*well, oh, but*) that signal pause or concession. This could also be framed as a semantic association with these discourse markers suggesting frustration or disappointment. For example:

7. I wasn't too happy about that, but never mind.  
8. Got that? Well, never mind.

This semantic association is exaggerated in example 6, above, with a sigh. The prosody, or pragmatic association, of the phrase can thus be said to be largely negative, as it frequently performs a dismissive function (either of an addressee's understanding of a situation or concept, or of the speaker's feelings regarding a situation). Hoey also suggests that priming can also be cracked with education. Such cracks are mended by either accepting a new priming or retaining the old, or they are healed by associating different priming to different situations (for example, a formal and informal use for the same word). An example would be a student learning that *never mind* in its most modern, dismissive use, is not appropriate for formal discussions. Finally, in addition to the initial priming of one item with another, an already primed item can also be primed. This is referred to as nesting. Nesting allows collocations to become part of longer phrases with minimal cognitive effort (Hoey, 2005). A salient example here is the use of *never mind* in the titles *Never mind the bollocks* and *Never mind the buzzcocks* (the latter is a reference by the title of a television quiz show to the former, an album by the Sex Pistols). This example is explored in full in the next section.

### 3.2.4 Pattern grammar

Hunston & Francis (2000) provide the final development of Sinclair's ideas with their theory of pattern grammar. As with the theories outlined above, pattern grammar looks at the mutual dependence of lexis and grammar, claiming that 'all words can be described in terms of their patterns' (Hunston & Francis, 2000: 3). Unlike the other developments of the Idiom Principle discussed in this chapter, the focus of pattern grammar is on Sinclair's notion of colligation. The authors summarise their approach as follows:

A pattern is a phraseology frequently associated with (a sense of) a word, particularly in terms of the prepositions, groups, and clauses that follow the word. Patterns and lexis are mutually dependent, in that each pattern occurs with a restricted set of lexical items, and each lexical item occurs with a restricted set of patterns. In addition, patterns are closely associated with meaning, firstly because in many cases different senses of words are distinguished by their typical occurrence in different patterns; and secondly because words which share a given pattern tend also to share an aspect of meaning. (Hunston & Francis, 2000: 4)

While focussing on colligation may seem like a narrow scope, the authors claim that such an approach attempts to describe the whole language. Lexical phrases, they argue, only account for part of the language. They realign their theory with Sinclair's ideas by pointing out that 'it is not patterns and words that are selected, but phrases, or phraseologies, that have both a single form and a single meaning. The outcome of this view is the Idiom Principle.' (Hunston & Francis, 2000:21). The procedure for identifying patterns uses corpus data. Concordance lines are sorted into alphabetical order (using the words to the right or the left, depending on the word under examination), allowing patterns to be more clearly visible. Using analogy, language users may replace a word in a pattern with one of similar meaning, even though the replacement word is not usually associated with the pattern being used. In this way, variability and novel use within this system is also accounted for. This leads to a set of words with fuzzy boundaries being associated with any given pattern (Hunston & Francis, 2000), and aligns the theory with Taylor's expanded and more creative notion of the Idiom Principle. Finally, the authors describe semantic prosody in terms of pattern grammar, pointing out that the 'tension between the meaning of the pattern and the meaning of the word used with the pattern can be exploited to imply meaning not explicitly stated' (Hunston & Francis, 2000: 108).

As noted above, the phrase *never mind the + noun* illustrates an instance in which *never mind* has undergone nested priming. This example can also be described in terms of pattern grammar. The final word in the phrase is subject to variation, but within the grammatical boundaries of the phrase (it must be a noun). Corpus data is not as helpful in analysing this particular use of the phrase *never mind*, as relevant examples are usually titles or names of products. Therefore, they are unlikely to be found contextualised within concordance lines with any frequency, even within a more up-to-date corpus than the BNC (such as the NOW corpus). However, the prominence of this pattern in modern culture can be seen using an internet search. When the phrase *never mind* is typed into Google, the examples *Never mind the bollocks* and *Never mind the buzzcocks* are the first two options given. This suggests that, at least in the contexts that inform popular internet searches, the phrase colligates strongly with *the + noun*. The nested nature of this pattern is confirmed when a search for *never mind the...* is performed. Again, *buzzcocks* and *bollocks* are the top two results. After further results related to these two items, *never mind the danger* and *never mind the bike shops* are the next suggestions. These are, respectively, the names of a local sports-based quiz show in Norwich and an online bike retailer. Regardless of the products these names represent, the choice of name for all three provides evidence of the pattern grammar associated with *never mind* that stems from its original use as an album title. As a punk album, it automatically carries semantic and pragmatic preferences of rebellion and popular culture. This web of meaning and use can be accessed by any products that use the pattern *never mind the + noun*, supporting Hunston and Francis's claim that patterns carry implicit meaning.

### **3.2.5 Knowledge structures & the Idiom Principle**

Knowledge structures, outlined in Chapter 2 (section 2.2) as central to the comprehension process at higher levels when integrating knowledge and text to build mental models, also play an important role within the Idiom Principle. As Partington (1998) notes, schemata are essential in explaining how the Idiom Principle works:

A schema is the form component of a "form-meaning pairing" which shares some of the qualities of a fixed phrase but which also contains variable parts capable of capturing context dependent information (Partington, 1998: 23).

In other words, a unit of meaning is fixed (to varying extents) and has slots which can be filled by various types of word. Therefore, a unit of meaning can be understood as a type of schema. Such a schema is what is referred to in Chapter 3 of this research as Pattern Grammar. He goes on to add that 'every lexical item in the language has its own individual and unique pattern of behaviour' (Partington, 1998: 27). This idea is expanded by Taylor (2012), who points out that the idiomaticity of expressions is not found in specific words, but in their adherence to a general constructional schema. When viewed in this way, he claims, Sinclair's definition of 'idiom' as 'a group of two or more words which are chosen together in order to produce a specific meaning or effects in speech or writing' (Sinclair, 1991: 172, in Taylor 2012) is too narrow. As the idea of pattern grammar suggests, a unit of meaning may be less reliant on lexical choice and more so on the appropriateness of a syntactic configuration.

Taylor (2012) also looks to Langacker's work on Cognitive Grammar to support his ideas about the schematicity of language. The rules of language can be described in terms of schema, where rules take the form of "abstract templates obtained by reinforcing the commonality inherent in a set of instances" (Langacker, 2008: 23). A linguistic structure can be placed on a cline running from wholly schematic, through partially instantiated, to highly specific. As an example, he gives 'V, X, in the N' as fully schematic, 'kick X in the shin' as partially instantiated and 'kick my pet giraffe in the shin' as highly specific. In Cognitive Grammar, such structures are known as constructions. Langacker suggests that large networks of schemata make up the rules and restrictions of language. These networks are formed through abstraction, where patterns are learned via previous experience, and the opposing process of conceptual integration, where correspondence between patterns build new concepts. Taylor (2012) points out that what is key to this theory is that language is not made up of rules, but rather of an inventory, or network, of constructions. These are related to each other via scheme-instantiation relationship and become strengthened, or entrenched, over multiple encounters. Such a view of language use and processing is in line with the Idiom Principle, as it suggests that language is accessed and processed in multi-word units, whether schematically or as specific instances. This is reflected in Taylor's reply to claims that such a model cannot dispense with rules entirely, 'the idea that constructions

are no more than the output of rules operating over the lexicon cannot be maintained. It's constructions all the way up' (Taylor, 2012: 145).

Finally, the Idiom Principle can help to provide further clarification regarding the form of linguistic triggers in schema activation. Key to this the concept of invariance. At a linguistic level, Van Dijk (1980) claims that lexis and reference which is semantically invariant in the surface text would act as a cue for prior knowledge as this would be perceived as topic-salient. This is due to the fact that semantic invariance is responsible for discourse coherence at the textbase level, ultimately building the gist of a text. Although van Dijk presents this idea in terms of coherence between propositions, there is no reason to think that this is not equally true of semantic invariance between units of meaning. Following this argument would allow a combination of single lexical items, as opposed to single words, to trigger for schema activation. This has implications for the nature and identifiability of schema-formation triggers as meaning units and invariance patterns will reoccur less frequently than the number of words that may be identified as possible cues. Consequently, rather than a situation in which almost any lexical item could be argued to be a schematic cue given the right context, viewing schemata-formation as triggered by meaningful units and repeated patterns gives a firmer grasp on what activates the organisation and application of existing knowledge.

### **3.3 Intertextuality**

Another area of theory which is essential to an accurate understanding of the characterisation process and how it can be robustly modelled is intertextuality. As Allen (2011) observes, reading is increasingly seen as a process of tracing textual relations and moving between texts, as meaning is held within a web of 'systems, codes, and traditions established by previous works of literature [...] of other art forms and of culture in general' (Allen, 2011: 1). In other words, rather than simply focusing on one story and one set of characters, text comprehension requires us to make use of a vast network of cultural knowledge, which varies from reader to reader. Links to this knowledge in the text are

referred to as intertextual references. These references play a significant role in prompting the reader to model, and question their models of, these characters, as 'intertextuality functions as an important frame of reference which helps the interpretation of a text' (Wales, 2011: 236) and, as a central feature of text, its characters.

### **3.3.1 An initial argument for intertextuality**

The units of meaning inherent in arguments for the Idiom Principle are often described as formulaic language. This is significant when we consider Gibbs' argument that one of the main purposes of using formulaic language in narrative text is to provide links to related contexts by using reference to or quotation from other sources (Gibbs, 2007). This is known as intertextuality, and its pervasiveness in our comprehension of text can be easily illustrated using examples from the language analysis in this chapter and my initial analysis from Chapter 1.

As discussed in the previous section, The Sex Pistols album title *Never mind the bollocks* has spawned several similar names, including the quiz show *Never mind the buzzcocks*. The Idiom Principle can be used to explore the common collocations, primings and patterns used to recognise these units as related in form. We can also begin to understand the relations of meaning between these names using semantic and pragmatic associations. However, these connections in meaning can only be fully understood using the notion of intertextuality (I am using the idea of a 'text' here in its broadest sense as an artefact – in this case an album – which contains spoken and written text elements). Specifically, the ideas and attitudes embodied in the original text are referenced in the adaptations of its name. These ideas are not contained within the name itself, but in the wider web of meaning made up of all 'textual' elements, including the linguistic style of the songs themselves and any album cover text, and cultural links associated with the album and the band. By referencing the album title, its successors reference far more than linguistic links and patterns.

The initial analysis of *Wyrd Sisters* in Chapter 1 provides a more detailed example of intertextuality at work in characterisation. In this analysis, I discuss the significance of *eldritch shriek* and the characterisation that the reader may base on this element of the surface text. I did not, however, include a discussion of *cauldron bubbles*, despite its

significance to my characterisation process. To me, *cauldron bubbles* does not seem intuitively unusual. On the contrary, I recognise it as a clear sign that these characters may be witches. However, my intuitions are not supported by using corpus analysis. Of the 153 instances of *cauldron* in BNC, only 5 collocate with *bubble* in any form (all *bubbling*). Four of these instances are an adjective + noun structure (*bubbling cauldron*), with only one using the noun + verb of the text example. There are also 10 instances of semantically related adjectives (*boiling, steaming, suppurating, seething, foaming*). Of the overall instances of *cauldron*, 54 appear in the fiction section of the corpus. Three of *bubbling* appear in this section, along with six of the semantically related adjectives. This indicates no strong literary association with the collocates used, and a comparatively weak association with fiction for *cauldron* itself. It is clear that the analytical tools suggested in Culpeper's model do not provide a way to discuss the significance of this meaning unit at the level of surface text, even if we also include the arguments of the Idiom Principle that text should be viewed as a series of units rather than words (as corpus analysis is often used to find patterns and collocations within units). Rather than being foregrounded due to unusual language use or drawing on semantic associations of literary description, *cauldron bubbled* is foregrounded due to the intertextual knowledge it draws on, as it echoes the line 'fire burn and cauldron bubble' from *Macbeth*, Act IV, scene I.

These intertextual links can be illustrated using Perfetti's (1997) suggestion of a multiple-text model. This involves combining a documents model ('an intertext model that links texts in terms of their rhetorical relations to each other – Perfetti, 1997: 346) with a situation model of the kind described in Chapter 2 that 'represents situations described in one or more text with links to the texts' (Perfetti, 1997: 346). Figure 3.1 combines document and situations models for *Wyrd Sisters* and one of its intertexts, *Macbeth*. Features common to both texts are highlighted in bold. The language presented in the document models here gives a sample of comparable text from both works and draws on information and examples beyond the short extract used in the initial analysis in order to provide a more representative multiple-text model. This is obviously not a true representation of the documents model, which would include all comparable language and of the texts. What I have represented here is simplified in order to make it possible to exemplify the modelled content. Likewise, the narrative structures feature only the main events in both texts and, in

the case of *Wyrd Sisters*, only those events that are comparable to those in *Macbeth*. *Wyrd Sisters* is influenced by far more intertextual elements than just *Macbeth* and, consequently, has a longer sequence of events.

| Wyrd Sisters   | Macbeth   |
|--|---|
| <b>Documents models</b>  |   |
| <p>LANGUAGE:<br/>           “When shall we three meet again?” [...] “Well, I can do next Tuesday.”</p> <p>“Can you tell by the pricking of your thumbs?” “The pricking of my ears.”</p> <p>STRUCTURE:<br/>           Witches meet.<br/>           Lord Felmet kills his cousin, King Verence.<br/>           Witches protect King Verence’s baby son.<br/>           Lord Felmet’s madness.<br/>           Felmet discredits witches.<br/>           Witches save village from evil Felmets.<br/>           Lord Felmet dies.</p> <p>TEXT TYPE: Novel (featuring a play)</p> | <p>LANGUAGE:<br/>           “When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning, or in rain?”</p> <p>‘By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes’</p> <p>STRUCTURE:<br/>           Witches meet<br/>           Witches’ predictions<br/>           Macbeth kills Duncan<br/>           Lady Macbeth’s madness<br/>           Witches make more predictions<br/>           More murders: Banquo, Macduff’s family<br/>           Macbeth killed</p> <p>TEXT TYPE: Play</p> |
| <b>Situation models</b>  |   |
| <p>CHARACTERS<br/>           PROTAGONIST: Witches<br/>           OTHER CENTRAL CHARACTERS: King Verence, Lord Felmet (murderer), Lady Felmet, Fool, Actors, Prince/Tomjon</p> <p>LOCATION<br/>           Lancre (a rural village on Discworld, a fictional world with many allusions to real world)</p> <p>TIME PERIOD<br/>           Uncertain (Medieval and modern motifs)</p>   | <p>CHARACTERS<br/>           PROTAGONIST: Macbeth (murderer)<br/>           OTHER CENTRAL CHARACTERS: Lady Macbeth, Witches, Banquo, Duncan, Malcolm, Macduff</p> <p>LOCATION<br/>           Scotland (real world)</p> <p>TIME PERIOD<br/>           Medieval period</p>  |

Figure 3.1: Documents & Situations models for *Wyrd Sisters* & *Macbeth*.

Modelling the text in this way provides a clearer picture of precisely which elements of the text (both at surface level and in the novel as a whole) draw on intertextual links. Consequently, we can also argue more strongly for the inherent role of such textual mappings in characterisation. For example, it is the language taken directly from *Macbeth*, along with symbols of witchcraft from the play (and popular culture more widely, if a reader

is not familiar with the particular intertext), which provide the most prominent characterisation cues in this extract. Without these intertextual references, we would merely picture three unidentified women, in poor weather, around an unusual item of kitchenware.

### **3.3.2 Intertextuality: foundational theory**

The term intertextuality is widely attributed Julia Kristeva (Worton & Still, 1990; Allen, 2000; Hogan, 2014; Mason, 2019). She explains that 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another' (Kristeva, 1986: 37), a process she labels intertextuality. Kristeva's work is based on Bakhtin's emphasis on the dialogic nature of all language. Within this, the text is constructed by the relationship between the writer, the reader and the cultural context (including other texts). Bakhtin emphasised this with the idea that 'discourse is a social phenomenon' (Bakhtin, 1981: 259). Kristeva calls this an 'intersection of textual surfaces' (Kristeva, 1986: 36). Within this context the words of others, taken from other texts, can provide stylistic effects that bring new significance to the language (either in line with, but refreshing, the original meaning, or subverting the original meaning as parody). Central to these ideas, and of particular interest to this research, is Bakhtin's emphasis on the significance of style within this socially-situated dialogue. Rather than being 'deaf to dialogue' (Bakhtin, 1981: 276), as he accuses previous stylistic approaches to the novel of being, the novel and its style are integrally bound to other texts. In other words, as I argue in my application of intertextuality, the dialogic nature of literary texts can be explored via the language and style of a text. As Bakhtin summarises,

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. (Bakhtin, 1981: 276).

Another major contribution to intertextual theory is Genette, who focusses more specifically on the literary text and its relationship to other texts. He proposes the term 'transtextuality'

(Genette, 1982: 1) as a general label for all relationships between texts (whether obvious or implicit). Genette describes several types of transtextual relationship (Genette, 1982: 1-5). The first is intertextuality which, in his more refined use, refers to a reference within one text to another (whether explicit, by quotation, or implicit, by allusion). The second is paratextuality, which refers to any element outside of the main narrative (for example, title, book cover, illustration, blurb) which provide context. Third is metatextuality, referring to commentary on one narrative by another. The fourth type of transtextuality is perhaps the most useful: hypertextuality. This simply refers to any reference, however explicit or implicit, between a text (the hypertext) and its earlier source (the hypotext). Of the other types of transtextuality, only metatextual commentary is excluded from the hypertextual. Finally, architextuality signifies links to genre and so links to reader expectations of text based on their encounters with similar texts.

In a detailed account of intertextual theory, Mason (2019) highlights several problems with traditional definitions of and approaches to intertextuality. Of the theory discussed here, she points out that Bakhtin's work is not helpful for highlighting specific instances or processes of intertextuality as he sees all language is dialogic, and therefore all discourse is potentially intertextual. Likewise, Mason argues that Kristeva's relating of narrative to context presents intertextuality as a philosophical debate rather than a useful analytical tool. Finally, Genette's idea of hypertextuality, which Mason describes as dealing with the overarching relationships between texts with intertextual references, focuses too much on the status of texts as intertextual or not, rather than the specific textual elements that render them as such. Mason offers a more practical view of intertextuality in her Narrative Interrelation Framework.

### **3.3.3 The Narrative Interrelation Framework**

A significant idea from more recent thinking on intertextual theory is the concept of 'axes of intertextuality' (Worton & Still, 1990: 2), which suggests that an intertextual reference may be made by either the writer or the reader. Some references may be unknown by the reader and therefore missed, or a reader may know more than writer and consequently interpret the text differently. Mason (2014; 2019) develops our understanding of the roles of intertextual references in comprehension by suggesting a way to approach intertextuality

that takes into account such differences between readers. She claims that 'intertextuality studies have largely overlooked the mechanics of how readers and authors make connections between texts' (Mason, 2019: 3) and emphasises the idea that if a link is not made by a reader, regardless of author intention, then 'it does not exist within their experience of that text and plays no role in their reading' (Mason, 2019: 3).

In order to address these issues, Mason develops The Narrative Interrelation Framework Mason, drawing on key theories from stylistics Reader Response theory. In doing so, she emphasises that 'the text is not a static object but dynamically constructed in the course of the interaction' between reader and text (Mason, 2019: 10). As responses to intertextual references vary depending on the reader, a text's intertextual references cannot be examined as a fixed set that will lead to a predictable corresponding set of associations being made by the reader. Likewise, the full comprehension of a text cannot be said to rely on such a set of references, as readers are clearly capable of understanding texts whilst missing certain intertextual cues. In order to look at what readers actually do with texts, rather than what they should do, Mason (2014; 2019) creates a distinction between the intertextual reference as a textual object and the narrative interrelation as the process the reader goes through in relating one text to another. In other words, 'intertextual references are made by texts; narrative interrelations are made by readers' (Mason, 2014: 193). Consequently, an intertextual reference can exist in a text but the reader may not make the narrative interrelation necessary to recognise it.

According to Mason's framework, narrative features which trigger interrelations can be placed on a cline of granularity, from marked to unmarked, with each type specific or general. These terms signify the extent to which the base narrative (the text being discussed or analysed) makes clear reference to another text. This cline, along with examples, is illustrated in Figure 3.2. As Mason points out, 'unmarked references do not bother the readers who do not notice them because they are unaware that their 'literary competence' is lacking' (Mason, 2014:186). Marked references, on the other hand, have the potential to highlight a lack of knowledge on the part of the reader, which the reader may feel the need to disguise. As such, narrative interrelations are intrinsically bound to issues of reader identity and may be exploited to create and undermine identities (one aspect of this is referred to by Mason as 'book shaming', which involves 'making negative assessments of a

person based on their narrative likes and dislikes, or knowledge they do or do not appear to possess about a given text' – Mason, 2019: 148). Such issues of identity are also closely tied to constructing impressions of character – I discuss this in Chapter 4.

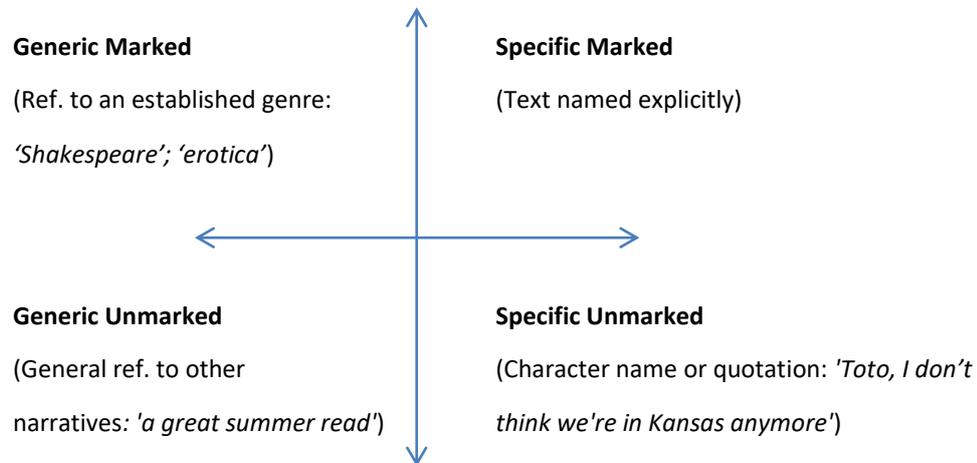


Figure 3.2: Categories of narrative granularity with examples (Mason, 2019: 78-85)

There are three further ideas of interest for this research in Mason's framework. The first of these is the 'dislocated reference' (Mason, 2019: 133). This refers to a word or phrase which originally referred to a specific text, but has become so widely recognised as to trigger no narrative interrelation. This is arguably what happens when many readers encounter the *three hunched figures* and the *cauldron* in the extract from my initial analysis. Secondly, the existence of a 'dummy narrative' - 'a text or story which is invented within a base and did not exist independently at the time it was referenced' (Mason, 2019: 158), is a useful concept. Pratchett makes frequent use of such narratives in his characterisation, as I outline in the analysis in Chapter 5. Finally, Mason suggests the analysis of intertextuality 'as a form of temporal and spatial deixis' (Mason, 2019: 153). She gives the example of 'once upon a time' as an unmarked reference used in this way to situate a text in time and space relative to the reader. Pratchett draws on recognisable references like this often, as seen from the beginning of his second novel about the witches:

Once upon a time such a universe was considered unusual and, possibly, impossible.

But then...it used to be so simple, once upon a time. (*Witches Abroad*: 7)

### **3.3.4 Knowledge structures & intertextuality**

As a way of explaining how the narrative interrelations made by readers work in a practical way during reading, Mason claims that 'the narrative interrelation framework is, in essence, a more refined engagement of schema and prototype theories which enables a descriptive account of how humans make connections between different pieces of information and stores of knowledge' (Mason, 2019: 22). She points out that 'whenever we encounter a narrative, our memory of that experience is extremely unlikely to match the original narrative itself' (Mason, 2014: 188). This is due to a number of factors, including level of interest, whether the text is read in full and purpose of reading. Schematic knowledge also incorporates knowledge gathered from different mediums (for example books, films, meta-commentary), and can combine fact and fiction (Mason, 2019). Consequently, different readers create different narrative schemata, which together build a personalised mental archive of stories. Narrative interrelations between such schemata 'occur when a reader identifies a *point of narrative contact* between two schema' (Mason, 2014: 189), which in turn prompts a process of spreading activation in which the reader notices further points of contact. The vaguer an intertextual reference is, the more reliant readers are on their intertextual mental archive and the more processing effort will be required. A focus on the surface text and the ways in which it cues readers' schematic knowledge allows me to explore the intertextual nature of characterisation and how readers' narrative interrelations are prompted by the style and language of the text.

## **3.4 The Rhetorical Processing Framework**

The second framework used in my revised model of characterisation is the Rhetorical Processing Framework (RPF) (Sanford & Emmott, 2012). This emphasises the idea already present in the existing models of characterisation, and in the Idiom Principle and Narrative Interrelation Framework, that reading 'is not a mere complex of text-based propositions, it is an interpreted piece of language' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 20). The RPF consist of three separate strands: The Rhetorical Focussing Principle, Fundamental Scenario Mapping and Experientiality. As these correspond to or overlap the levels of cognition in the

characterisation models I have adapted, the RPF provides my revised model with a comprehensive existing framework with which to combine existing and new theoretical elements.

### **3.4.1 The Rhetorical Focussing Principle**

The Rhetorical Focussing Principle (RFP) focusses on reader engagement with the surface text, asking ‘what linguistic cues help determine which mental model to adopt, and how mental models might result from the text itself’ (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 19). It aligns closely with the ideas of the Idiom Principle discussed above. In order to answer this, it emphasises the role of a text’s style in focussing reader attention. Focussed attention, Sanford & Emmott claim, governs which aspects of a text will be modelled. As a result, the surface language of a text is essential when modelling comprehension as the various stylistics features of this language guide the reader’s interpretation of the text and its characters. Central to the RFP is the processing of figurative language, frequently used in literary texts to foreground information. Despite seeming more complex, common figurative language (including idiom), the authors claim, causes no slowing of processing. This is attributed to the fact that much of our comprehension operates using figurative structures, as evidenced by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Gibbs (1994). Creative uses of phrase and figurative language, on the other hand, do slow down processing. Such use is more common in literature and is more likely to be processed literally in the first instance and reprocessed to arrive at the figurative or novel meaning intended. This is evidenced by the discussion of experimental findings in which novel figurative language took longer to process than statements that were simply false, suggesting that figurative language needs to undergo secondary processing in order to compare the literal and figurative meanings (Glucksberg, Gildea & Bookin, 1981, in Sanford & Emmott, 2012). Such language is therefore foregrounded. Partington (1998) makes a similar point about the unusual use of collocation, which can be exploited for effect via substitution (of, for example, lexical or grammatical structure), expansion (where items are added to a phrase), abbreviation or rephrasing. Foregrounded language, whether achieved by using figurative language or other means, is key to the control of reader focus during text processing. A final key point made by the RFP is that rhetorical focussing not only guides the reader to pay attention to specific parts of

the text, it also means that some areas of text are processed in more detail than others (Sanford & Emmott, 2012). Non-foregrounded sections undergo shallow processing, producing underspecified representations that may overlook lexical meaning entirely. This may provide a useful way of deciding which elements of surface text are lost during processing in order to form a textbase and which retain their structure and/or content.

### **3.4.2 Fundamental Scenario Mapping**

The second strand of the Rhetorical Processing Framework draws on the ideas discussed in Chapter 2 about the significance of knowledge structures, context and goals in text processing. Fundamental Scenario Mapping (FSM) suggests that mental representations of text are formed by relating text information to a situation that the reader is already familiar with. In FSM, a concept originally introduced by Sanford & Garrod (1981) as Scenario Mapping Theory, situation-specific knowledge controls processing. This is done in two stages. First, a reader tries to match text information to a known situation. If this fails, inference or a search for alternative scenarios is employed. This process is an essential feature of reading fiction, as 'when failures of primary processing prompt secondary processing, defamiliarisation may ensue and cause a reader to look more thoughtfully and/or with amusement at either an ordinary or extraordinary scene' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 39). Key to reconciling such seemingly counterfactual information in these situations is the process of conceptual blending, which allows existing knowledge and new information to be combined to model novel situations. The significance of Conceptual Blending for characterisation is discussed in Chapter 4. The authors suggest that character knowledge is used in the same way as situational information when processing text, with readers' expectations about character influencing text processing.

Sanford & Emmott also suggest that scenarios are so influential during text processing that they can override the significance of linguistic features. They claim that 'world knowledge is not only utilized very rapidly, its recruitment can occur even more rapidly than a local semantic analysis of a sentence, with interesting consequences for interpretations' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 25). For example, the quick application of contextual knowledge means that words that do not fit the situational model are treated, at least temporarily, as anomalous. In addition to influencing the way in which text is processed, the selected

mental model of context also informs predictions about the text, influencing future processing. In other words, FSM sees comprehension as a product of using knowledge of situations to inform, and even alter, semantic and syntactic interpretations. For this research, this idea suggests that readers are quickly primed to process surface text via contextual information, meaning that they are also primed to expect certain features of language (for example, certain phrase types, structures or rhetorical devices). It is important to distinguish here between the situation model, which simply illustrates the current situation in a text at a given stage of reading, and the situational knowledge employed in FSM, which uses world knowledge to interpret language and text (Sanford & Emmott, 2012).

### **3.4.3 Experientiality**

In the final strand of the RPF, Sanford & Emmott (2012) highlight the importance of the experiential nature of comprehension (specifically, the role of emotion and embodiment) and the ways in which writers manipulate this to how a text is read. This idea is addressed in Schneider's model of the characterisation process (he notes that 'emotion plays a huge role in text understanding, and especially in character-reception' - Schneider, 2001: 613), but lacking in Culpeper's. Rather than mapping to any specific features of existing models of cognition and characterisation, the notion of experientiality affects text processing at all levels, relying (as all other aspects of processing does) on schematic structures to combine new and existing knowledge.

#### **Emotion**

The term 'hot cognition' is used to refer to 'how cognition is coloured and modified by feelings' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 191). This stands opposed to 'cold cognition' in which a reader has knowledge of and can describe an emotion without experiencing it (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 201). This idea falls under the banner of affect, to use the broader term often favoured by theorists, which covers a range of more specific states such as preferences, moods and emotions. Sanford & Emmott (2012) propose a simplified view of this complex field, highlighting two central theoretical strands: those which see emotion as a product of cognition, and those that suggest cognition as influenced by emotion. In other

words, theories of the former type highlight a person's judgement and evaluation of a situation before an emotional response is triggered, whereas those of the latter type favour a view that the physiological changes which characterise emotional response are primary and initially unmediated by cognition (Sanford & Emmott, 2012).

Many researchers, including Sanford & Emmott (2012), view emotion as central to the reading process. Glenberg et al (2005) suggests that much of the joy we feel in reading is derived from emotional recognition and response. Likewise, Burke (2011) highlights the particular influence emotion has on the processing of literature as opposed to other text types. The question of how such hot cognition is prompted by authors is a central inquiry of the RPF, with stylistic features of a text key to eliciting or repressing such emotional responses (Sanford & Emmott, 2012), especially when they employ figurative language or the repetition of emotion-triggering language. The ultimate goal of any manipulation of reader emotion for a writer is empathy, or lack of, for a character, as 'empathy creates interest in the characters and their future actions, and it can reinforce a distinction between different types of character' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 210). Although factors such as autobiographical similarity and shared experience have been cited as key in empathetic responses, these effects are often so strong that they can be elicited across gender, with females interested in a male character's narrative and vice-versa, and across species, with empathy being elicited for non-human characters (Sanford & Emmott, 2012). Crucially for my revised model of characterisation, Fauconnier & Turner (2003) claim that a key use for Conceptual Blending is the transfer of emotions from self to other, a process which allows empathy with characters.

### **Embodiment**

The final element of the RPF relates to the reader's embodied experience. Several researchers have considered this issue in relation to text processing. As Stockwell points out

The notion of embodiment affects every part of language. It means that all of our experiences, knowledge, beliefs and wishes are involved in and expressible only through patterns of language that have their roots in our material existence (Stockwell, 2002: 5).

Gibbs reiterates the point, claiming that 'significant aspects of people's imaginative abilities arise from, and continue to be structured by, pervasive patterns of embodied activity'

(Gibbs, 2005: 66). In the RPF, the authors explore the idea that 'in reading literature, a simulation of the actions, events and experiences depicted runs literally in the minds of readers' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 32). This view is supported by other researchers, including Zwaan & Madden (2005), who argue that text acts as a set of cues which activate experiential traces and combine them with the events being described. Consequently, they argue there is no clear barrier between reception, action and cognition, as they all leave experiential traces. The focus of Sanford & Emmott's enquiry into embodiment is, as with all elements of the RPF, how writers use language to foreground or background this experiential aspect of comprehension. The significance of embodied comprehension to characterisation is clear, as it offers an explanation, along with theories of emotional response, as to why readers often construct and experience characters so vividly. Whether we see the simulation involved in embodied comprehension as happening during processing in real-time, or simply triggering similar brain states (experiential traces, to use Zwaan & Maden's term), it is clear that we cannot remove ourselves from our embodied experiences when reading. Consequently, this needs to be taken into account in any analysis of the characterisation process.

### **Experientiality & knowledge structures**

Far from being a separate issue from other areas of cognition, affect can be understood in similar terms to the role of any other knowledge cue. Although some theorists have tried to set affect apart from cognitive theories (Miall, 1989, argues that the tendency for literature to defamiliarise and question schemata makes them unsuitable for exploring longer narratives), others have linked the idea of affect directly to schema-based comprehension. For example, Fiske & Taylor suggest that prototypical emotional episodes that can be understood in terms of a script. Such a script would consist of 'expressions, action tendencies, subjective feelings, and physiological states' (Fiske & Taylor, 1991: 141). They also point out that experience-based schemata can carry affective tags, and thus be triggered by an affective cue, just as easily as they can be cued by other kinds of information. Emotion, and the expectations and goals linked to it can, therefore, control cognition by interrupting one goal or schema and arousing interest in another. This is

perhaps more likely for emotion-based cues, which provoke stronger response in the reader, than for other types of cues.

Likewise, the embodied nature of cognition is reflected via knowledge structures in the theory of image schemas. The image schema represents a conceptual mapping from a source to a target domain. Just as other types of schemata are developed from our experiences, an image schema reflects the embodied nature of that experience, conceiving of abstract concepts as bound to the physical directions which the body is capable of (for example, GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN). Turner (1996: 16) gives the example of the image schema CONTAINER and the image schema MOTION ALONG A PATH combining to give the image schema INTO (when the goal of a path is the inside of a container) or OUT OF (when the source of a path is the inside of a container). This example illustrates clearly the simplicity of such schematic representations and how they combine to form more complex concepts. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) argue that conceptual metaphors such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which map a concrete example to an abstract concept using an image schema, underpin comprehension at all levels. Of particular interest to this research is the suggestion that conceptual metaphors also underpin the understanding and use of idiom (Gibbs, 1992). If idiomatic units of meaning are the basis for much of our text cognition, as I argue at the beginning of this chapter, then characterisation is also a process bound to embodied image schemata.

### **3.5 Chapter conclusion**

In this chapter I have introduced three areas of theory that combine with existing models of characterisation to make them more easily utilised for text analysis. The Idiom Principle (Sinclair, 1991 & 2004) outlines the ways in which we instinctively use patterns to process chunks of language. These patterns include lexical collocation, pattern grammar and patterns of semantic and pragmatic meaning. Therefore idiomatic units of meaning, far from being used as merely decorative stylistic flourishes, 'are an integral part of the language that eases social interaction, enhances textual coherence, and, quite importantly, reflects fundamental patterns of human thought' (Gibbs, 2007: 697). By including the Idiom

Principle as the central tool with which to analyse surface text, I have provided a means by which stylistic chunks of text can be fully linked to the knowledge they cue, without losing relevant surface structure to the formation of propositions. The consequent significance of surface text addresses the issue raised by Perfetti and Britt (2012) that a purely proposition-based approach to text processing does not explain the role of syntactic and stylistic elements in comprehension.

The Narrative Interrelation Framework plays a vital role within my revised model of characterisation, as it provides a detailed way of modelling the links made by readers to other texts and characters. Refocusing traditional ideas of intertextuality to illustrate the prominence of the reader in making links with other texts, it is used in my characterisation model in unison with the Idiom Principle and the RPF to explain how certain units of surface text are foregrounded due to the narrative interrelations they may trigger.

In light of the increased significance of surface text suggested by the Idiom Principle, the Rhetorical Focussing Principle (RFP), the first strand of the Rhetorical Processing Framework (RPF), is especially useful for unpicking the stylistic impact of surface text on characterisation. This is especially true as it highlights the varying levels of retention for units of meaning during processing depending on their salience to the reading purpose (in this case, characterisation) and the degree of foregrounding they receive. The notion of Fundamental Scenario Mapping from the RPF can be applied to explain the role of prior knowledge and experience in this model-building process, providing further clarification of the role of knowledge structures in comprehension and characterisation. Finally, the role of emotion and embodied experience in all cognition is emphasised by the RPF, and is therefore also central in the construction of character. This aspect of characterisation is explored further in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.3).

# 4. Approaches to character

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## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to define the object of my research – character itself – in order to understand what exactly it is that my revised model of characterisation aims to model. Frow’s (2014) observation of the tension between character as text and character as person-like entity is reflected in much of the theory surrounding character. He argues, as I do, that character must be seen as both at once to work. In addition, I argue that character can only be adequately defined when seen as a product of textual features and mental processes. In this chapter, I outline the two main views of what character is: a textual, literary construct or a person-like entity, and explore the overlap between them in most theories of characterisation. I then identify the textual features and cognitive mechanisms involved in comprehending character in order reach an understanding of how these two approaches to the characterisation process can be combined into a coherent whole. Next, I explore three further approaches to modelling character that combine textual and cognitive elements: Theory of Mind, mind style and emotion. Finally, I suggest that Conceptual Blending is a useful way of modelling the complex interaction that take place during the characterisation process in order to combine information from these various sources.

## 4.2 Defining character

Character is notoriously difficult to define. Frow’s description highlights this complexity:

a character is a paradigm constructed cumulatively across the length of a text as successive sets of semantic differentiation from other characters, generated in relation to culturally specific typologies, defined both by the words the character speaks and the words spoken about him, and unified as a composite and complex entity (Frow, 2014: 12).

Frow's exploration of character as a figure defined against cultural and narrative ground, a person as understanding character involves the category of personhood, a type based on folk taxonomies, a voice that communicates and a name within a text, amongst other things, begins to outline the many possible approaches to defining character. In this section, I focus on character as textual versus character person-like, also exploring character as a tool for reasoning.

#### **4.2.1 Character as literary figure and non-actual individual**

A helpful starting point in an attempt to define character is Margolin's work, which outlines three ways of viewing character:

character as literary figure, that is, an artistic product or artifice constructed by an author for some purpose; character as non-actual but well-specified individual presumed to exist in some hypothetical, fictional domain – in other words, character as an individual within a possible world; and character as text-based construct or mental image in the reader's mind. (Margolin, 2007: 66).

As literary figures, a character is an 'abstract cultural entity, depending essentially for its existence on actual objects in space and time and on the intellectual activity of authors and readers' (Margolin, 2007: 67). In other words, they are created in the human mind and bound to a particular cultural context. In this view, characters can only be known by examining the text. Margolin even suggests that characters as literary figures are not bound by logic and real-world rules, although this is constrained by the need for readers to be able to relate to characters on some level in order engage with the text. If we view characters as non-actual individuals, we engage with them on a more natural, person-like level and become involved with questions of their existence, identity and sameness across time and story worlds (Margolin, 2007). Finally, viewing character a mental construct

is concerned not so much with the validity and specific nature of any given mental representation but rather with its textual base (cues, sources), the operations involved in its formation, the principles (rules, regularities) governing or guiding these operations, and the architecture of the final construct.

Character as a mental construct is the approach taken by the models outlined in this research, as it emphasises the process of characterisation and draws on reader knowledge of character and how this is triggered by and combined with the text. However, this final

conceptualisation of character is better viewed not as the third option in a list of equals, but as an overarching approach that combines the first two in order to build a complete picture of what character is.

The dualism of character as literary figure or non-actual individual can equally be expressed as a question of flat versus round characters, to use Forster's (1974) terms, or of dehumanising and humanising approaches. However, few theories see character as exclusively one or the other. Propp's (1968) account of characters in fairy tales is often given as an example of a purely textual view, where characters exist merely as plot functions (for example, as hero or villain). While the specific characters (actors) and their motivations may vary, the functions and character roles involved in the story (performed by actants) are constant. However, even a structuralist account such as Propp's requires extra-textual knowledge of character and person type and is therefore arguably not purely textual. Forster's flat and round characters provide an early hint at a combined approach to character. While the former are 'constructed round a single idea or quality' (Forster, 1974: 47), merely a type, characters can become rounded as more qualities are ascribed to them. They then become more complex and person-like, requiring knowledge of actual people to be understood. Despite the simplistic nature of flatter characters, it is important to acknowledge, as Toolan (2001) points out, that both of these character types require readers to use their own knowledge of people and characters to infer what a character is like. In other words, even flat characters do not reside entirely in the text. Toolan captures this complexity of character well, as he explains that 'character entails an illusion in which the reader is a creative accomplice. Out of words we make a person' (Toolan, 2001: 80).

Frow's (2014) work is a further example of the inseparable nature of text and reader in the construction of character. While character varies with genre, and is therefore literary in nature, such genre typologies of character are built on folk taxonomies, which are based on knowledge of real people. He expands on this complexity with the observation that even the criteria for personhood on which folk taxonomies are based are subject to change with time and social context, thus complicating the category that acts as a ref for fictional characters. For Frow, character exists in the relationship between social contexts and the language used in texts to express links to these contexts. Frow's suggestion for resolving the dual nature of character for analytical purposes is to see approaches to character as structuralist and as

humanist as different levels of analysis. However, although he likens this approach to Margolin's distinction of non-mimetic (textual) and mimetic (cognitive) character types, the suggestion is too simplistic when we consider that even basic textual representations of character rely on some degree of extra-textual knowledge for meaning.

Fantasy literature, the focus of my initial analysis in Chapter 1 and first extended analysis in Chapter 5, is extremely useful for examining the interplay between textual and person-like character. The genre has often been seen as following the pattern of character-as-function or character-as-trait. This is perhaps unsurprising, as many of its stock characters are taken directly from fairy tales and myths (witches, heroes, princesses and so on). Leguin (1989) emphasises limited characterisation in many fantasy texts, suggesting that character in fantasy is often archetypal (for example, she claims that the various hobbit characters in *Lord of the rings* together make up one rounded character). However, Attebery (1992) suggests that much modern fantasy examines the link between the character as an imitated person and as story function. Using Bakhtin's term, Attebery proposes that fantasy characters are dialogic, formed in the conversation between the two different approaches to characterisation. He expands this claim to suggest that successful literary texts of all genres are those in which 'characters are both determiners of and subservient to the action' (Attebery, 1992: 86), arguing that readers take pleasure from seeing believable characters acting out familiar story patterns, and from their shock at realising they are doing this. Intertextuality, a central tenet of my revised characterisation model and inherently dialogic in nature, is fundamental to exploring this interplay between character as type and as imitated person.

#### **4.2.2 Character as a tool for reasoning**

Vermeule (2010) shifts the discussion of character away from issues of text or person in order to explain the ontological, epistemological, linguistic and ethical motivations for our engagement with characters. Instead, she suggests that characters are 'the greatest practical-reasoning schemes ever invented' (Vermeule, 2010: xii). Our engagement with characters, Vermeule claims, is rooted in our desire to gossip. Far from being merely a frivolous desire for schadenfreude, gossip offers an arena in which we can reason about the

potential consequences of an action and the possible motivations of others while avoiding the consequences ourselves. It can also be used as a social bonding tool. According to Vermeule, fictional characters are as able to provide such a cautionary spectacle as real people.

Vermeule (2010) argues that we are able to use characters in imagined situations to reason about complex phenomena in the same way that we do so with real people because we employ the same 'conceptual primitives' (Vermeule, 2010: 23) that underlie all cognition. These include the concept of animism, the preference for social over other types of information and the attribution of agency to others. These elements of characterisation are explored further in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.1. Consequently, Vermeule believes that we show the most interest in characters whose motivations are more complex and opaque, such as Machiavellian characters. This is reflected in the types of characters who are most often rewritten in different narratives and media. She gives the examples of Lady Macbeth, Sherlock Holmes, Satan and Faust as providing such 'cultural heuristics', which we use 'to surf the cultural field and to make sense of its profusion' (Vermeule, 2010: 52). The concept of intertextuality is key here, and is explored in relation to character in Section 4.2.3.

### **4.3 Locating character**

As with other areas of focus when processing text, modelling characterisation requires an approach that combines text-based cues with reader knowledge. This is in accordance with Toolan's (2001) understanding of characters as being like an iceberg, with much of their content needing to be inferred from the information given in the surface text. This section explores the textual features (the tip of the 'iceberg') that trigger character relevant knowledge, and the mechanisms involved in forming the knowledge into a coherent model of character.

### **4.3.1 Character in the text**

As noted in the outline of the characterisation models in Chapter 1, Culpeper (2001) identifies three types of textual cue for characterisation: explicit cues given by the characters themselves and narrators, implicit cues derived from speech forms and other linguistic features, and authorial cues. As explicit cues are relatively self-explanatory, this section will focus on implicit and authorial cues in order to locate character in textual features.

#### **Character names**

Perhaps the most readily accessible cue for characterisation is a character's name – an authorial cue. As Margolin (2002) suggests, the proper noun a character is assigned when they are named creates a mental file in which readers store all information relevant to that character name. As a result, naming aids the storage and retrieval of character-specific information in the construction of mental models of character. Frow (2014) elaborates, pointing out that names tie a character to a social context and order and, in doing so, make textual constructs identifiable as persons. In addition, he sees the pronouns and social nomenclature used to refer to a character are essential for constructing character in fiction and allowing reader to relate to them. However, Frow cautions that a name, while often informative and a useful reference point, should not be seen as the central reference point as characters can exist without a name. In other words, a character is far more than just their name. This is evident in my initial analysis, as neither character is named in the short extract and yet the references used by the narrator and the characters themselves (*three hunched figures, an eldritch voice, another voice, we three*) are capable of painting a vivid picture for readers who make the relevant narrative interrelations.

#### **Character speech**

A second significant cue for characterisation found in the text is character speech. A key feature of most character speech, as Leech & Short (2013) point out, are the dialects and idiolects that are often used to signal certain character attributes. They clarify that dialect refers to the linguistic features found in a particular subgroup of society, usually consistent with social boundaries created by, but not limited to, geographical or class. Idiolect is a more precise term referring to an individual's speech patterns. Graphology, often in the form of non-standard spellings, is used to suggest these features, although complex systems of spelling and punctuation in English mean that few inferred mappings between

graphology and spoken features are objectively verifiable. The authors point out, however, that such realistic mappings are not always desirable. Rather, ‘if we meet such a non-standard spelling in fiction, it is the non-standardness that strikes us, not the supposed phonetic reality behind it’ (Leech & Short, 2013: 135). For example, Joe in Dickens’ *Great Expectations* attempts to alter his dialect so as not to embarrass himself and Pip in London with the greeting “‘Pip, how AIR you, Pip?’”, only to fall swiftly back into his natural speech patterns moments later: “‘Which you have that growed,” said Joe, “and that swelled, and that gentle-folke’d”” (Dickens, 1965: 241-2). From these short extracts, we can infer much about Joe, his relationship with Pip and his view of their relative social standings.

In addition to the linguistics features of speech used by a character, we also need to consider how character speech is presented to fully understand how speech contributes to characterisation. This is represented by Short (1996) as a continuum of speech representation moving from those involving narration (narrator’s representation of action, narrator’s representation of speech and narrator’s representation of speech acts) to those involving speech (indirect speech, free indirect speech and direct speech). The categories of speech presentation and their location along the cline are outlined in Figure 4.1.

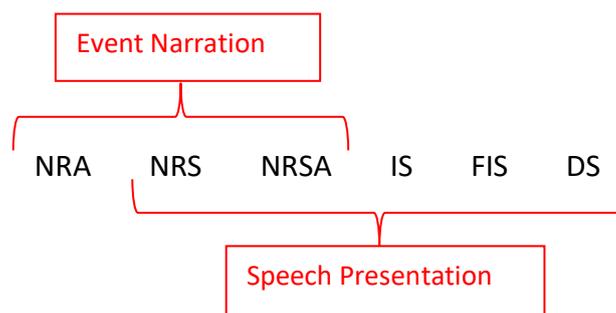


Figure 4.1: Speech representation categories (Short, 1996: 306).

The categories can be more easily understood when used to represent a specific instance of speech or narration (here using the *Great Expectations* example from the last paragraph):

- NRA** Joe and I met.
- NRS** Joe spoke to me.
- NRSA** Joe greeted me and expressed surprise at my appearance.
- IS** Joe asked how I was and said I had changed.
- FIS** Jo asked how I was, I had changed considerably.
- DS** 'Pip, how AIR you, Pip? [...] which you have that growed'

In these different renderings of Joe's words (originally given as direct speech in the text) we can see the level of detail and insight into character afforded by each category. Direct speech allows readers to use Joe's language to infer a significant amount about Joe's social status and his feelings about it when faced with Pip's. Once this direct access to language is lost, much of Joe's character in this instance is also lost, as we move towards the narrator's view of the scene. Of course, as a first-person narrator Pip is by no means objective, as his descriptions of Joe surrounding this extract suggest, and so would never offer us such objective versions of the encounter. The direct speech of the original gives us unfiltered access to Joe, free from narration (which points out that Joe is 'honest' and 'glowing', but also 'uncomfortable') and its reflections of Pip's own character.

### **Character thought**

With his model of speech categorisation, Short (1996) also considers the role of character thought presentation. Thought report categories follow the same pattern as those of speech presentation (with 'speech' directly replaced by 'thought' in all relevant categories). Towards the narration end of the spectrum (NRT, NRTA, IT), Short sees little distinction from speech category effects and also notes that these forms are relatively rare. However, direct thought and free indirect thought have differing effects on the reader's perceptions of character, and so are notable. Like direct speech, direct thought provides unfiltered access to a character's mental processes. Unlike direct speech, it can appear with or without quotation marks and can consequently be freer (without punctuation and reporting language) or more structured. These contrasts can be used to juxtapose a character's speech and thought within the same scene. Free indirect thought, Short asserts, is noteworthy because it has the opposite effect to its spoken counterpart: rather than distancing us from a character by inserting narrative elements, we feel closer to them when

presented with a mix of direct and indirect thought. Short credits this to the fact that direct speech is seen as the norm as it most closely reflects real-world communication. However, as we lack direct access to the thought of others, indirect thought seems more usual. Consequently, a mix of direct and indirect thought features (for example a reporting verb and direct access to thoughts for the former, narrative past tense for the latter) creates the impression of being allowed special access to a character's mind. Consider the following extracts from *1984*:

He was painfully conscious of the risk he had taken in coming here. It was perfectly possible that patrols would catch him on the way out: for that matter they could be waiting outside the door at this moment. If he went away without even doing what he had come here to do ----! (Orwell, 1989: 71).

In this extract, Winston's fear and hesitation is made apparent through FIT using a reporting phrase – *he was painfully conscious* – and the narrative past tense to give a sense of direct and immediate access to his thoughts

The very fact that characters are endowed with speech and thought is, as Frow (2014) notes, a way of emphasising their personhood. This emphasis is heightened via free indirect discourse, which merges the character as text (via narration) and person (via speech and thought). The relevance of free indirect discourse is also referenced by Vermeule as a textual tool used to trigger engagement with characters (she claims it provides a 'double-voiced consciousness especially aligned with sympathy and irony' – Vermeule, 2010: 76), although Palmer (2004) questions the suitability of speech categories as an adequate tool for analysing complex character modelling. These arguments link closely to the attribution of minds to character, which is explored in Section 4.3.1.

#### **4.3.2 Character in the mind**

Of course, the representation of characters via textual features is only possible because of the reader knowledge such features trigger. As Culler suggests, we draw on a 'fund of human knowledge' (Culler, 1975: 142-3) to make inferential links between character action and factors such as motive, behaviour and personality to provide the necessary mixture of textual and cognitive factors. The salient areas of reader knowledge for the task of characterisation are, according to Culpeper (2001), mostly similar to those required for

forming impressions of real people. As a result, the same knowledge structures govern the application of this knowledge.

The first area of knowledge that constitutes important schematic information for characterisation is literary schematic knowledge of generic character types, roles and traits. This is in line with Culler's (1975) observation that genre knowledge is particularly important to characterisation. Culpeper (2009), reflecting on his original model of characterisation, points out that characterisation works differently in different genres. In other words, it is not only knowledge of character traits and actions within a certain genre that aid characterisation (for example, fantasy often features heroes and villains), but knowledge of how characterisation processes normally work within the genre (for example, the observation noted in 4.1.1 that fantasy often involves relatively flat, trait-based characters). However, any episodic encounters with a character that subvert or develop these schema-based expectations can affect processing and ultimately alter character schemata (Culpeper, 2001; McIntyre, 2014).

Frow (2014) notes that fictional taxonomies form part of the broader phenomenon of folk taxonomies. These contain culturally-bound knowledge of real people that is also key to processing character effectively. Folk taxonomies are culturally-based categorisations containing information such as physiognomies (for example, a hooked nose signifying wickedness), ruling psychological doctrine, gender roles, racial or historical type, social, legal or religious hierarchy and, as noted above, fictional taxonomies. These taxonomies are used in fiction to form a two-way process of character and person construction. As Frow explains:

The character typologies on which fictional texts draw and to which they contribute provide a ready-made model of personhood which is usable, on the one hand, for immediate recognition of characters in texts, and, on the other, for application to persons in the world (Frow, 2014: 119).

This echoes Vermeule's argument that character is principally a tool for reasoning about the real world. Of particular significance to this research is Frow's observation of the role of language in moving characters away from mere type towards personhood and the affective engagement that comes with it.

Folk taxonomies form the basis for social typologies (Frow, 2014), which categorise person type using factors such as age, gender, occupation and social class as a basis for knowledge

about real people. Names, noted above as a key textual cue for characterisation, prompt a move from a general type to specific instance. In order to refine our understanding of how such knowledge structures are applied during characterisation, it is useful here to note the factors that govern their application to social comprehension. Fiske & Taylor (1991) suggest that social role (for example, a witch) is likely to be applied before character trait (for example, evil). Within this, a basic-level subtype is more likely to be used than a category type (for example, witch rather than female). Visual cues are relied on above other types of cues in real-life perception of people. Because of the application of so many other real-life theories of person and social cognition to fictional characters described here, it seems reasonable to assume that descriptions of a character's visual features will have the same prominence over other aspects. Particularly salient to the analysis of characterisation are Fiske & Taylor's (1991) observations of the importance of primacy, attention-grabbing schema cues and prominence of primed schemata. In other words, information presented earlier in a text, linked to repeated or frequently used schematic knowledge and foregrounded is more likely to cue schematic structures. Story structure and stylistic features can be used to achieve desired characterisation effects that make use of these processing tendencies. Finally, reader emotions are highlighted as relevant via Fiske & Taylor's (1991) emphasis on the importance of a person's mood to which schemata are cued for trait attribution.

Fiske & Neuberg's (1990) idea of a four-stage process of impression formation is helpful for understanding how the category-based knowledge of people described above is applied during the reading process. The process begins with initial categorisation of information and is followed by confirmation of this category membership if the information is consistent with category requirement. If not, recategorisation occurs. If categorisation is not possible after this, piecemeal integration of information is called for. The figure of categorisation offered in Chapter 2 (figure 2.1) illustrates the first two of these stages. Recategorisation would involve a loop back to the beginning of the initial process in this figure, while piecemeal integration would involve abandoning it altogether in favour of more complex focussed processing.

Finally, the likelihood of category- and schema-based impressions of character being constructed is governed in part by reader motivation. If a reader is particularly interested in a character, a more detailed impression-based process is more likely to be adopted. Schema-based processes take precedence over person-based ones as they require less processing effort. Because of this, Culpeper suggests that we can better explain Forster's flat and round character distinctions in terms of characters who are understood using a single schema (flat), versus characters who require piecemeal integration (round) (Culpeper, 2001; 95). The information provided in the text also plays a role in dictating which approach is adopted by a reader. The more incomplete or incoherent the information provided about a character the more likely a text is to prompt the use of surface features for individual interpretation. Authors can therefore control the way in which characters are processed by foregrounding textual features to control reader attention, as suggested by the Rhetorical Focussing Principle.

### **4.3.3 Character amongst texts: intertextuality & ontology**

It has already been noted that the concept of intertextuality is central to describing what character is, as it provides intertextual types and instances of character on which to build definitions. It is also apparent from my initial analysis in Chapter 1 that the narrative interrelations made by readers form a significant part of the characterisation process (at least for the extract in question). In addition to the role of narrative interrelations in providing character typologies and links to characters in other texts that act as characterisation cues, Mason (2019) suggests a further role for knowledge of other texts in the characterisation process. She argues that fictional knowledge is also attributed to characters themselves, which influences the construction of that character by the reader. This is based on the idea that

narrative knowledge and narrative preferences are intrinsically bound up with both the ways in which we perceive and characterise others, and indeed the ways in which we perceive and characterise ourselves (Mason, 2019: 140).

In other words, just as narrative preferences and intertextual knowledge reflect reader identity and are often used to influence social interactions (as discussed in Section 3.2.3 of this research), impressions of character can also be created based on the intertextual

knowledge they have and how they use it. An example is the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which makes frequent use of references to other texts (used here in the broadest sense of the term, including books, television and film) in order to attribute certain kinds of knowledge to its characters. As Burr observes,

This practice is established in the show's very first season. In its 12 episodes there are at least 17 such references, including TV shows (*Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *The X Files*, *Star Trek* ), numerous movies (*Mommie Dearest*, *Gidget*, *The Wild Bunch*, *The Exorcist*, *Soylent Green*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Shining*, *The Usual Suspects* ) and comic characters (*The Fantastic Four*, *Superman*, *Spiderman* ). Throughout the series, references to SF and horror shows, films and characters are particularly noticeable (Burr, 2003).

Using these references, the show's characters are situated within their genre. By self-reflexively commenting on characters and situations like the ones they find themselves in, they build a clearer picture of their characters within a recognisable, real-world culture which allows readers to relate to them more easily (issues of character reliability are discussed further in section 4.4). For example, when Buffy comments to her watcher Giles 'I can't believe you, of all people, are trying to Scully me' (*The Pack*, Season 1, noted in Burr, 2013), she encapsulates reader and character knowledge of Scully as a highly sceptical character from *The X Files*, characterising Giles as a certain, sceptical, character type and herself in opposition to him.

This phenomenon is also seen through an author's use of 'dummy narratives' (Mason, 2019: 158). Mason defines these as texts or narratives that are invented by the author and did not exist at the time a text was written. This latter point is an important distinction, as several dummy narratives have been written into existence after the original text in which they appeared. Mason gives the examples of J.K.Rowling's *Quidditch through the ages* and *The tales of Beadle the Bard* as dummy narratives from the *Harry Potter* series that were written after they appeared in the original stories. There are also several examples of dummy narrative being post-written in this way from Pratchett, including *Where's my cow?*, a children's book originally read by Sam Vimes, commander on the Night Watch, to his young son and later written into reality by Pratchett. Dummy narratives are particularly prolific in fantasy narratives like Pratchett's, as direct reference to real-world texts would be impossible in an alternate-world setting. They allow character identity to be shaped by the

type of textual knowledge they have, using stylistic and narratological features like title, plot, text exerts and character names to suggest genre and comparison to real-world texts.

The intertextual nature of reading and characterisation is also relevant to issues of character ontology (explored further in Section 4.3.3). In other words, the question of whether characters that appear in more than one work are more real because they have a broader realm of existence. Richardson (2010) approaches this issue by asking if the same character can exist in more than one work. Characters can enjoy such a multiple existence in a number of forms. The most common is likely to be a series of novels by the same author featuring the same character (as Pratchett's *Discworld* novels do with the witches). Alternatively, a character may be borrowed by a different author (Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes character has been borrowed many times in this way). The character of Sherlock Holmes opens up another line of enquiry here: adaptation of novels for film and television. As well as Holmes' appearance in many films and a recent BBC series, examples include Hulu's adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, HBO's *Game of Thrones* or Lemony Snickett's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, which has been made into a film (Nickelodeon movies, 2004) and a more recent TV series (Netflix, 2017). *Wyrd Sisters* has also been adapted for screen in cartoon form (Cosgrove Hall films, 2007). Regardless of the answer one is inclined to give to the ontological aspect of this question, the appearance of a character in more than one text certainly has implications for the breadth of information about that character available to readers.

In addition to the information- and ontology-based consequences of a character that exists in multiple texts, Heidbrink (2010) suggests that the phenomenon of characters appearing across multiple media in this way provides an additional challenge in terms of theorising how character is constructed. Specifically, changes in the media through which a character is presented often lead to changes in reception method, and may give an increased role to ideas like immersion of the reader and interaction between reader and character. For example, the player of a computer game is arguably more immersed in the plot and interacts with characters in a more active way, and a live stage production gives the opportunity for audience engagement in a way that a film or book does not. These questions lead to further consideration of how we construct and relate to characters.

## **4.4 Relating to characters: Theory of Mind, mind style & emotion**

Much recent thinking about character has involved the ways in which we endow them with mental and emotional attributes. This reflects Stockwell's (2009) idea that the key to reader engagement with a character is impersonation. He uses this term to describe a state reached by a character when their physical, social and psychological traits are described or inferred with enough detail to feel plausible and authentic – another way of saying that a character needs to be 'round' enough for us to relate to them as a non-actual person. When this happens, characters 'acquire a mind with their body, and a life beyond the book, and an intermental relationship with the reader as a person' (Stockwell, 2009: 116). An essential element of reaching this impersonation threshold is the attribution of mind and consciousness to characters. However, it is important to note that judgements of impersonation are subjective to readers, being based on their varying prototypes of personhood. This section will outline Theory of Mind as a way of exploring the attribution of minds to fictional characters, the effects of engagement with character on an emotional level (following the third strand of the Rhetorical Processing Framework – experientiality), and the ways in which character minds can be stylistically foregrounded to heighten these first two factors and influence character construction.

### **4.4.1 Theory of mind**

Theory of Mind (ToM) is a psychological term that refers to our ability to attribute minds to other people. Vermeule (2010) highlights the centrality of representing a character's mental state for engagement with a text, referring to this process as mind reading. In reading character minds in this way, we are able to imagine the beliefs, emotions and motivations of others, amongst other mental characteristics. Attributed to work on primatology by Premack & Woodruff in 1978 (Carruthers & Smith, 1996), the concept has proved useful in the study of reading fiction, drawing on many of the ideas outlined in this research (specifically, text- and mind-based processing, application of schematic structures, intertextuality, and the socially and emotional reader).

One significant application of ToM to fiction and character is Palmer's (2004) work on fictional minds. In a similar approach to my revised characterisation model, Palmer emphasises the importance of a balance between text and knowledge when examining how character are constructed. He suggests, as I do in Section 4.2.1, that at its most basic level character is a collection of words related to a name. ToM can help us to examine how these words help to construct a more complete character by revealing characterisation as a sequence of 'individual operations that result in a continual patterning and repatterning until a coherent fictional personality emerges' (Palmer, 2004: 40). In fiction, he claims, we have the advantage of being told what people are thinking, rather than having to infer it from speech and behaviour. Consequently, such mental processes become textual. Using a speech category approach, we can think of this as taking the form of direct thought, thought report or free indirect thought. However, Palmer argues that an approach based on speech categories falls prey to 'the grip of the verbal norm' (Palmer, 2001: 53) in which too much emphasis is placed on character speech at the expense of non-verbal forms of mental functioning. Instead, he suggests that we avoid such limitations by setting aside speech and thought categories and viewing all reports (whether speech or thought) as reports of mental functioning. This better reflects our everyday ToM processes, as we do not usually have such direct access to the thoughts and mental processes of others (Palmer, 2002).

Palmer takes his argument further, arguing that our comprehension of character minds is the central process through which we are able to access fictional worlds. He aligns this idea with possible worlds theory and employs Ryan's (1991) principle of minimal departure, in which readers always assume that fictional events and persons are as close to real experience as possible, to explain how gaps between knowledge of real and fictional worlds are bridged. As such, this explains why we apply our understanding of real minds to characters and are able to build such complete pictures of fictional personas. Palmer refers to the socially-based inferential processes involved in ToM as the 'mind beyond the skin' (Palmer, 2004: 11), which guides the processing of character from individual actions to an inferred disposition, trait, or state of mind. This approach echoes Margolin's view of characters as non-actual individuals. As an extension of this approach, Palmer also emphasises the role of intertextuality within the construction and attribution of fictional

minds, as knowledge of other texts provides readers with exemplar story worlds and characters which can be applied to current texts. He argues that:

the wide-ranging and complex interrelationships between discourses that fall under the heading intertextuality are of great benefit to the reader while attempting to construct coherent and satisfying fictional personalities (Palmer, 2001: 42).

In addition, Palmer cites cultural models of character (as outlined in Section 2.3.3 of this research) as a significant source of information for the construction of fictional minds. Possible world, cultural and textual character-relevant knowledge allows us to form what Palmer refers to as a continuing consciousness frame, triggered initially by schematic information and filled in as more information becomes available.

Zunshine (2006) offers a further application of ToM to characterisation, suggesting a model of metarepresentations. These track features of ToM across texts and genres, providing constraints during comprehension (emphasising once again the centrality of intertextual activity in characterisation processes). For example, Zunshine suggests that detective fiction is characterised by a distrust of the beliefs and behaviours of others. In other words, prior knowledge of fictional minds is used to provide a relevant context for character comprehension. This reflects the overarching contextual frame within which models of comprehension operate (for example, reading for character in Culpeper's model). The second strand of this metarepresentational approach involves the tracking of character minds as separate from narrator minds, author minds and reader own minds. Here, a representation of mental activity is tracked separately to its source. For example, *he thought she hated him* would be separated in to *he thought* (the source) and *she hated him* (the represented mental state). This can then form part of more complex ToM tracking, involving the narrator (who wants us to think that *he thought she hated him*), and ourselves as the reader, who may be withholding final judgement on whether *she hated him* or not.

Like Vermeule, Zunshine argues that fiction and its characters both create and satisfy 'cognitive cravings' (Zunshine, 2006: 4) based on our desire to explore ToM. For this reason, representations of unusual minds, for example autistic minds, have been popular in recent fiction, as autistic people often struggle with ToM (for example Bocking, 1994; Semino, 2014). Vermeule (2010) refers to these non-standard minds in fiction as representations of mind blindness, or an inability to read minds. Such studies are linked closely to the concept

of mind style, discussed in Section 4.3.2. Conversely, fiction can also provide relief from the constant need to engage our ToM when we are given information about characters' mental functions. The use of the same ToM processes in real and fictional contexts leads to an 'intuitive realization that on some level our evolved cognitive architecture indeed does not fully distinguish between real and fictional people' (Zunshine, 2006: 19). According to Zunshine, the primacy of ToM to our comprehension of character and the necessity of tracking its fictional application using metarepresentations can be manipulated and frustrated by writers if they withhold information about mental functions, focussing instead on physical description. These mental processes can also be emphasised when we are encouraged to attribute minds to non-human entities via pathetic fallacy, personification and anthropomorphising.

Mind-modelling is a term introduced by Stockwell (2009) as a more suitable way of describing the literary application of ToM. This avoids, he claims, the potential confusion stemming from the fact that ToM is not actually a theory of minds in itself, but a description of the psychological process of attributing minds. By adopting a different term, literary theorists can apply relevant ToM ideas in an unproblematic way to engage with the minds of characters across the fictional divide between real and imagined people. Mason (2019) illustrates this fiction-specific application by applying the concept of mind-modelling to the ways in which readers model the mental archives other readers, authors and characters using the intertextual references and narrative interrelations they make. She explains this potentially complex process:

We may mind-model why the character has made the reference, but we might also model why the author has had the character make the reference, as well as possibly how other readers may interpret the character's reference, and even what other readers might think about why the author has had the character make the reference! (Mason, 2019: 97).

Mind-modelling is therefore a central aspect of our construction of character at all levels of comprehension, from the textual references that suggest behavioural traits and motivations, and the generic mental frames that guide character processing, to the modelling of the mental archives of authors and characters

#### 4.4.2 Mind style

Zunshine suggests that

narratives that challenge their readers ToM by their unusual and difficult representations of fictional consciousness may offer valuable insights into the workings of our consciousness which is anything but predictable, orderly, and simple (Zunshine, 2006: 42).

This idea has been explored using the concept of mind style. While consciousness is arguably attributed to most characters to some degree, the notion of mind style is more specific and is only usually notable when foregrounded as unusual. The term was introduced by Fowler, who defined it as ‘the world-view of an author, or a narrator, or a character, constituted by the ideational structure of the text’ (Fowler, 1996: 214). He uses the stylistic features of vocabulary, transitivity and syntax to explore how mind styles are created, although other features of text can also be informative. Leech & Short (2013) add to this, pointing out that mind style is a realisation of a narrative point of view. As such, it refers to the style of one novel, narrator or character rather than to a whole body of work. In line with the aims of my research, I use the term mind style here to refer to character mind style. The creation of mind styles can affect how we ascribe character features including motivation, state of mind and attitude, with more unusual mind styles often foregrounded with features such as figurative language and pathetic fallacy. Mind style, according to Leech & Short, should be seen as a cline, rather than a binary choice of normal or unorthodox.

Semino (2002) has also refined the term *mind style*, suggesting that it needs to be differentiated from *world view* and *ideological point of view* (the three were treated as largely synonymous by Fowler). She uses world view as a more general term to refer to a character’s view of the world in which they exist. Ideological point of view is a specific element of world view and involves culturally, socially, politically and religiously shared aspects of experience. Mind style refers to more individual, personal or cognitive aspects of a character’s world view and experience. However, as McIntyre points out, in practice it is impossible to maintain a strict divide between these two concepts and consequently ‘ideological point of view and mind style should be understood as heuristic notions only’ (McIntyre, 2005: 24).

Semino (2007) adds further clarification to the discussion of mind style by incorporating theories already discussed in previous chapters of this research. Firstly, she employs schema

theory to explain how frame blocking may occur for certain characters, depending on the mind style constructed for them. Here, the possession and activation of appropriate schemata, or lack thereof, can create mind style as access to the frame knowledge needed to successfully comprehend and act in a given situation is restricted. Cognitive metaphor theory can also be applied. The nature of a character's relationship with or use of metaphor (specifically, whether it is more systematic or idiosyncratic), Semino suggests, reveals much about their mind style. As metaphors help us to make sense of abstract concepts in concrete terms, a more unusual presentation of a character's use and understanding of them may suggest a similarly unusual comprehension of the world.

#### **4.4.3 Emotion**

Many of the writers cited in this chapter have highlighted the link between character and emotion. This helps to emphasise the role of emotion in narrative comprehension outlined by the RPF. Frow (2014) claims that character relies on affect to create interest; without emotional engagement, the reader does not identify with a character and therefore lacks the motivation to model them in any detail. Frow uses this as a basis for his argument that we identify and engage with characters via a model much like Freud's concept of ego-centric binding, in which dreams (likened here to fictional accounts) provide an arena for the exploration of our selves. He summarises his position by suggesting that "'character" is an effect of the self-"recognition" of a subject in its dispersal through the multiple positions offered by a text' (Frow, 2014: 54). Consequently, reading character is intrinsically linked to learning about the self and others. Likewise, in support of his criticism of the linguistic focus of the study of fictional minds, Palmer (2004) suggests that the strong link between cognition and emotion can offer an insight into the non-verbal nature of consciousness. Such studies can be aided by the separation of emotional responses into three types: short-term emotional events, medium-term moods and long-term dispositions. Vermeule (2010) offers empathy as an explanation for simulation – an alternative, she suggests, to ToM in characterisation. Where ToM applies on-line inferential processes to determine factors including agency, goals and motivations, simulation uses off-line reasoning in which traces of these mental processes are run virtually. In other words, rather than engaging with characters because we are using the same mental processes as we do for real people, we

engage with them because an empathetic response triggers a simulation of these processes. Simulation can perhaps be characterised as more closely aligned with the fiction-centred practice of mind-modelling, as it distances mind attribution from real-world processes and makes it more applicable to fictional contexts.

In addition to the role of reader emotion in characterisation, character emotion plays several key roles in cognition. Firstly, Sanford & Emmott (2012) show that the emotions of characters are often inferred even when not explicit mention of them is made, suggesting that character emotion is key to any mental model constructed for that character. Schneider claims that readers often judge characters and their actions according to moral values, whether they belong to the reader or are set up by the text. He calls this latter type of value part of the creation of an 'authorial audience' (Schneider, 2001: 614). These moral judgements are intrinsically tied to emotion and play an important role in characterisation, although judgements based on the values of an authorial audience may differ over time, and so should be used with caution as a basis for theorising reader judgement. Crucially, 'moral approval influences how a reader might empathize with a character' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 212), and so influences overall reader engagement with and modelling of a text and its characters.

#### **4.5 Constructing character: conceptual blending**

A central tenet of my revised model of characterisation is that conceptual blending can not only be applied to complex logical reasoning and metaphorical blending, but can also provide a useful way of modelling how existing and new information about characters are combined. I touched on this briefly in Section 2.4 as a way of combining various character-relevant schemata, and revisit it here to emphasise its use for combining more complex information. Figure 4.2 outlines a conceptual blend for the intertextual model introduced in Section 3.2.1 (Figure 3.1), suggesting how textual and situational information from the base text (*Wyrd Sisters*) and its intertext (*Macbeth*) combine via blending to construct a model of Pratchett's characters.

It is worth noting at this stage that, for less complex mappings, we could view this process as one of superimposition rather than blending. For example, a character stereotype may initially superimpose itself on a text's character when triggered by simple text features like a name or type-label, with blending of key character type element with text-specific information only occurring once more information is obtained by the reader. This provides a more complete account of the characterisation process from the triggering of initial knowledge structures to more complex, piecemeal integration.

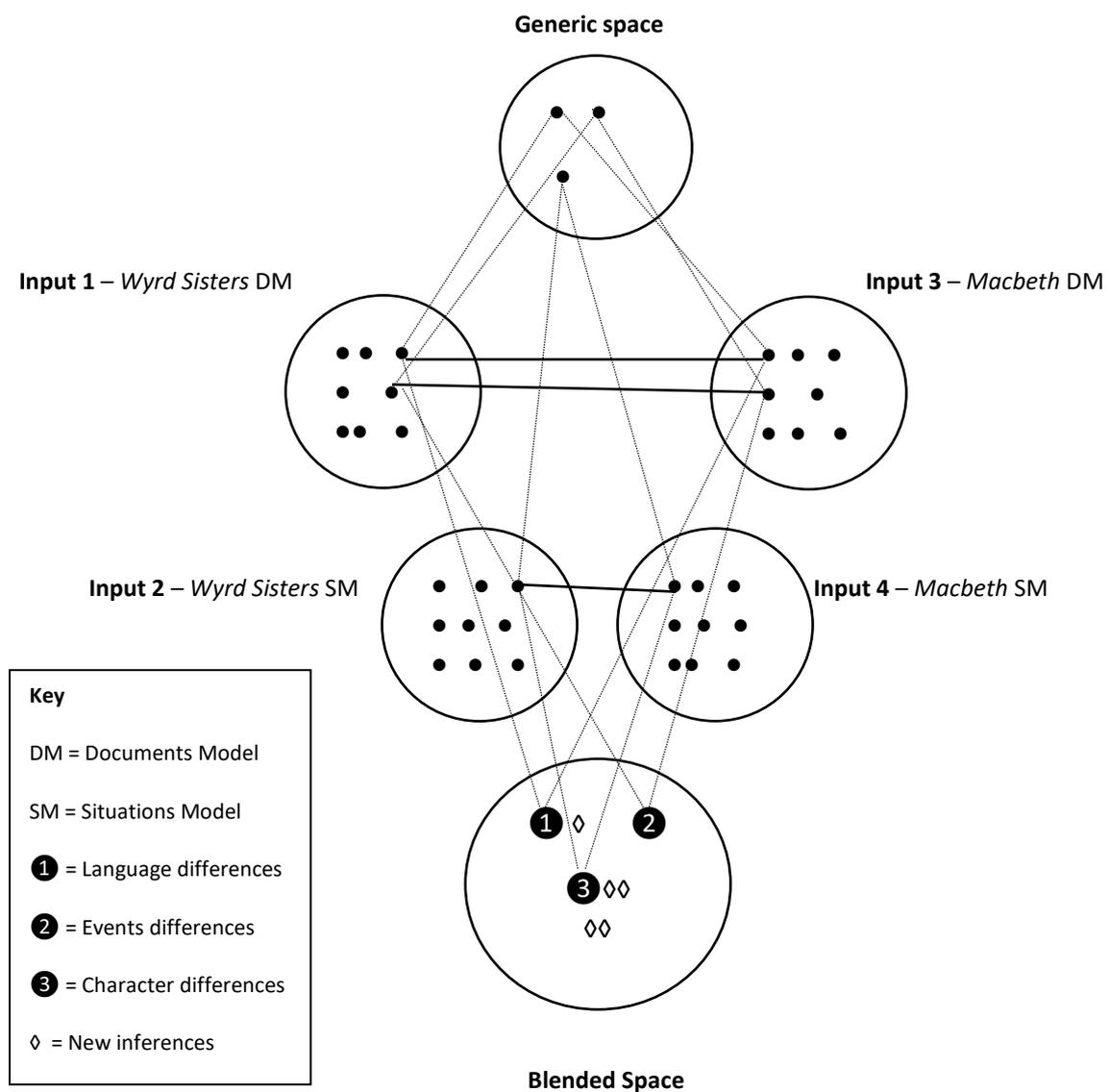


Figure 4.2: A cognitive blend for the *witch* characters within a *Wyrđ Sisters* Situation model.

## 4.6 Chapter conclusion

The question of character is not one of whether character is found in the text or the reader's mind, of whether the character is flat or round, type or person-like. Rather, relevant questions concern the type and complexity of knowledge and the cognitive mechanisms needed to infer and model character. As Frow suggests, 'the price paid for the continuity between character and person is that both must be thought of in terms of presence - of 'real' personhood - rather than in terms of textuality' (Frow, 2014: 17). Textual cues such as narration, character name and speech can guide the modelling of character based on linguistic and social knowledge. However, the role of these textual features is often more correctly conceived of as a basis for prompting narrative interrelations. These textual trails provide information about character types, roles and settings that combines with information in the base text to build a fuller character model.

Intertextual processes also play a role in the attribution of minds to characters and the reader's resulting emotional engagement with them. By providing generic frameworks and possible story worlds, the narrative interrelations made by readers guide the construction of fictional minds. Mind-modelling and affective processes in fiction provide insight into why readers engage with characters and, consequently, influence the ways in which character is modelled during reading.

# 5. Case study 1: Terry Pratchett's witches

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## 5.1 Introduction

After situating Pratchett's work in relation to the literary criticism it has received and introducing the texts in which Pratchett's witches appear, my analysis begins by exploring the schemata that are likely to govern character comprehension in these texts. This mirrors the starting point of Culpeper's (2001) critique of Katherine in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and provides a logical beginning to any character analysis, as such cognitive structures underpin all comprehension. The continuing analysis of how such schemata are instantiated by the texts also echoes Culpeper, although my emphasis will be firmly grounded in the Idiom Principle and the Rhetorical Processing Framework (RPF) in order to more clearly account for model these processes. I then link textual and cognitive structures at play in this characterisation process to the intertextual nature of character in general, and of these characters specifically. Finally, I look at the ways in which experientiality governs the modelling of the minds and mind styles perceived in Pratchett's work in order to build a complete picture of the characterisation process according to my revised model and its role in reader engagement with character.

## 5.2 Pratchett's work: An overview

### 5.2.1 Pratchett and the critics

Pratchett's work has been written about using a number of critical themes in recent years. As a fantasy author this commentary often appears in formats not commonly seen in other areas of fiction. Specifically, a number of companions to his *Discworld* series provide additional narrative combined with critical commentary. These include *The Folklore of*

*Discworld* (Pratchett & Simpson, 2009) – an in-depth exploration and critique of the real-world folkloric basis for many Discworld characters and settings, and the *Science of Discworld* series (Pratchett et al, 1999; 2002; 2005 & 2013) – a series of four books mixing Pratchett’s narrative with alternate popular science chapters explaining the real-world discoveries and inventions that inspired Pratchett’s text. While these texts are, undoubtedly, intended for a popular reading audience rather than a critical one, they nevertheless take a literary-critical view of the basis for much of Pratchett’s work by exploring the relationship between the fantasy and real worlds and the commentary of the former on the latter.

In addition to work that spans the divide between fiction and criticism, several purely critical approaches to Pratchett also exist. One of the earliest of these is *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature* (Butler et al, 2000). The authors in this collection of essays apply an array of theories in order to prove that Pratchett’s work deserves to be viewed from a literary critical standpoint. Their aim is to right the claim that

suffering from the triple damnation of writing popular, humorous fantasy, Pratchett has largely been ignored by the press, and when he is reviewed, often doesn’t get any real attention beyond another description of the Discworld itself (Langford, 2000).

The essays in this volume view Pratchett through various critical lenses, including theories of narrative space mapping and ethics, to studies of specific characters, including Death, the Librarian and the City Watch. Most relevant to this study is Sayer’s examination of the witches, which focuses on representations of gendered oppositions through magic on the Discworld. Specifically, Sayer discusses presentations of female magic as craft- and nature-based, as opposed to male wizards’ lore- and book- centred practices, referring to ‘ecocriticism, social geography and post-feminism’ (Sayer, 2000) in order to analyse these central characters. A number of Sayer’s ideas link closely to my own approach to the witches, most notably the role of appearance and intertextuality, and are expanded using the theories in my revised characterisation model during this chapter. Sayer’s critique, grounded in gender studies and feminism, is reflected in most approaches to Pratchett’s witches (Andersson, 2006; Croft, 2009; Sinclair, 2015).

A similar approach is taken in a second collection of essays, *Discworld and the Disciplines* (Alton & Spruiell, 2014), an interdisciplinary approach to Pratchett’s work that applies

theories from politics, philosophy, visual semiotics, humour and corpus stylistics. From the perspective of this linguistic study, the corpus stylistic account of Pratchett's work holds most potential for applicability. However, Spruill's (2014) approach builds an account of Pratchett's style using corpus analysis and frequency-based data, with the aim of accounting for the humorous effects perceived in Pratchett's work. This does not align with my approach to modelling characterisation, which employs corpus analysis to verify intuitions about associated meanings. The interdisciplinary perspectives outlined here are reflected across other critical approaches to Pratchett, which explore perspectives of postmodernism, intertextuality and story (Smith, 2007; Brown, 2009; Noone, 2010; Luthi, 2014; Donaldson, 2014), education and children's literature (Gruner, 2011; Haberkorn & Reinhardt, 2011) and humour and the carnivalesque (Smith, 2012).

### **5.2.2 The witch novels**

*Wyrd Sisters* is the first book to feature the witches as a trio (Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg and Magrat Garlick) and forms part of the central witches trilogy. After the King of Lancre is murdered by his cousin, Duke Felmet, the witches send his baby son to safety. Eventually, they realise that they cannot wait for the rightful heir to the throne to grow up and return to save the kingdom, so they cast a spell to move the kingdom fifteen years into the future. Meanwhile, Felmet is angered by the power and respect the witches have and plots against them using propaganda, finally commissioning a play to be written to discredit them. This backfires as the witches magically alter the play to reveal the truth about Duke Felmet and the King's murder, leading to Felmet's final leap into insanity and eventual death.

*Witches Abroad* sees Magrat inherit the role of fairy godmother, much to the displeasure of the other witches who resent their younger colleague's rise in status. The three travel to the far-off land of Genua in order to challenge Lillith, another fairy godmother who, crazed with power, is using the force of story to rule the kingdom and shape events there to her will. Along the way they encounter several situations, many of which offer alternate accounts of recognisable stories and characters, from a sleeping princess trapped in a castle and a wolf cursed to act like a human and attack grandmothers, to cottages landing on their heads and

an eerie village living under the nocturnal threat of the local count. The witches eventually reach Genua and manage to stop the forced marriage of a local girl to an imposter posing as a prince. There are several other novels that feature the witches as central characters: *Equal Rites*, *Lords and Ladies*, *Maskerade*, *Carpe Jugulum* and the Tiffany Aching books. These are not the focus of this analysis, although I occasionally draw relevant examples from them.

### 5.3 Witches in the mind: *Wyrd* schema & scenarios

As the first novel that presents the central witch characters as a trio, *Wyrd Sisters* is a logical starting point from which to begin modelling the schematic elements at work when constructing Pratchett's witches. These fall under the RPF label of Fundamental Scenario Mapping, a specific application of schema theory to narrative which views comprehension (and, by extension, characterisation) as a product of combing information from the text with familiar situations (which contain roles for people and characters). *Wyrd Sisters* is, along with *Witches Abroad*, one of only two texts featuring the witches that refer to them explicitly in the title. Consequently, the name is key to triggering the initial top-down knowledge needed to structure the characterisation process. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) defines *Wyrd* as an Old English spelling of the noun *weird*, meaning 'the principle, power, or agency by which events are predetermined; fate, destiny' ("weird", 2019: 1.a.), 'a witch or wizard, a soothsayer' ("weird", 2019: 2.b.) or, in the plural form, 'the Fates, the three goddesses supposed to determine the course of human life' ("weird", 2019: 2.a.). *Weird-woman*, the form most closely mirrored in the title of the novel, refers to a witch ("weird, n", 2019: C2). However, the title applied to Pratchett's witches is not a hyphenated compound; *wyrd* occupies an adjectival slot. The first OED entry for *weird* as an adjective (no definition is given for an adjective with the alternate spelling) points more clearly to the likely origin of Pratchett's label: 'having the power to control the fate or destiny of human beings [...] originally in the *Weird Sisters* = (a) the Fates; (b) the witches in *Macbeth* ("weird, adj.", 2019: 1). It seems reasonable to presume that the Old English spelling was chosen to emphasise the more traditional meaning and trigger the desired knowledge in the reader, rather than have them default to the modern meaning of *weird* as strange, unusual, odd or

fantastic (“weird, adj,” 2019: 4.a.). Based on the use of this less common form, there is also a strong suggestion that an awareness of the schematic knowledge it would have triggered at the time of its use (either originally or at the time of Shakespeare’s use) is desirable or intended. This is especially relevant for the contrast it provides to the modern views of witchcraft likely to be prevalent amongst Pratchett’s readers, which view such witchcraft as belonging to the realm of fantasy, or as a valid cultural or religious practice. The salient question arising from this is how likely readers are to make the narrative interrelations Pratchett presumably intended, an issue explored further in Section 5.5.2.

An initial schema for the witches, narrative interrelations allowing, is therefore likely to include links to magic, witchcraft and fate. The elements that potentially contribute to the WYRD schema may be drawn from fiction, in the form of other characters labelled as witches, and from real life, representing our impressions of people who label themselves, or are labelled by others as, witches in both past and modern society. Elements derived from fiction draw on genre-based knowledge of character type, setting and plot, and provide frames that guide expectation and comprehension of character setting and action. Elements derived from real life, on the other hand, have their basis in folk taxonomies and social typologies. Drawing on the schema given in my initial analysis (Figure 1.12), Figure 5.1 outlines the schematic elements likely to be found in a WYRD schema (here based solely on the term *wyrd*, with no text-based inferences).

|                         |                     | <b>Traditional</b>                              | <b>Modern</b>                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| <b>Person</b>           | <i>Habit</i>        | Magic/spell casting                             | Magic/spell casting                     |
|                         | <i>Goal</i>         | To control fate, to influence events            | Good or bad, noble or self-interest     |
|                         | <i>Trait</i>        | Cruel, evil, deceptive, controlling, mysterious | Evil and cruel or intelligent and brave |
| <b>Social role</b>      | <i>Supernatural</i> | Controller of fate, worker of magic             | worker of magic, villain or hero        |
|                         | <i>Occupation</i>   | Wise-woman, witch                               | Any                                     |
| <b>Group membership</b> | <i>Gender</i>       | Female  | Female                                  |
|                         | <i>Religion</i>     | Devil-worship                                   | Any/not specified                       |
| <b>Appearance</b>       | <i>Hair</i>         | Grey, wild/messy                                |   |
|                         | <i>Clothes</i>      | Black, pointy hat                               |   |
|                         | <i>Face</i>         | Warts, unattractive, wrinkled                   |   |
|                         | <i>Body</i>         | Hunched / elderly                               |   |

Figure 5.1: Schematic elements in a WYRD schema.

The schema given here represents elements likely to be associated traditionally with the term *wyrd*, based on the *OED* definitions and associations given above. The modern witch-related associations are based on a brief analysis of common examples of witches in popular culture. This was done using a sample of internet search results from a variety of popular websites (Google, Barnes & Noble, Goodreads, Librarything and Bustle). Two key features of the search are particularly noteworthy. Firstly, apart from dictionary definitions and encyclopaedic entries of *witch*, all references are to fictional witches (common examples are the witches in *Harry Potter* series, the good and bad witches in *The Wizard of Oz*, the White Witch in C.S. Lewis's *The lion, the witch and the wardrobe* and the three witches in *Macbeth*). This sets modern schematic representations of witches apart from traditional ones, as use of *wyrd* to describe a person or practice in Shakespeare's time and before was far more likely to carry accusations of real-life witchcraft, as evidenced by witch trials throughout the UK in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A schema for the modern witch, centred around fictional representations, is consequently more reliant initially on genre-based character knowledge, rather than the stereotypes of real-world folk taxonomy.

Secondly, the central role of appearance for many of the characters given as prototypical examples provides justification for the inclusion of appearance as a key element of the WYRD schema. While the good witches are mostly young, and described positively in terms of appearance when such description is included at all, the bad witches are ugly and/or disguising their great age with magic. For example, the Wicked Witch of the West is famously depicted as green-skinned, hook-nosed and haggard in the 1939 film, whereas Glinda is young and beautiful (Fleming, 1939). Roald Dahl's evil witches hide their hideous appearance behind masks and wigs, as they have bald heads, claws and large nostrils (Dahl, 1985). Lewis's White Witch has a harsh beauty that reflects her tyrannical power ('her face was white...like snow or paper or icing-sugar, except for her very red mouth. It was a beautiful face in other respects, but proud and cold and stern' - Lewis, 1980: 35). Conversely, descriptions of good witches tend to focus far more on their character traits. For example, Hermione is brave, intelligent and moral ('you're the cleverest witch of your age I've ever met, Hermione' - Rowling, 2000: 253). These provide prototypical features that we can assume are a starting point for many readers when processing modern witch characters.

It is clear from the breadth of information contained in this initial schema that even at this early stage of the characterisation process, tracking relevant input, references and intentions is a complex process. The reader is faced with combining fictional and real-world input from historical and modern societies, in addition to combining relevant knowledge about characters and people with inferences about authorial intention. Conceptual blending is undoubtedly at play to combine and extrapolate from this vast reserve of information.

## **5.4 Witches in the text: rhetorical focus on character**

This section outlines the ways in which specific features of the surface text – names and representations of speech and thought – contribute to the characterisation of Pratchett’s witches in varied and complex ways. This is made possible by the ways in which they relate to and react against the schematic associations they trigger. In line with the RPF’s Rhetorical Focussing Principle, these features focus reader attention on character-relevant information, influencing the construction of character models within the larger mental model of the text.

### **5.4.1 Names**

Naming plays a prominent role in the characterisation of Pratchett’s witches, both in terms of instantiating relevant schemata and questioning the application of the character types and stereotypes they contain. This is a reflection of the power of language and text for these characters, with the power to name things and thus control your own story an element of the witches’ characters that ‘cuts across the sequence’ of witch novels (Sayer, 2000). Therefore it is important to note that *wyrd sisters* is not a title the witches give themselves but one given to them in the text as a whole, and in one specific instance by their enemy, Duchess Felmet (“get back to your cauldrons, wyrd sisters” - *Wyrd Sisters*: 118). As Pratchett & Simpson point out, ‘being strong individualists, it would never occur to [...them] to give themselves a collective name’ (Pratchett & Simpson, 2009: 200). Similar labels for the witches are used throughout the novel to draw attention to power of such names and

their manipulation by those who wield them. For example, Lord Felmet's fool astutely observes that names can be used against the witches ('Crone. Evil eye. Stupid old woman.', *Wyrd Sisters*: 67), while a castle guard who attempts to stop Granny Weatherwax finds himself quickly defeated and challenged regarding his choice of address: "your peasant magic is for fools, mother of the night" [...] "Mother of the night, indeed!" (*Wyrd Sisters*, 15-16). This aspect of naming is reflective of what Margolin (2002) calls the pragmatics of naming - the exploration of who has the authority to bestow names upon a character, and how that authority is used. As with all attempts to wield authority over the witches, these are not received well. As a result, the labels that most readily trigger schematic associations with a WYRD or WITCH schema are also those that are most quickly challenged in the texts, causing the schematic assumptions they instantiate to also be questioned.

Another use of naming to build a picture of character for the witches is seen in the titles the characters are known by within their community. As Granny explains:

"them as knows me, or has earned it one way or another, calls me Granny Weatherwax [...] it's what they call a honorific, like Old Mother So-and-so, or Goody Thingy, or Nanny Whatsername" (*A hat full of sky*, 270).

Within the witch community of the Discworld, where various witches are referred to as *Goody*, *Gammer*, *Old Mother*, *Nanny* and *Granny*, the assignation of these familial titles as a mark of respect reveals the social hierarchy of the characters. Emphasis is placed on the significance of these titles by the giving or withholding of permission to use them. Thus Granny uses *Mistress Weatherwax* as her preferred title for those outside the witching community, *Miss* is also permitted, but the informality of *missus* is not tolerated ("Mss" snapped Granny", *Wyrd Sisters*: 69). The same social standing is apparent in Nanny Ogg's title, but no title is given to Magrat, as junior witch – a reflection of her position within the group. In fact, as Magrat reflects, her name has quite the opposite effect. Given by a mother who lacked talent in spelling, she muses that

a caring parent would have spelled Margaret correctly. And then she could have been a Peggy, or a Maggie—big, robust names, full of reliability. There wasn't much you could do with a Magrat. It sounded like something that lived in a hole in a river bank and was always getting flooded out (*Witches Abroad*: 31).

Magrat is so convinced of the negative power of her name on her character that, in an attempt to avoid a similar fate for her daughter, she inadvertently names her 'Esmerelda Margaret Note Spelling of Lancre' (*Carpe Jugulum*: 47), thanks to a too-literal priest.

Finally, the most complex naming the witches receive refers to their role in the witch-lore triad of 'the maiden, the mother and the crone' (*Witches Abroad*: 248). Here we see an example of a schematic cue to the WYRD schema, in the reference to three witches, and to generic characterisation frames in general in the reference to types of character. Against these schematic backgrounds, the three characters display their complexity. Granny fills the role of crone by default but, as Nanny muses, 'Granny combined all three [roles] in one' (*Maskerade*: 15), and so is difficult to categorise in such simplistic terms. Meanwhile, Magrat 'lives out the complexity of the traditional identities associated with femininity in changing from maiden to mother, witch to queen' (Sayer, 2000: 94), and Nanny, while of the same generation as Granny, is the eternal mother (of fifteen children and countless grandchildren). This reflects the various roles that the characters step in and out of during the Discworld series that complicate the construction of their characters.

## 5.4.2 Speech & thought

### Language, dialect & non-standard use

The use of spoken language to prompt inferences about the witches is clear from the first meeting with the would-be coven used in my initial analysis and neatly illustrated again in their second meeting:

1. "Good evening," said Granny.  
"Well met by moonlight," said Magrat politely. "Merry meet. A star shines on—"  
"Wotcha," said Nanny Ogg. Magrat winced. (*Wyrd sisters*: 50)

The neutral, no-nonsense formality of Granny's opening line is contrasted with the array of schematic cues provided in Magrat's response. She continues to use Shakespearean language, this time a take the greeting 'Ill met by moonlight' from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here, the greeting references fairy magic rather than witchcraft – a less specific and, perhaps, more positive character type for most readers. The rest of her contribution pulls magical references from other sources. *Merry meet* is often cited as a standard Wiccan

greeting, as verified by a Google search and UrbanDictionary.com (Shakespeare refers to merry meetings in several plays, but I have been unable to find the phrase merry meet as a greeting). *A star shines on the hour of our meeting* is an Elvish greeting from *The Lord of the Rings*. As a result, Magrat's speech serves to place her enthusiasm for magical tradition (however stereotypical) in stark contrast to Granny's formal greeting.

Nanny's highly informal salutation opposes both Granny's and Magrat's in Extract 1. Much can be implied from this short response - Nanny may be deliberately diffusing the formality of the situation, or even antagonising the other participants. However, such colloquial use of language is standard for Nanny and, over the course of the witches' texts, forms a distinctive idiolect with greetings including the memorable "What ho, my old boiler," [...] Wotcher, Magrat. Pull up a chair and call the cat a bastard." (*Wyrd Sisters*: 69). Granny also betrays her true character by using non-standard dialectal forms, revealing her formality as an affectation and prompting inference as to its purpose. For example, she frequently uses third person *s* incorrectly ("I knows all about folk songs" - *Witches Abroad*: 61) and elides initial letters ("I don't 'old with it," - *Witches Abroad*: 43), both suggestive of a regional dialect. Magrat's speech, in contrast, betrays little dialect and is relatively neutral apart from in situations such as that of extract 1, where she uses what I propose can be thought of as a textual dialect (in other words, language characterised by its use of intertextual styles and phrases).

A struggle between Granny's two linguistic selves – the formality she adopts as head witch versus her natural dialect – is most clear in her rare uses of the written word, as illustrated graphologically in this letter to the Archancellor of the Discworld's leading magical university:

2. To ther Hed Wizzard, Unsene Universety,

Greatings, I hop you ar well, I am sending to you won Escarrina Smith, shee hath thee maekings of wizzardery but whot may be ferther dun wyth hyr I knowe not shee is a gode worker and clene about hyr person allso skilled in diurse arts of thee howse, I will send Monies wyth hyr

May you liv longe and ende youre days in pese, And oblije, Esmerelder Weatherwaxe (Mss) Wytch. (*Equal Rites*: 86)

Non-standard forms abound in this extract, from frequent and obvious spelling errors to archaic forms (*hath, I knowe not*). Granny clearly lacks the skill in written language to effectively convey the level of formality she desires. This lack of skill is closely tied to a distrust of the written word that is evocative of a particular mind style, discussed in section 5.6.2. Similar use of the written word is used to cue characterisations of Nanny Ogg, although her frequent letters home in *Witches Abroad* betray a devotion to the colloquial in contrast to Granny's desired formality:

3. Dear Jason unt so witer (as they say in foreign parts),

Well here's a thing yore ole Mum doin Time in prison again, Im a old lag, youll have to send me a cake with a vial in it and I shall have little arrows on my close just my joke. This is a Sketch of the dunjon. Im putting a X where we are, which is Inside. (*Witches Abroad*: 251).

Of particular interest to the characterisation of the witches via speech and language use is their conscious use of language as a character-building and plot-influencing device, prompting the reader to construct ever more complex character models. An instance of this is seen when the witches adopt the guise of harmless wood-gatherers in order to influence events in *Wyrd Sisters* and guide the banished prince back to Lancre (extracts 4, 5 & 6). The clashes between the language required for the role they must play and their natural speech serves to highlight, firstly, the different characters of the witches themselves and, secondly, their metatextual awareness of language as a tool for prompting influential schematic associations and narrative interrelations. In these extracts, direct speech is used to set each witch in opposition to the linguistics traits of the character type they are playing. The first encounter – Granny's – begins by cueing a schema for such an encounter (*Ho there, good mother*). This frame is quickly disrupted, however, by a contrast between Granny's language (*lawks, young master, my poor old heart*) and the manner in which it is delivered (in a defiantly short-tempered fashion):

4. "Ho there, good mother," he said. [...]  
"Mistress," snapped Granny Weatherwax. "And I'm a poor old woman gathering wood," she added defiantly.  
She cleared her throat. "Lawks," she went on. "You did give me a fright, young master. My poor old heart." [...]  
"Your poor old heart what?"

“What about my poor old heart?” said Granny, who wasn’t used to acting like an old woman and had a very limited repertoire in this area. (*Wyrdsisters*: 198).

The frame-based knowledge that would usually help guide characterisation within such encounters in a more traditional narrative begins the second encounter on a shakier footing, as Magrat’s age doesn’t align with the expectations of the schema. She quickly reverts to her natural speech patterns, characterised by a lack of dialectical markers:

5. “Ho there, old...good...” he hazarded.  
Magrat pushed back her shawl.  
“Just a humble wood gatherer,” she snapped. She held up a twig for proof. [...]  
“Would you care to share our lunch, old...good wo...miss?” he said. “It’s only salt pork, I’m afraid.”  
“Meat is extremely bad for the digestive system,” said Magrat. “If you could see inside your colon you’d be horrified.” (*Wyrdsisters*: 199)

Nanny, as ever, stays true to her colloquial idiolect (*bugger, spot on*). The fact that she hardly bothers to adopt the language of the role assigned to her implies a self-assuredness and lack of artifice consistent throughout Pratchett’s work:

6. [...] “which way’s Lancre?”  
“Keep on, left at the ravine, then you pick up the track that leads to a bridge, you can’t miss it,” said Nanny promptly.  
Hwel grabbed the reins. “You forgot about the lawks.”  
“Bugger. Sorry. Lawks.”  
“And you’re a humble old wood gatherer, I expect,” Hwel went on.  
“Spot on, lad,” said Nanny cheerfully. (*Wyrdsisters*: 200)

### **Speech and thought presentation.**

Direct speech is by far the most common form used to represent the witches’ speech, as seen in Extracts 1, 4, 5 & 6. As a reflection of character unfiltered by narration, such instances often provide the clearest cues for characterisation, as discussed in relation to dialect and non-standard use in relation to these examples. The prevalence of this form of speech report for the witches suggests the significance of specific features of their language use to their characters, and the reader may infer an independence of character from the lack of narrative filter in these instances. Other forms of speech report are rare and mostly

used to skip longer sections of direct speech. For example, speech acts are reported to update other characters of events already familiar to the reader:

7. Granny explained. Nanny interrupted a few times with brief questions (*Wyrd Sisters*: 90-91).

Consequently, examinations of speech presentation offer little beyond that already discussed in terms of the witches' language. Thought presentation, however, is more informative.

Narrative report of action (NRA) is common in descriptions of the witches and is often accompanied with thought report. Of the three witches, Magrat is most frequently the subject of thought report. This is exemplified in extract 8, where an action suggestive of inner turmoil is followed by details of these mental processes in the form of Free Indirect Thought (FIT), characterised by the presence of reporting features like *she felt* and *to her amazement*, alongside narrative past tense.

8. Magrat's hands shook slightly as they made the tea. Of course, it was all very gratifying, but it was a bit nerve-racking to start one's working life as village witch between Granny and, on the other side of the forest, Nanny Ogg. It'd been her idea to form a local coven. She felt it was more, well, occult. To her amazement the other two had agreed or, at least, hadn't disagreed much (*Wyrd Sisters*: 7).

This example is indicative of her character's standing in the trio and her new-age views of witchcraft, as she frequently voices many of her true feelings and beliefs only in her head to avoid conflicts with the two older witches, who take a more traditional approach. As a result, it is Magrat who is often the most relatable character, as we have more unfiltered access to her thought processes.

Similar combinations of reports of action and thought are seen in depictions of the other witches and, likewise, provide further cues for modelling their characters. In extract 9, Granny's action of sitting is combined with thought report that uses her own linguistic idiosyncrasies (the non-standard spelling of *metterforically*) to emphasise the representation of direct thought and, consequently, suggests the directness of the reported thoughts in the rest of the extract.

9. [...Granny] sat down in her rocking chair, which started to rock all by itself. She'd often thought of the forest as a sprawling creature, but only metaphorically, as a wizard would put it; drowsy and purring with bumblebees in the summer, roaring and raging in autumn gales, curled in on itself and sleeping in the winter. It occurred to her that in addition to being a collection of other things, the forest was a thing in itself. Alive, only not alive in the way that, say, a shrew was alive (*Wyrd Sisters*: 76-77).

A final significant use of thought report is in providing commentary on one character by another – most notably of Granny who, as the most inscrutable of the three, is often the subject of the other's musings. In these instances, thought report provides the reader with a telling combination of commentary on Granny that is situated firmly within Magrat's (extract 10) and Nanny's (extract 11) particular mind sets. For Magrat, Granny's behaviour provides a direct comment upon Magrat's own character – illustrative of her self-critical, subservient nature. Nanny's thoughts display her characteristic peace-keeping role; Nanny may often be depicted as a simple, fun-loving soul, but she is wise enough to judge another's mood and act accordingly.

10. As [...Magrat] plunged down toward the forest roof in a long shallow dive she reflected that there was possibly something complimentary in the way Granny Weatherwax resolutely refused to consider other people's problems. It implied that, in her considerable opinion, they were quite capable of sorting them out by themselves (*Wyrd Sisters*: 144).
11. Nanny looked at Granny Weatherwax's hand. It was bleeding. Then she looked at Granny Weatherwax's face, and decided that she'd never admit that she'd looked at Granny Weatherwax's hand (*Witches Abroad*: 35).

All these instances of thought report also play a central role on constructing a mind style for the characters, as explored in Section 5.6.2.

## 5.5 Experiencing wyrd minds

This section looks at the unusual ways in which minds are presented in the witch novels. This goes beyond the simple attribution of minds to the characters by the reader, and is a central theme running through the texts. Using Granny Weatherwax as a focal point, as she

is the most interesting character in terms of mental activity, I present a novel approach to mind attribution and describe the construction of her unique mind style, emphasising the role of the Rhetorical Processing Framework's notion of experientiality as it applies to the embodied, emotional experience of these characters.

### **5.5.1 Mind-modelling a wyrd mind**

The use of thought report (discussed in Section 5.4.2) and the actions described in or inferable from the extracts used throughout this analysis act as key prompts for attributing minds to characters. Consequently, much of the discussion so far can be recast as an analysis of how readers model the minds of the witches using their speech, thought and action. A particularly interesting, and somewhat unusual, aspect of mind-modelling and mental functioning concerning the witches is the mind-modelling that takes place between characters. This takes the form of headology (or folk psychology, as we would call it) and is a central tenet of a witch's magic that places the essence of magic in the mind and reflects the process of mind attribution. As an expert practitioner of headology, Granny gains a higher than average awareness of the human mind. This is used frequently by Granny to help patients in her village. A family suffering from illness from a well contaminated by the toilet do not understand the link to bacteria, but they move the two apart when Granny explains that the illness is caused goblins, attracted by the smell of the privy. A man with chest pain is told to walk five miles every day to throw three pennies in a lucky fountain, because 'a five mile walk in the fresh air every day will see him right as rain', but he needs the belief in magic to make him do this. As Granny explains, 'you have to tell people a story they can understand' (*A Hat full of sky*: 243). These are simple tricks that often disappoint other characters when they discover the lack of actual magic involved. However, they reveal a great deal about Granny's modelling of the minds of others. We see similar instances of more usual, everyday mind-modelling in extracts 9, 10 & 11, where each witch considers the mental processes of another in their consideration of motivation and consequence.

### 5.5.2 Wyrð mind styles

As with mind-modelling, many of the extracts given in this chapter may contribute to the modelling of particular mind styles for the witches. For example, Magrat views the world very differently to the older witches and is often cast, via speech and thought presentation, in a subservient or oppositional position to them (as in extracts 1, 8 & 10). However, Granny again presents the most interesting prospect for considerations of mind style construction. This is particularly true of her relationship with language and the non-literal, the former initially seen in extract 2 in her unfamiliarity with the written word and the latter in extract 16 (section 5.6.3, below) in her unease with the conventions of fiction, but is clearest in her mistrust of the metaphorical.

Struggling to use and understand metaphors is a common feature of Granny Weatherwax's interactions, as seen in extract 12. Here, Granny applies flexibility to the idiom *the world is your oyster* that does not exist in common language use.

12. "Get your mind right [...] and the world is your..." The old witch leaned down to Tiffany and whispered: "What's that thing, lives in the sea, very small, folks eat it?"

"Shrimp?" Tiffany suggested, a bit puzzled.

"Shrimp? All right. The world is your shrimp" (*A hat full of sky*: 233).

Here, the error seems to be merely lack of linguistic knowledge or skill. However, Granny's relationship with metaphor is more complex than this, and often takes on a metalinguistic quality. Firstly, her responses to metaphor are foregrounded by the misspelling of the term when attributed to her, whether in direct speech, thought or narration. She calls it 'metterfor' (*Equal Rites*: 156), 'metterforically' (extract 9) or 'mettyfor' (*Witches Abroad*: 61) – the inconsistent misspellings a reflection of her unfamiliarity and unease with the concept, and of written language in general. Her response to mention of it by others – "“Oh,” said Granny darkly, “one of them things”" (*Witches Abroad*: 97) – reinforces this.

Granny's view of metaphor is contrary to the way in which cognitive linguists believe it is used in everyday language, which foregrounds certain elements of her world view concerning language use. Many cognitive linguists suggest that metaphor underlies all thinking (for example Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and that it is used as a way of modelling

shared experience (Li, 2012; Strauss & Quinn, 1997; Kovecses, 1999). Rather than using figurative language as a tool for understanding and sharing information (whether for aesthetic or practical purposes), Granny mistrusts it because she believes that it veils the true meaning of things. As a result, she reveals unusual cognitive processes that are more commonly associated with autistic characters (Bockting, 1994; Semino, 2014). However, as Granny has far more command over social interaction than most characters with similar cognitive traits, her lack of figurative cognition instead draws attention to the cognitive and literary process of metaphor itself and reveals a very literal world view and a distrust of those who seek to mask reality. This aspect of Granny's character provides a highly salient, literal example of the role of figurative language, which is intrinsically tied to the argument for text processing via units of meaning, in characterisation.

### 5.5.3 Experientiality

#### **Embodiment**

The simplest way to foreground the idea of the embodied mind for the purposes of characterisation is in terms of the physical features of the characters in question (Dancygier calls this 'embodied characterisation' - Dancygier, 2012: 168). This is seen in descriptions of all three witches. Nanny has 'white curls so thick she might have been wearing a helmet' (*Wyrd Sisters*: 7) and is 'as gummy as a baby [...with] a face like a small dried raisin' (*Wyrd Sisters*: 33), both descriptions reflecting her role as matriarch and respected village elder. Magrat's lack of presence and will is mirrored in the fact that she has 'a watery expression of goodwill wedged between a body like a maypole and hair like a haystack after a gale' (*Witches Abroad*: 22). Again, however, it is Granny that offers the most interesting example of embodied characterisation in the clash between her natural appearance and how she feels a witch should look:

13. It was one of the few sorrows of Granny Weatherwax's life that, despite all her efforts, she'd arrived at the peak of her career with a complexion like a rosy apple and all her teeth. No amount of charms could persuade a wart to take root on her handsome if slightly equine features, and vast intakes of sugar only served to give her boundless energy. (*Wyrd Sisters*: 27)

Granny attempts to make up for her lack of witch-like appearance in all other aspects of her appearance, wearing the traditional black hat and clothing she deems suitable to let people know she is witch, reflecting a recurring theme in the witches' narratives of the idea that the body shapes personality and vice-versa (Sayer, 2000). Granny wants to look like a stereotypical witch for the tradition, status and respect she associates with that appearance, but her innate goodness will not allow it. We see the same effect in Margat, who's appearance is 'naturally resistant to magic' (*Wyrd Sisters*: 103), and so is unable to cast spells to create the illusion of glamorous womanhood she desires. This idea of the literal embodiment of character is taken further in the character of Agnes Nitt, the witch who replaces Margat when she becomes Queen of Lancre. In choosing a pseudonym – Perdita ('hinting at darkness and intrigue and, incidentally, of someone who was quite thin' – *Maskerade*: 15) – Agnes inadvertently creates an alternate persona as a 'repository for all those thoughts that Agnes couldn't think because of her wonderful personality' (*Maskerade*: 30) - her 'wonderful personality' coming, of course, from her own physical appearance of someone with 'impressive build' (*Maskerade*: 18). Consequently, embodiment has manifest physical power for the witches, rather than being simply an influence on cognition.

The concept of embodiment is also reflected in the physical spaces occupied by the witches. As Schneider (2001) suggests, traits and related world views can be mapped from fictional space to character. Descriptions of the witches' homes provide a clear example of this:

14. Most witches preferred to live in isolated cottages with the traditional curly chimneys and weed-grown thatch. Granny Weatherwax approved of this; it was no good being a witch unless you let people know.

Nanny Ogg didn't care much about what people knew and even less for what they thought, and lived in a new, knick-knack crammed cottage in the middle of Lancre town itself and at the heart of her own private empire. [...] Above the hearth was a huge pokerwork sign saying "Mother." No tyrant in the whole history of the world had ever achieved a domination so complete... (*Wyrd Sisters*: 49)

There are several units of meaning in each description which directly contrast with each other to build a picture of the two witches, reflected in their homes: Granny is *traditional* and *isolated* while Nanny is *new*, *in the middle* and *at the heart*. The informational parallelism of Granny's approval of the stereotypical witch's cottage and its power to impart status and social role suggests disapproval of the following scene describing Nanny Ogg. The lack of linguistic parallelism further adds to the sense of fullness and activity in Nanny's

home versus the sparseness of Granny's. This exploration of the witches' characters in relation to their physical space reflects the idea that 'the witches and their cottages belong utterly to one another, each cottage matching the spirit of the witch who lives in it' (Sayer, 2000: 85).

A central feature of Granny's witchcraft is particularly significant when considering the role of embodied cognition in characterisation - borrowing, or the art of leaving your own body and entering the mind of another creature (usually an animal, as human minds are too complex):

15. Granny Weatherwax had many times flicked through the channels of consciousness around her. It was, to her, part of the heart of witchcraft. To see through other eyes...

...through the eyes of gnats, seeing the slow patterns of time in the fast pattern of one day, their minds travelling rapidly as lighting...

...to listen with the body of a beetle, so that the word is a three-dimensional pattern of vibrations...

...to see with the nose of a dog, all smells now colours... (*Lords & Ladies*: 76).

The embodied nature of experience is made clear here through descriptions of how perception varies depending on the type of body inhabited. The awareness of the minds of others Granny develops by using this skill is used to identify some highly unusual minds, including elves (a 'predatory shape, all cruelty and cool unkindness' – *Lords & Ladies*, 76) and a forest ('drowsy and purring with bumblebees in the summer, roaring and raging in autumn gales, curled in on itself and sleeping in the winter' – *Wyrd Sisters*: 77). Granny's skill in borrowing foregrounds the embodied nature of experience, as she is able to experience and understand using other embodied forms, which has a consequent impact on her understanding of the world. In addition, by allowing access to a variety of non-human minds the concepts of mind attribution and alternate world views are also foregrounded as Granny literally perceives the world as another sentient mind. This provides an opportunity for metafictional commentary on the role of these processes in characterisation, if one approaches the texts with this purpose in mind.

### **Emotion**

The emotional attachment needed for successful characterisation is illustrated in readers' responses to the witch texts. This is exemplified in comments that reference the likeability of characters, as the following example illustrates:

The three witches are works of genius, genuinely likeable, funny, and quirky characters whose interactions are a joy to behold. You would think that a man's view of women written 25 years ago would date horribly and laughably, but it's a mark of how insightful and observant Pratchett was that they are just as warm, relevant and funny now as they ever have been. (Leah 1.5.2012. Goodreads.com)

The greatest outpouring of emotion for Pratchett's characters undoubtedly occurs when, in his final novel *The Shepherd's crown*, Granny Weatherwax dies. Here is just a small sample of reader comments:

I wouldn't recommend reading it in public unless your heart is a lot stonier than mine. (Alex Sarll, 30.8.2015. Goodreads.com).

Lordy... what is Discworld coming to? A satisfying end? With a delightful sense of wonder and humor and nostalgia? Why yes, it did come to that. \*wipes a tear away from his face\* (Bradley, 15.6.2016. Goodreads.com)

I can't be coherent about this. I just can't. I cried so hard between pages 37 and 41 that I had to put the book down and go do something else. (Jennie Rigg, 5.7.2015. Goodreads.com)

Here, we see emotion for a much-loved character tightly bound with emotion for a much-loved author, who died half-way through writing the book. All these reviews, and many more, reference the slow loss of Pratchett to dementia as well as the loss of one of his central characters. As a result, readers make some interesting points about the noticeable lack of recognisable style in the novel. For example:

I couldn't hear Pratchett in the prose. (Nisha-Ann, 26.8.2016. Goodreads.com)

The last couple of books of Pratchett's have been sad, both in terms of being obvious goodbyes to his world and characters, and the obvious diminishing of his craft. (Lindsay, 1.9.2015. Goodreads.com)

These notes about style emphasise the relevance of surface text for all, not just academic, readers. In addition, they hint at an emotional attachment to these stylistic elements, due to their familiarity and representativeness of the author.

## 5.6 Intertextual witches

Intertextuality, a major addition to my revised model of characterisation, provides an area of analysis in which we find all three RPF strands at work. It employs style to focus reader attention on references to other texts and characters, it uses intertextual scenarios and models to provide a framework for character cognition, and it draws on reader experience (emotional and embodied) of reading other texts. Pratchett's witch novels offer a playground in which to explore webs of intertextual meaning and their influence on characterisation. They do this not only by cueing a variety of narrative interrelations in the reader, but also by placing intertextuality at the very core of the Discworld's existence, an idea that is particularly emphasised in the witch narratives:

Stories exist independently of their players. If you know that, the knowledge is power. [...] And their 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 (*Witches Abroad*: 8).

For the characters of the Discworld, repeated references to a plot or character are not merely intertextual triggers for relevant knowledge or a way to construct an identity, but a sign of 'narrative causality' (*Witches Abroad*: 8) at work and of history repeating itself in often unstoppable ways. This section explores the characterising role of intertextuality in Pratchett's work, focussing on *Wyrd Sisters* and *Witches Abroad* as they provide the most explicit intertextual references.

### 5.6.1 Pratchett's intertexts

As is apparent in the initial schematic associations described in Section 5.3, the witches novels make frequent use of references to other texts. These provide an array of cues for the blending of character information from the text itself with corresponding or contrasting information from the intertexts alluded to. There are numerous references to Shakespearean plays throughout *Wyrd Sisters*. Specifically, *Hamlet* is reflected in the family murder and subsequent haunting, and in the play within a play intended to reveal the witches as villains. *Macbeth*, as already highlighted in discussions of the initial analysis in

Chapter 1, is echoed in the murder and madness that follows (although here, it is the murdered, Felmet, who is mad, while Lady Felmet remains cold and controlling) and the presence of a trio of witches. *As you like it* is mirrored in the comment that 'all the disk is but an Theater' (*Wyrld Sisters*: 162), mirroring 'all the world's a stage' (*As you like it*, Act 2, scene 7), played out in the way in which many of the novel's characters are aware of and subject to certain roles. This is emphasised further in later novels, when *Wyrld Sisters* itself becomes an intertext. For example, the opening of *Maskerade* sees the following description: 'an eldritch voice shrieked: "when shall we...two...meet again?"' (*Maskerade*: 7). This references not only *Macbeth*, but also the earlier use of the reference in *Wyrld Sisters*, in order to foreground the poignancy of Magrat's absence.

References to other elements of folklore and fairy-tale are also rife in *Wyrld Sisters*. Specifically, a famous witch called Black Aliss is credited with creating situations highly reminiscent of *Cinderella*, *Hansel & Gretel* and *Sleeping beauty*, while the witches themselves employ the guise of a harmless old apple seller akin to the evil Queen in *Snow white* ('the apple-seller gambit had never worked more than once in the entire history of witchcraft [...] but it was traditional') *Wyrld sisters*: 106). Finally, Granny, Nanny and Magrat become godmothers to the baby prince by default in this novel, taking on the role of a more positive fairy-tale character. It is these intertextual links, above anything else, that allow the reader to characterise and re-characterise Pratchett's witches. By referring to several different types of witch, both traditionally good and bad, they make the characterisation process more complex.

The complex relations between the witches as characters and person-like beings is continued in *Witches Abroad*, where we see them travel through a landscape of stories, with each place they visit shaped around a different genre or narrative. It takes fairy tale as its central intertextual source, as the trip is prompted by Magrat's new role as a fairy godmother, and the text sees 'fairytales operate metafictionally in order to comment upon the way that formulaic stories operate' (Smith, 2007: 131). Consequently, the ability of the witches to alter the outcomes of the stories in question sets them in opposition to the character stereotypes that would normally be associated with them as character types. Central references are made to *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*, as

well as more general fairy tale motifs like animals morphing into humans and vice-versa, and narratives from other genres including *Dracula* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

It is not only references to other texts and the cues these provide for characterisation that are at work in the modelling of the witches as characters. Pratchett also allows the witches a metatextual knowledge of the literary structures in which they are involve, which gives scenarios (in the form of story narratives) a powerful role on Discworld, where they not only shape comprehension but influence reality. By creating a world in which stories have a more concrete power to shape events via the magic present on Discworld, Pratchett gives his characters licence to employ intertextual references and motifs as both plot and characterisation devices. Scenarios that exist for the reader as merely culturally-shared stories become, for the witches, far more powerful and can be used in order to adopt character roles through which they can influence story events. In many of these instances, the combination of a character stereotype with linguistic features that embody that type is symbolic of the witches adopting certain roles to suit their purposes, as seen in Extracts 4, 5 & 6 in Section 5.4.2. While the witches may not be adept at acting the roles they need to in this example, their knowledge and application of them provides useful insights into her view of character roles as a tool with which to influence the world. Readers are clearly aware of the push and pull between character as person and character as type continually in these sections, as evidenced by this Goodreads comment:

Nobody takes themselves seriously in this book. The witches know what you expect witches to be like and they fill your expectations and then throw them to the ground. (Vicky N. 7.7.2017. Goodreads.com)

### **5.6.2 Narrative interrelations**

It is clear from browsing reviews of *Wyrd Sisters* on Goodreads.com that many readers, with differing levels of knowledge, use the intertextual references in the novel to make narrative interrelations which will have differing levels of impact on their characterisation processes. From those who recognise basic references but admit their lack of in-depth knowledge of the referents texts...

It's been a while since I've read Macbeth, so I'm sure I missed a lot of the references and in jokes, but I got enough of them to get a pretty good laugh. (Robzak 16.3.2015. Goodreads.com)

...to readers who are far more expert on the main source text:

A student gave me this book while we were studying Macbeth in class. *Wyrd Sisters* is a sort of parallel story, which manages to poke fun at the play, revere the play, make inside jokes about the play, and ... well, generally turn the play on its head. All the while, you, the reader, get to feel very smart and superior for getting all the jokes and allusions. (Leslie\_B April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008. Goodreads.com)

There are also those readers who pick up more than expected. The following review refers to references to Shakespeare which I did not:

Like the earlier 'Witches' Discworld novel, this one represents a minor departure from the early established formula, this time seeing Pratchett riff heavily on Shakespeare, especially MacBthe and Hamlet but also The Tempest, Richard III and others, and it's a strategy that works to great effect. Where less talented authors mock Shakespeare openly through the dialogue, Pratchett adopts the memorable set-pieces from the several plays and lovingly crafts his own tale around them - much as is often done with other well-known stories such as fairy tales and the Greek myths. The humour here then (and there is a great deal of it) is not to be found at The Bard's expense but instead some of his plays' highlights are given the sardonic, common-sense twist demanded by the loudest smart-arses in the stalls. (Lee Broderick 29.8.2011. Goodreads.com)

These observations can, of course, still be classed as valid narrative interrelations, as I am far from an expert in Shakespeare and, even if I were, it is possible that the reviewer is making implicit interrelations that no other reader would make.

What is particularly interesting about all these reviews is the self-reflexive comments they provide about the readers' awareness of their own narrative interrelations, or lack of them, and their knowledge of why these provide such a rewarding reading experience. In terms of Mason's theory on intertextual references, all those made in Pratchett's work are unmarked. This is unavoidable, as the actual texts to which the quotations and allusions refer do not exist in the fantasy world of Discworld, and so cannot legitimately be referred to by character or narrator. This arguably makes any reward the reader gets from making interrelations greater, as they involve more in-depth processing in order to make these links. This is likely to have consequences for the depth of character processing that occurs due to the interrelations made. Also significant, however, is the number of Goodreads

reviews that do not mention Shakespeare or *Macbeth*, or make any narrative interrelations. These range from plot summaries to comments on the plot and characters. This seems strange when we consider the joy with which many reviewers describe the interrelations they make, and so we could assume that the reviewers who make no mention of them simply do not recognise the intertextual references. If this is the case, then their models of the witches may be much less developed than for other readers. Alternatively, there may be more complex issues at work here surrounding the completeness of readers' knowledge of textual referents and their fear of how other readers will see them based on this. Mason (2019) suggests that such feelings of inadequacy are common amongst readers and should be taken into account when analysing reader response to text. In terms of characterisation, such perceived inadequacies could impact reader views of and engagement with characters, especially when involved in the affective processes involved in mind-modelling (see Section 5.6.1).

The interrelations evident on Goodreads, however knowledgeable, are merely the tip of the intertextual iceberg when compared to the in-depth narrative interrelations detailed in *The Annotated Pratchett file* (a detailed annotation by fans of cultural and textual links throughout Pratchett's work). What is particularly interesting about the narrative interrelations made in *The Annotated Pratchett file* is that they contain responses by Pratchett himself – a rare opportunity to verify narrative interrelations. As an example, the naming of the village of Lancre, home to the witches, is related in the annotations to a witch hunter named Pierre de Lancre – an interrelation that carries obvious character-relevant associations, as it further situates Pratchett's witches within a real-world historical witchcraft frame. However, when presented with this idea, Pratchett replied 'I'm astonished. I've never heard of the guy, and I'm reasonably well-read in that area. But it *is* a lovely coincidence.' And so we see an example of an inferred interrelation not only unintended by the author, but relating to knowledge not shared by him. As a result, the complexities of mapping potential narrative interrelations in general and as a key factor in characterisation are illustrated.

### 5.6.3 Dummy narratives in Pratchett

A final area of interest regarding the role of intertextuality in characterising the witches is the appearance of 'dummy narratives' (Mason, 2019). Their existence is central to the plot and characterisation of the witches in *Wyrds Sisters* as the play written and performed to discredit the witches is itself a dummy narrative. In this example, the existence of the fictional narrative provides an encapsulated illustration of the stereotypical character types the witches resist, prompting readers to question their initial schematic assumptions (as Magrat points out, "if this gets about, witches'll always be old hags with green blusher" – *Wyrds Sisters*: 219). In the novel, the play exists within a wider context of text-based knowledge being used as a marker for characterisation. For example, in her first encounter with the theatre, Granny is shown to lack the relevant knowledge of the genre:

16. ...it was beginning to become apparent to Magrat that there were certain fundamental aspects of the theatre that Granny had not yet grasped.  
She was currently bouncing up and down on her stool with rage.  
"He's killed him," she hissed. "Why isn't anyone doing anything about it? He's killed him! And right up there in front of everyone!" [...]  
"Look, Granny, it's not really real, d'you see?"  
Granny Weatherwax subsided a little, but still grumbled under her breath. She was beginning to feel that things were trying to make a fool of her. [...]  
"He is a man," she said. "In a straw wig. Making his voice squeaky."  
Magrat shuddered. She knew a little about the conventions of the theatre. She had been dreading this bit. Granny Weatherwax had Views.  
"Yes, but," she said wretchedly, "it's the Theater, see. All the women are played by men."  
"Why?"  
"They don't allow no women on the stage," said Magrat in a small voice. She shut her eyes.  
[...]  
Granny was quietly chewing the same bit of apple over and over again, her eyes never leaving the action.[...]  
She was making up her mind.  
Then she stood up.  
Her black shawl billowed around her like the wings of an avenging angel, come to rid the world of all that was foolishness and pretense and artifice and sham. [...]  
"He done it!" she shouted triumphantly. "We all seed 'im! He done it with a dagger!" (*Wyrds Sisters*: 29-32)

Unlike Magrat, Granny does not possess the relevant literary knowledge to engage appropriately with the play. Therefore her lack of knowledge about this dummy narrative is a strong characterisation cue. This is a trait seen in all Granny's interactions with the written word - the only book she possesses in an almanac, hung in the privy, illustrating the fact that

‘Granny had a philosophical objection to reading, but she’d be the last to say that books, especially books with nice thin pages, didn’t have their uses’ (*Equal Rites*: 31). In keeping with the idea that ‘witches didn’t normally have much use for literacy’ (*Wyrd Sisters*: 95), Nanny also has only a fleeting relationship with the world of letters. However, in this instance, she is the author (under the penname The Lancre Witch) of the popular cookbook and marital guide *The Joye of Snackes* (*Maskerade*: 36).

This is in contrast to the use of dummy narratives to construct Magrat’s character via her relationship with culture, fiction and the written word. She clearly has a better understanding of the fictional world of the theatre than the other witches. She is also frequently found referring to collections of books borrowed, and later inherited, from the local research witch. These include travelogues like ‘With Wand and Broomstick Across the Great Nef Desert’ (*Witches Abroad*: 41) and spell books in ‘meticulous handwriting detailing the results of patient experiments in applied magic’ (*Wyrd Sisters*: 95). Magrat is also the only one of the witches to buy reading material. She is especially fond of self-improvement tomes such as ‘the Path of The scorpion, which offered cosmic harmony, inner one-ness and the possibility of knocking an attacker’s kidneys out through his own ears’ (*Witches Abroad*: 33), and magical grimoires, the use of which is often mocked by the older witches.

What is clear from all of these literary encounters is that the witches knowledge of and relationship with texts is often used for comic purposes and is telling of certain character traits. As dummy narratives, the texts described are tailored perfectly to these characterisation aims. In the case of the older witches, these traits are indicative of a lack of literacy (also reflected in their own writing, detailed in Section 5.4.2). For Magrat, they construct a more new-age character type, in opposition to the traditional storybook witches on which Granny and Nanny are (loosely) based.

## **5.7 Chapter conclusion**

My revised model of characterisation has been applied to Pratchett’s witches to offer insights into the use of schematic knowledge in the construction of initial models of

character and the role of textual features in instantiating and developing these impressions. This analysis also illustrates the role of experientiality in attributing and modelling character minds. The Rhetorical Processing Framework provides a comprehensive approach that combines all these elements as they apply to processing narratives and the characters encountered therein. Finally, the ways in which readers make substantial use of narrative interrelations to infer character traits and blend relevant information from different sources, based on features of the surface text and the schemata contained in their mental archive, provide a unique opportunity to evidence all these elements at work.

Using Pratchett's characters has an additional advantage as they are able to provide literal illustrations of many of the key concepts discussed due to their existence in an alternate, fantastic reality. The theories applied to illustrate how readers model character are often experienced as actual phenomena by these characters, allowing an explicit, sometimes metacritical view of characterisation in which the underlying principles can be analysed from new and informative perspectives.

# 6. Case study 2: Margaret Attwood's Handmaids

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## 6.1 Introduction

Having considered characters whose narratives make explicit use of many key features of the characterisation process, I now turn to a less obvious example in order to test the robustness of my revised model. Margaret Attwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (HT) has been chosen for the comparability of the texts with Pratchett's work in several respects. Firstly, they are commonly said to contain intertextual references to fairy tale. This similarity of intertexts provides an interesting comparison regarding the uses and interpretations of these references. Secondly, both sets of characters exist in settings removed from simple representations of the real world - the witches in an alternate fantasy reality, the handmaids in a dystopian, speculative future. Consequently, both share the dual impulses of these genres - mimetic representation and fantastic alteration (Hume, 1984) – and are comparable in terms of the subversion of reality and their impulse to trace 'the unsaid and the unseen of culture' (Jackson, 1981: 4). The two narratives also have at their centre issues of feminism and the representation of female social roles, offering another informative area for comparison regarding the applicability of my revised model. Despite these similarities, Attwood's work has received far more critical attention and literary acclaim than Pratchett's and so her characters provide an opportunity to test the applicability of my model of characterisation in a more critically robust sphere.

## 6.2 Attwood's work: an overview

This section outlines the central themes of literary criticism of *The Handmaid's Tale*, and provides an overview of the narrative and its characters.

### 6.2.1 Atwood and the critics

Atwood's work has been the object of considerably more criticism than Pratchett's. This is not surprising, as her novels spans a range of genres (Goodreads.com classifies her work as fiction, fantasy, classis, science fiction, literature, dystopia and feminism, amongst others), whereas Pratchett's work falls firmly within the bounds of the fantastic. Criticism of *The Handmaid's Tale*, studied frequently as part of school curricula for decades, easily outnumbers the entirety of critical work on Pratchett and spans a range of theoretical approaches. This section discusses the major themes in criticism of Atwood's text, offering exemplar studies, but a true reflection of the amount of existing criticism is not possible in this short space. Feminist theory is the most common approach, with critiques discussing the text from psychological perspectives (Calvi et al, 2020), as a depiction of patriarchal control via restricted space (Minico, 2019 and Neuman, 2006), and recently in light of the issues of the #metoo movement (Moeggenberg & Solomon, 2018). This approach has also been applied specifically to the wider story world of the narrative created by film and television adaptations and use in political activism (Howell, 2019). A similar approach to the narrative beyond the original text is also taken by some critiques of the representation of race in the story (Crawley, 2018 and Phoenix, 2018). Much of the criticism of *The Handmaid's Tale* unavoidably views its theory and subject through the lens of dystopian fiction and its tropes (Fleuer, 1997), especially those adopting an ecocritical approach (Changizi, 2017 and Hooker, 2006).

The works cited provide some sense of the richness of Atwood's work in terms of analysis. However, there are several strands of criticism of particular relevance to this study. The first involves the narration of the novel and its presentation of two discourse types – that sanctioned by the regime and that personal to the narrator – in creating an impression of mind style (Staels, 1995). This has been extended more recently to explore the effect of visual cues in the television series in reflecting the 'split sleeves' of the narrator (Harrison, 2020). The second looks at the language of the text more broadly, particularly in terms of the role of language in oppression and resistance (Nanjoo, 2019). The intertextual nature of *The Handmaid's tale* has also received much attention, with fairy tales (Wilson, 1993) and the Bible (Filipczak, 1993 and Trivellini, 2016) the two most common interrelations made by critics, although more general generic links are also highlighted (for example romance plot

devices – Miner, 1991 – and the previously noted links to dystopian texts). Finally, there has been some specific focus on the affective nature of the reader's response to the text (Holladay & Classen, 2019).

### **6.2.2 The Handmaid's Tale**

*The Handmaid's Tale* was first published in 1986. It offers a dystopian vision of America in the year 2000 which sees the area around Boston become a totalitarian regime called Gilead - a totalitarian theocracy ruled by men. Created in response to dropping fertility rates and the freedoms perceived to have caused them, such as abortion and the freedom of women, men take on roles of married Commanders, soldiers known as Angels or Guardians (unmarried servants). The women of Gilead play several subservient roles: Wives of commanders, Handmaids used for reproduction by the Commanders, Aunts who train and look after Handmaids, servants called Marthas and prostitutes known as Jezebels. Women who are married to low-ranking men and are not Handmaids are known as Econowives. The text suggests that the distinction between the two revolves around morality: women selected as Handmaids have usually been found guilty of a perceived immorality such as adultery or abortion. Women who are unwilling contribute to Gilead society are also at risk of being sent to the Colonies – parts of North America contaminated by radiation and pollution - to toil and make the land fertile once more. The text is narrated by Offred, a Handmaid, and ends with a section of fictional historical notes which explain that Offred's narrative was originally discovered in audio format on cassette tapes. The original text has been extended in recent years in a TV adaptation (MGM & Hulu, 2017) which, after the first series, extrapolates events from the end point of the original novel. As Atwood acts as a consultant on the television series, it is safe to assume that any content relevant to characterisation is in line with her original vision, although my focus in this analysis is largely on the novels.

### 6.3 Handmaids in the mind

Readers may activate schematic character-relevant knowledge and scenarios for *The Handmaid's Tale* in similar ways to those describes for Pratchett's witches – based initially on the word itself. As with *Wyrd*, the word *Handmaid* is historical – meaning a female servant - with its use in modern language archaic (“handmaid, n”, 2019: 1a). It can also be used figuratively to mean ‘an abstract or immaterial thing considered as auxiliary to another in a subordinate capacity’ (“handmaid, n”, 2019: 1b). The term may also carry Biblical associations for some readers, whether positive or negative, reflecting the story of Jacob and his wife Rachel who, unable to have children due to Rachel's infertility, use Rachel's handmaid Bilhah as a surrogate. With all these associations, low social status and subservience for women is implied.

However, the schematic knowledge at work in the characterisation of Atwood's Handmaids is arguably more complex than for Pratchett's witches. While there are fewer fictional prototypes on which to base the initial characterisation process, there is significant potential for existing reader associations for the text and its characters based on wider cultural reference. The popularity of the novel and the subsequent television series, in addition to the anticipation surrounding the written sequel, is a potential factor here. In addition, use of character costumes (red robes and white winged headdresses) at recent political protests has potentially created an awareness of these characters beyond their usual audience, with the outfit now associated with many women's rights issues (Beaumont & Holpuch, 2018). Consequently, it is not only the word or text itself that carries key character associations, nor the intertextual web surrounding it (discussed further in section 6.6.1), but a broader cultural and political context that many readers of the text, new and old, exist within. The likelihood of associations beyond the text, more visual and widely accessible, is supported by a simple Google search for *Handmaid*, in which all but one of the first page results refer to the television series (the one that does not is an encyclopaedia entry for the term). In order to reflect this complex web of potential character associations, I have divided the potential components of a HANDMAID schema (Figure 6.1) into two sections: those for readers with a modern contextual awareness of the text and its characters, and those for an imagined (traditional) reader with little contextual knowledge beyond the linguistic

associations detailed above. Unlike the equivalent schematic structure for Pratchett’s characters (Figure 5.1), these distinctions not only refer to historical versus modern knowledge, but the degree of contextual knowledge a modern reader may have (in other words, a modern-day reader could still make solely traditional associative links).

|                         |                       | <b>Traditional</b>     | <b>Modern</b>   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Personal</b>         | <i>Goal</i>           | to serve; to reproduce | freedom; survival; to overthrow the theocratic regime |
|                         | <i>Trait</i>          | subservient            | subservient; potentially defiant                      |
| <b>Social role</b>      | <i>Marital status</i> | unmarried              | unmarried   |
|                         | <i>Occupation</i>     | servant                | servant   |
| <b>Group membership</b> | <i>Gender</i>         | female                 | female  |
|                         | <i>Religion</i>       | Christian              |   |
| <b>Appearance</b>       | <i>Hair</i>           | long, feminine?        | hidden when outdoors                                  |
|                         | <i>Clothes</i>        | Few? OR modest?        | red dress & cloak, white winged hat                   |
|                         | <i>Face</i>           |                        | (partially) hidden when outdoors; no make-up          |
|                         | <i>Body</i>           | attractive?            | covered at all times in company                       |

Figure 6.1: Schematic elements in a HANDMAID schema.

These elements represent the differing factors that may influence initial schematic associations for Atwood’s characters. Particularly significant is the appearance of the characters in each schema. While context-rich modern readers are likely to have a singular and vivid idea of red-cloaked women, possibly marching in protest, traditional associations may vary substantially, from the Biblical idea of Mary as the Handmaid of the Lord and modestly-clad symbol of pure fertility, to connotations of scantily-clad handmaids in the more overtly sexual role of concubine. Consequently, it may be more difficult to associate particular appearance features with the characters if knowledge is reliant on a traditional schema. Conversely, the traditional schema carries with it a stronger religious affiliation for the Handmaid, in contrast with a modern reading which may not make this connection. Finally, characterisation taking place within the modern context carries associations of defiance and the reclamation of power, which a traditional schema lacks. As with the WYRD schema, it is likely that knowledge from both traditional and modern contexts will contribute to a reader’s HANDMAID schema. However, unlike schematic structures used to

construct character models for the witches, a HANDMAID schema has the potential to operate without the traditional elements outlined in Figure 1.6, increasing the potential for more significant differences in initial character assumptions.

## **6.4 Handmaids in the text**

The language of the surface text plays a significant role in the characterisation of the Handmaids and is foregrounded in a variety of ways to reflect the idea that ‘language plays a crucial part in shaping and changing individuals’ (Nanjoo, 2019: 86). This section focuses on the use of naming as a tool for characterising oppression in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the unusual presentations of speech and thought that encourage a unique character model for Offred and her fellow Handmaids, and the foregrounding of language through its use as an instrument of defiance.

### **6.4.1 Names**

The labelling of social roles in *The Handmaid’s Tale* (detailed in section 6.2.2.) is the most general instance of significant naming in the text. In Gilead, people are primarily defined by their social role and, by foregrounding this through repetition and their variance from usual forms of address, Atwood emphasises the lack of personal identity and social bonds afforded the servants of Gilead. This is especially apparent when reference is made to women sent to the colonies – ‘Unwomen’ (*HT*: 20), unworthy even of a social title. The references to the Bible made by the nomenclature of Gilead are particularly salient as they signify the personality types the regime wishes to form their citizens into. These are discussed in section 6.6.1.

The names ascribed to Gilead’s Handmaids plays a significant role in their characterisation as a cog in the wheel of the regime. Once they are sent to a Commander’s household, they are assigned a name reflecting his ownership of them – our narrator is Offred, as her Commander is Fred Waterford. Her fellow Handmaids are similarly disempowered (Ofglen, Ofwarren) and severed from their past identities, and Offred tell us ‘my name isn’t Offred, I

have another name, which nobody uses now because it's forbidden [...] I keep the knowledge of this name like something hidden [...] this name has an aura around it, like an amulet' (*HT*: 94). This is a reminder of the power of names and the associations they carry; this power is removed from Handmaids in an attempt to quash their identities and links to who they were before Gilead. This is foregrounded when we begin to see these names reclaimed as act of defiance: 'We learned to whisper almost without sound. [...] In this way we exchanged names, from bed to bed: Alma. Janine. Dolores. Moira. June' (*HT*: 14). Although no connection is made to one of these names by the narrator, the sense of secrecy and insubordination at the sharing of true names is palpable.

The significance of naming in the narrative is further emphasised in the historical notes that form the novel's epilogue. Here, the reliability of Offred's narration is questioned by future academics because of the names she gives to the people in her account. Firstly, they point out that we have no way of knowing who she was, as 'she does not see fit to supply us with her original name' (*HT*: 318). Likewise, 'other names in the document are equally useless for the purposes of identification and authentication' (*HT*: 318), as they are claimed to offer no traceable or verifiable historical leads. This is thought to be due to deliberate use of pseudonyms to protect any friends and family of Offred who may have survived, should her story be discovered. However, the reliability of Offred herself as a narrator is also called into question via naming, as it is suggested that the Name 'Serena Joy' for the Commander's wife may have been 'a somewhat malicious invention by our author' (*HT*: 321). Consequently, naming is not only a cue for characterisation in the traditional sense in this text (for example, by triggering associations of social roles), but is used to provide a critique of the narrator. This foregrounds the fact that Offred is herself involved in the process of naming the characters in her story, an idea that becomes even more salient when we consider the emphasis Offred places on her account as a story (see section 6.6.1).

#### **6.4.2 Language: Gilead's forbidden fruit**

While the dialectical features of speech are an essential part of the characterisation of Pratchett's witches, the language of Gilead presents a language rooted in dogma and stripped of such personal signs. As Staels points out, 'in a society that functionalises

language to the extreme, the potential polysemy of discourse is replaced by absolutely homogenous, univocal signs' (Staels, 1995: 457). The official language of Gilead is, then, characterised by an enforced lack of dialectical features and non-standard forms. This functionality and control is foregrounded in the new words and phrases used in the text: citizens are monitored by Compuclocks and attend Prayvaganzas, Handmaids are transported to group birthings in the Birthmobile, and new crimes like Gender Treachery can be committed. Nowhere is this more prominent than in the Handmaids' rare exchanges with each other (extracts 1 & 2). In line with my argument regarding the significance of the Idiom Principle to processing character via the surface text, these phrases are significant not because of the lexical meaning their words convey, but because of their recognisability as fixed expressions and the prosodic meanings they carry. To misuse or abandon them would be a sign of dissent; to use them is compliance (or at least the appearance of it). Here, we see an instance of textual dialect (introduced in section 5.4.2) used for more sinister purposes

1. "Blessed be the fruit," she says to me, the accepted greeting among us. "May the Lord open." I answer, the accepted response (HT: 29).
2. "Under His eye," she says. The right farewell. "Under His Eye," I reply, and she gives a little nod (HT: 54)

Such use of language by the state is also extended to instances of more familiar language being used to control the oppressed. For example, extract 3 shows Offred's recollection of a gathering in the Handmaid training centre in which a group of trainees were made to chastise a rape victim. The repetition, parallelism and emphasis foreground the almost mantra-like nature of the chant, again suggesting that the power lies in the form of the phrase, rather than in its component parts. If the Handmaids do not participate they too are punished, and so are forced to take part in this language-driven frenzy.

3. *Her fault, her fault, her fault, we chant in unison.*  
*Who led them on? Aunt Helen beams, pleased with us.*  
*She did. She did. She did.*  
*Why did God allow such a terrible thing to happen?*  
*Teach her a lesson. Teach her a lesson. Teach her a lesson. (HT: 82).*

In addition to state-sanctioned language and the use of language to create a regime-loyal pack mentality, the forbidding of reading and of certain words is also indicative of the power that language has within this narrative. No women, even the Wives, are permitted to read and, although men are allowed to read, they are still subject to strict rules concerning certain forbidden terms. In extract 4, a doctor's dissent and risk when he offers to get Offred pregnant – the ultimate goal of all Handmaids in order not to be sent to the Colonies – is centred entirely around his use of the forbidden word sterile. Such words are a threat to patriarchal control as they lay blame with the man, as opposed to the permitted term – barren – which describes the woman's fault. In these descriptions of language as forbidden and strictly controlled, the reader's attention is drawn to the surface text because they are asked to consider the true meaning and power of language.

4. I almost gasp: he's said a forbidden word. *Sterile*. There is no such thing as a sterile man any more, not officially. There are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that's the law (*HT*: 71).

The control of language by the state is placed in sharp contrast to and subverted by Offred's internal use of language. Her internal narrative is consistently characterised by a thoughtful, even playful, engagement with words that foregrounds it as a divergence from the language she is permitted to use. In extract 5, she admits that such thoughts serve a purpose - they are a litany, a form of mental self-soothing used to deal with her physical captivity. As in extract 3, parallel structures are used in the repetition of *it is* to foreground this function.

5. I sit in the chair and think about the word *chair*. It can also mean the leader of a meeting. It can also mean a mode of execution. It is the first syllable in *charity*. It is the French word for flesh. None of these facts has any connection with the others.  
These are the kinds of litanies I use to compose myself (*HT*: 120).

The comfort Offred finds in this almost hypnotic repetition of language is also seen in her yearning for familiar phrases – again a signifier of the validity of the Idiom Principle as an approach to characterisation via surface text. Even a simple exchange is desirable, as described in extract 6, and would be a comforting link to past freedoms.

6. gently we would complain, our voices soft and minor-key and mournful as pigeons in the eaves troughs. *I know what you mean, we'd say*. Or, a quaint expression you sometimes hear, still, from older people: *I hear where you're coming from*, as if the voice itself were a traveller, arriving from a distant place. Which it would be, which it is (*HT*: 20)

Nowhere is this contrast between state and individual, between external and internal language use, more prominent than in the physical descriptions of language given by the narrator. In extract 7, describing an elicited scrabble game between Offred and the Commander, words again represent freedom and are given a physical form by the scrabble tiles. Here, the language usually confined to the mind is made solid and foregrounded for the reader by the words played in the game. These words, used to score highly, also require attention and in-depth processing because they do not form part of longer units, so cannot be quickly processed from context. The range of spellings and sounds that give richness to these words is highlighted in the alliteration (*luxury...counters...candies*) and sibilance (*crisp, slightly acid...delicious*) used to describe their formation, an effect given voice by Offred later in the text (extract 8) in another instance of words made manifest in physical effects. This is also relevant to the foregrounding of embodiment throughout the text, explored in section 6.5.3.

7. We play two games. *Larynx*, I spell. *Valance*. *Quince*. *Zygote*. [...] This is freedom, or an eyeblink of it. *Limp*, I spell. *Gorge*. What a luxury. The counters are like candies, made of peppermint [...] The letter C. *Crisp*, slightly acid on the tongue. *Delicious* (HT: 149).
8. The willow is in full plumage [...] with its insinuating whispers. *Rendezvous*, it says, *terraces*; the sibilants run up my spine, a shiver as if in fever (HT: 161).

The role of language within *The Handmaid's Tale* makes it impossible to simply set aside the surface text when processing its characters at higher levels. Offred's relationship with and use of language is central to both her internal and external dialogues, forming a significant part of her character model. As Staels suggests, 'in a society that censors aesthetic speech, Offred's poetic discourse reactivates the lost potential of language and the conditions for the production of meaning' (Staels, 1995: 461). This effect is extended in presentations of speech and thought in the text.

### 6.4.3 Speech and thought presentation

The significance of the narrative style and first person narration of *The Handmaid's Tale* is reflected in reviews of its recent sequel, *The Testaments*, which have focussed heavily on comparison with the narration and style of the original text (Williams, 2019). The narration

of the text adds a layer of complexity to the text not found in Pratchett's work. As a result, presentation of speech and thought is one of the defining characteristics of the text. This is reflected in reader reviews on Goodreads. For example:

I guess Atwood doesn't believe in quotation marks. I don't think I've ever come across a novel yet in which there is no distinction between the narrator and the character (Pollopicu, Nov 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

*The Handmaid's Tale* frustrates me a lot—and not only because it contains run-on sentences and needlessly abandons quotation marks (Kate, April 13th, 2011).

These comments clearly express a frustration regarding the style of narration in the text. However, the claim that Offred's narration contains no direct speech is inaccurate. Direct speech is reserved for speech occurring in the character's (as opposed to the narrator's) present (for example, extracts 1 & 2). This form also becomes more common in the second half of the novel, as events progress and Offred is allowed glimpses of freedom and hope, representing a slight shift from the disconnected, internal thoughts of the past or imagined present to direct, external experience. Therefore, there is some discernible pattern to the speech representation in the text. The confusion expressed by the Goodreads reviewers is likely to be caused by use of FIS to recount near past events at all distances from the present (extracts 9, 10, 3 & 11, in order of distance from the present story world) and imagined events (extract 6).

9. Last week they shot a woman [...]  
Rita and Cora knew the woman. I heard them talking about it, in the kitchen.  
Doing their job, said Cora. Keeping us safe.  
Nothing safer than dead said Rita, angrily (*HT*: 30).
  
10. We stood face to face for the first time five weeks ago, when I arrived at this posting.  
[...]  
So, you're the new one, she said. [...]  
Yes, I said (*HT*: 23).
  
11. Somewhere good.  
Moirra, sitting on the edge of my bed, legs crossed [...] a cigarette between her stubby yellow-ended fingers. Let's go for a beer.  
You're getting ashes on my bed, I said (*HT*: 48)

When combined with other forms of speech presentation – for example, Narrator Representation of Action (extracts 7 & 8) and Narrator Representation of Speech Act (extract 4 and imagined in extract 6) – it is easy to see how readers may find it difficult to separate the internal and the external and keep track of events (an effect enhanced by the non-sequential narrative, as evidenced by the page numbers in the citations for extracts 3, 9, 10 & 11, which do not correspond to the chronological order of the events described).

Although some readers clearly respond negatively to the mixed representations of speech and thought in the text, this stylistic choice plays a crucial role in characterising Offred. Her narration takes place between external theocracy and internal freedom and the lack of clear division between the two encourages a model of character struggling within and between these set boundaries. Representations of thought are particularly salient to this aspect of her character. Firstly, the absence of direct speech from narration of past events distances the reader from the characters described and, as a result, aligns them more closely with Offred's internal thought processes. In addition, frequent presentations of direct thought (extract 5) and free indirect thought (extract 7) allow a contrast between external speech and internal thought to depict present events. Harrison (2020) applies the notion of split selves to this feature of the narrative, arguing that Offred's internal/external divide is made particularly apparent in the TV series due to use of voiceovers and close-up shots. According to Harrison, the presentation of two present selves in the narrative – an argument equally applicable to the text due to juxtaposition of speech and thought presentation - provides a contrast to a purely first person narration, which focusses on a present voice narrating the past. Offred's two selves are created because she is 'silenced and made strange to herself by her indoctrination as a Handmaid' (Howell, 2019: 219) and are emphasised in her modelling of herself, both mentally and physically, as 'doubled' (*HT*: 33), an aspect of her character explored further in section 6.5.

## **6.5 Experiencing minds in Gilead**

Offred's mind is, unavoidably, the focus of *The Handmaid's Tale*, as she is the narrator as well as the central character. This section looks at mind attribution in the text – both in

terms of how Offred's mind is modelled by the reader, and how she models other minds as part of her narrative - and how this contributes to sense of Offred's unique mind style. As in Pratchett's presentation of the witches, the Rhetorical Processing Framework's notion of embodied, emotional experience is also central to Offred's relationship with her world, but in more figurative ways.

### 6.5.1 Mind modelling

The dislike of the narration in *The Handmaid's Tale* expressed by some Goodreads reviewers can be also explained as a difficulty in modelling Offred's mind. In other words, the representation of the narrator as a split self via the mixing of speech and thought representation often makes her mental processes difficult to distinguish from those of others, and her motives potentially unclear. This absence of separate, definable identity is emphasised throughout the text not only in the presentation of speech and thought, but in Offred's own observations relating to her lack of self. As doubles of the other Handmaids, she describes Offglen and herself as 'Siamese twins' (HT: 174), relating to her as a mirror image of herself (extract 12). The lack of mirrors in Gilead is a central theme in the text and represents a lack of individual identity; Offglen may as well be Offred's reflection (extract 12), as they are viewed by Gilead as identical. Offred describes the one remaining mirror she has access to (extract 13) as providing only distortions and parody – again, she is unable to see her true self.

12. she's like my own reflection, in a mirror from which I am moving away (HT: 54).

13. There remains a mirror, on the hall wall. If I turn my head [...] I can see it as I go down the stairs, round, convex, a pier-glass, like the eye of a fish, and myself in it like a distorted shadow, a parody of something, some fairytale figure in a red cloak (HT: 19).

Mind-modelling for Offred is therefore complicated by this lack of discernible identity and thought not only for the reader, but for Offred herself, who often struggles to model an individual mental identity for herself.

It is not only her own mind that Offred struggles to model effectively. Her difficulty in modelling the minds of other characters reflects a lack of personal connection to others in this strictly controlled society. This is especially prominent during her changing relationship

with the Commander after he asks her to meet illicitly in his study. At their first meeting, Offred describes her uncertainty at his motives and her lack of understanding of those she can imagine (extract 14). When his motives become apparent (extract 15), we see a moment of mind-modelling in which the Commander not only becomes a relatable person, but in the same instant becomes just another stereotype from a familiar category: the cheating husband.

14. His needs were obscure to me, and what I could perceive of them seemed to me ridiculous (*HT*: 163).

15. So there it was, out in the open: his wife didn't understand him.  
That's what I was there for, then. The same old thing, it was too banal to be true (*HT*: 166).

Through her descriptions of other characters, we see Offred's own mind-modelling at work. As a result, she herself is attributed more complex mental processes.

The reader's modelling of Offred's mind is further complicated by the historical notes at the end of the novel. Here, we see a discussion of Offred's narrative and her potential motivations that provides an explicit example of mind-modelling for her character. In addition to noting the difficulty of establishing the narrator's true identity (discussed in section 6.4.1), the authenticity of the narrative itself is questioned with reminders that it 'might be a forgery' (*HT*: 314) and the caveat 'if the author is telling the truth' (*HT*: 315). The academic discussion places the narrative amongst others of similar type and subject and reminds us that 'our author, then, was one of many, and must be seen within the broad outlines of the moment in history of which she was part' (317). Therefore, in presenting an analysis of the tale removed from its original story world, the historical notes serve to place Offred firmly within a historical context in which she was not an individual voice and, at worst, may not have existed at all. However, the notes are deeply ironic due to the 'sheer logical reasoning' (Stael, 1995: 465) that causes the academics to disregard 'the unique narrating voice of 'someone' who speaks from within the periphery' (Stael, 1995: 464) and produce a commentary 'dangerously detached about [...the novel's] horrifying events' (Wilson, 1993: 272). Consequently, the notes are likely to prompt readers to think about their own modelling of Offred's mind, whether they take the academic commentary at face value and question the tale's authenticity, or whether they perceive the notes as an

analytical and ironic contrast with the emotional, intimate narrative of the tale itself which sheds light on the attribution of mental functions to the narrator of the tale. The reader is encouraged to model the minds that are modelling Offred's mind, laying bare the process itself.

### 6.5.2 Mind style

The confusion of identity so apparent in *The Handmaid's Tale* from speech and thought presentation also creates the impression of a unique mind style for Offred. This is most clearly reflected in her frequent use of figurative language, as 'traces of unconscious processes are visible in the narrator's free flow of similes' (Staels, 1995: 461). In the likening of herself to other things, we see Offred's search for ways in which to identify and characterise herself. She describes herself as 'like a queen ant with eggs' (HT: 45), 'like a child' (HT: 62), 'like a prize pig' (HT: 79), 'like the word *shatter*' (HT: 114), 'a melon on a stem' (HT: 162), 'like a cocoon' (HT: 180). She also uses this technique to characterise the Handmaids as a group – 'we are containers' (HT: 107), 'we are two-legged wombs [...] sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices' (HT: 146) – further emphasising the amorphous identity they are trained to adopt. In likening herself to all these things, amongst others, Offred presents a mind style indicative of an untethered self, of undefined existence, emphasised in her characterisation of herself as a composition (extract 16).

16. My self is a thing I must now compose, as one composes a speech (HT: 76).

This reliance on simile for identity provides an interesting contrast to Granny Weatherwax's dislike of figurative language due to her unshakable sense of self (section 5.5.2), and offers further support for the significance of idiom and recognisable phrase as a tool for rhetorical focussing of reader attention on character. Moreover, Offred's use of figurative language throughout the narrative highlights the role of blending in characterisation. While my revised characterisation model proposes that blending combines character information from all textual and mental sources, by processing simile in the text we engage in blending in its more traditional form, mapping source and target input. Consequently, Offred's

mental processes reflect in microcosm the conceptual blending at work in the reader's mind in modelling her character.

Finally, Offred's mind style is not only characterised by lost identity, but by defiance, as is clear from her desire to explore and embrace forbidden language, and to tell a forbidden narrative. She expresses this in terms of her own mental capacity and her view of sanity as a commodity (extract 17).

17. I am sane. Sanity is a valuable possession; I hoard it the way people once hoarded money (HT: 119).

This is illustrative not only of defiance – a sane mind, in Offred's view, is one able to question and challenge the regime – but of the values she has in this new world. The commodification of the mind places it, and the thought processes it controls, at the centre of the narrative. Consequently, reader attention is focussed on mind style and attribution.

### **6.5.3 Experientiality**

#### **Embodiment**

For Offred, who has lost control of her own body, physical descriptions are an act of longing, reclamation and defiance, and serve to highlight the embodied nature of her experience. This is present in the physical, sensuous experience of sibilant language expressed in extracts 7 & 8, and in her description of an instinctual, animal response to meeting the Commander outside her room, in forbidden territory (extract 18).

18. The signals animals give one another: lowered blue eyelids, ears laid back, raised hackles. A flash of bared teeth (HT: 59).

Physical description is also present throughout the text in portrayals of physical space. For example, the unfiltered, stream-of-consciousness narration (a 'cognitive meandering' – Short, 1996: 317) of extract 19 lends immediacy to the embodied, contained experience of Offred's room.

19. A window, two white curtains. Under a window, a window seat with a little cushion. When the window is partly open – it only opens partly – the air can come in and make the curtains move. I can sit in the chair, or on the window seat hands folded, and watch this. Sunlight comes in through the window too, and falls on the floor, which is made of wood, in narrow strips, highly polished. I can smell the polish (*HT*: 17).

Even the lack of free speech in Gilead is described in physical terms, as whispers and signs that are ‘more like a telegram, a verbal semaphore. Amputated speech’ (*HT*: 211). Through these descriptions Offred expresses her desire ‘to give expression to repressed corporeal and affective processes [...] she gives voice to a want, to a personal desire for touch and for being touched’ (Staels, 1995: 460).

The centrality of embodiment to our experience of Offred’s character is also emphasised by her use of figurative language. The similes she uses to construct an identity for herself (section 6.5.2) clearly express physical comparison, and the prominence of embodiment is enhanced by the fact that ‘key metaphors which run throughout *The Handmaid’s Tale* relate to body parts and their metonymic relationships to the wider world’ (Harrison, 2020). Most common are the metaphors of eyes, representative of surveillance and control, and hands, representative of power. The enforced repetition by the Handmaid’s of the greeting ‘under his Eye’ (extract 2) is a constant reminder of this surveillance, in addition to the name of the military police – the Eyes. Representations of restricted and tied hands (for example folded, as in extract 19) depict a lack of power, and a Handmaid’s hands can be amputated as punishment as they are not essential for their duties.

### **Emotion**

Emotion plays a significant role in readers’ responses to the text and its characters, as ‘Offred’s tale moves, emotionally, as well as rhythmically, in contrast with the deathly stillness that reigns above ground’ (Staels, 1995: 463). The emotional effects on readers caused by the detailed descriptions and sharp contrasts between self and state are apparent from a sample of Goodreads reviews:

I’ve been moved by books in the past, many times, but I’ve never before read a book that has emotionally drained me to such a degree. This is frightening and powerful (Sean Barrs, Jan 19th, 2016).

What a perfect time to be scared to death by this novel (Tatiana, Nov 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

I'm so emotionally drained after reading it that it's a miracle I'm not still hiding underneath a pile of blankets, sobbing (Navessa, Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

These reviews support the findings of research into affective response to the text, which has been used to claim that such responses prompt a critical engagement with the social and political events of the text:

We posit that negative emotions drive viewer engagement with the text. Specifically, reactions of anxiety, fear, and anger ground participants' reading of the series, and encourage them to critically interrogate the contemporary political environment through the lens of *The Handmaid's Tale's* Gilead (Holladay & Classen, 2019: 2).

Experience of the emotional as well as physical restrictions of Gilead through the narrative are heightened not only in Offred's longing for emotional expression and contact, and for her family, but also through depictions of hysteria. After the stress of her first illicit meeting with the commander, she describes her experience of overwhelming and inappropriate emotion in explicitly physical terms (extract 20), with echoes of birth, reminding herself that such outbursts used to be thought of as 'the wandering womb [...] hysteria' (*HT*: 156).

20. I cram both hands over my mouth as if I'm about to be sick, drop to my knees, the laughter boiling like lava in my throat. I crawl into the cupboard, draw up my knees. I'll choke on it. My ribs hurt with holding back, I shake, I heave, seismic, volcanic, I'll burst. Red all over the cupboard, mirth rhymes with birth, oh to die of laughter (*HT*: 156).

While such emotional outbursts are forbidden, some hysterics are encouraged in gatherings of Handmaids. These are rendered as tangibly physical at a group birth where Offred experiences fake labour pains and milk production, and in descriptions of mass punishments where handmaids are encouraged to 'tear a man apart with their bare hands' (*HT*: 320) – the hysteria of mass emotion made flesh and encouraged by the state as a form of moral fervour.

## 6.6 Intertextual handmaids

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, as in Pratchett's work, we see intertextual references used to encourage character modelling using all strands of the Rhetorical Processing Framework – foregrounded language, scenario and experientiality. As a work of speculative fiction set in an imagined future, the text is able to make reference to other texts at all levels of granularity (as illustrated in Chapter 3, Figure 3.2) including marked reference to real-world texts, rather than being limited by a fantastic setting. This section explores the role of intertextuality in constructing Offred's character, outlining the main intertexts in the novel before examining some of the narrative interrelations made by Goodreads reviewers and discussing the role of the text itself as a dummy narrative.

### 6.6.1 Attwood's intertexts

The most prevalent and explicit intertext in *The Handmaid's Tale* is the Bible, as it forms the basis of the theocracy of Gilead. This is established before the narrative even starts with a quotation from Genesis with which the role of the Handmaids is justified (extract 21).

21. And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.  
And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of womb?  
And she said, Behold my maid Bilah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. (Genesis, 30: 1-3, in *HT*: epigraph).

The Biblical reference is carried through the text in the form of specific, unmarked reference in the names of places and people. Gilead itself forms part of the setting of Jacob & Rachel's Biblical tale (referenced directly later in the text in the hymn 'There is a Balm in Gilead' – *HT*: 230) and the centre in which the Handmaids learn their role is named the Rachel and Leah Centre as further mention of this. The shops (Milk and Honey, Loaves and Fishes, All Flesh, Daily Bread) are all given titles that refer to well-known stories or common phrases in the Bible (I recognise them myself from use in a wider cultural context with little knowledge of the original intertext). Finally, several of the social titles are taken directly from the Bible:

Handmaids (see section 6.3), Marthas in reference to a woman characterised by domesticity, Jezebels to depict a non-Christian woman who went to her death in make-up and fine clothes, and Angels – the Guardians of the Faith (*HT*: 30).

In addition, much of the language used to shape this new reality makes specific unmarked reference to the Bible and religion. For example, the Handmaids must be ‘worthy vessels’ (*HT*: 75), people attend ‘Salvagings’ (*HT*: 31), sin is often reference to ‘The Fall’ (*HT*: 205) and in accusations of being ‘shameful, immodest’ (*HT*: 72) and ‘Scriptural precedent’ (*HT*: 26) permits behaviour. Even Offred herself, in her private narration, hopes for ‘a way out, a salvation’ (*HT*: 71). In further mirroring of Biblical language, reference to ‘the word’ is foregrounded in descriptions of the Commander (‘he has the word. How we squandered it, once’ - *HT*: 99) and his wife (‘how furious she must be, now she’s been taken at her word’ – *HT*: 56). Interestingly, in the former scene, the Bible is not referenced directly, even though that is the text the Commander reads from. This is the case throughout the narrative and foregrounds the pervasive nature of religion, as opposed to the Bible specifically, as intertext. This has a dual effect. Firstly, we may read it as signifying the idea that religion is so inherent to this society that it needs no mention. Alternatively, or perhaps in addition, it allows satirical commentary on aspects of many fundamental religions (Wilson, 1993). These frequent allusions to religious doctrine via language, however they are interpreted, highlight the significance of the surface text when constructing and intertextual model of character.

In a parallel with Pratchett’s witches, many character-relevant implications are made in *The Handmaid’s Tale* using intertextual reference to fairy tale. This is most clearly signified by the clothing worn by the Handmaids (extract 22), indicative of the tale of Little Red Riding Hood. The repetition of *red* in this extract foregrounds the link, which is further emphasised by the familiar and ominous *path through the forest*.

22. I get up [...] advance my feet into the sunlight, in their red shoes [...]. The red gloves are lying on the bed [...]. Everything except the wings around my face is red: the colour of blood. [...] I pick up the shopping basket, put it over my arm. [...] I go out into the polished hallway, which has a runner down the centre, dusty pink. Like a path through the forest [...] it shows me the way (*HT*: 18).

Suggestions of the vulnerability of Offred and the danger of her situation are inherent in this reference. We see link made more explicit shortly after (extract 13) when Offred likens

herself to *some fairytale figure in a red cloak*. However, rather than the third-person narration usually found in fairy tale, the first-person narration of the text foregrounds and privileges Little Red Riding Hood's point of view and prepares the reader for a more rounded and intimate experience of the character.

Reference to fairy tale is woven into the text throughout Offred's narrative and, in addition to the links to Red Riding Hood, several other references seen already in this analysis carry fairy tale motifs. The recurrent mention of mirrors (seen in extract 13) is suggestive of the magic mirror in Snow White, while Offred's preoccupation with bodily senses often echoes the transformation often seen in fairy tales. For example, extract 18 is suggestive of fairy-tale like transformation of human into animal, while extract 7 sees scrabble tiles mentally transformed into food (food itself presenting a recognisable tale motif, as in Snow White's apple or a witch's gingerbread cottage); the Handmaid's bodies are transformed into vessels, and Offred verbally transforms herself via simile. All these fairy tale intertexts are placed firmly in the realm of the bodily – of sensation and transformation, of colour and symbolism, temptation and danger, not only providing scenarios around which to model Offred's character, but emphasising the role of embodied experience in the modelling process.

### **6.6.2 Narrative interrelations**

The discussion of intertexts in *The Handmaids' Tale* in section 6.6.1 is not only based on my own narrative interrelations, but is supported by those made in other critical works (see section 6.2.1) and in commentary on the text by Atwood herself (Atwood, 2014). This allows me to make stronger claims regarding the validity of my intertextual analysis. In addition, some criticism makes narrative interrelations I have not. For example, in discussing the close connections between of Atwood's intertexts, Wilson highlights a third key area – mythology – that was not foregrounded for me when reading the text:

All the women females in the book figure in a parodic goddess trilogy. Interlacing the fairytale, mythic, and biblical intertexts, Atwood's novel presents Offred as already eaten Red Cap, raped Persephone maiden and Venus (Aphrodite), and biblical Bilhah; the Commander as wolf, Hades, Jacob, and biblical patriarch; Serena Joy as witch-mother, Hecate, and Rachel. The goal of Red Cap's quest is reunion with Mother Earth or Persephone's return from "hell" (Wilson, 1993: 272).

This insight provides an interesting parallel with Pratchett's witches, who are also modelled in relation to their role in the mythical goddess triad (see section 5.4.1). Furthermore, Wilson offers other interrelations – Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Anderson's fairy tale *The Red Shoes* – that some readers (myself included) may not make. This not only provides a fascinating insight into the multiple characterisations made possible by intertextual links, it also highlights the differences in narrative interrelations made depending on reader knowledge.

Similar evidence can be found in study guides for the novel, many of which comment on literary allusion in the text (allusion is defined as 'an indirect or passing reference [...] the nature and relevance of which is not explained by the writer but relies on the reader's familiarity with what is thus mentioned' – Baldick, 2008 – and so is comparable to specific unmarked reference in the Narrative Interrelation Framework). For example, Spark cites, amongst others, Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's play *The Changeling*, Milton's *Sonnet 19*, Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. A significant point regarding narrative interrelations and their control in certain reading contexts can be made here. Rather than offering one possible interpretation of an intertextual reference, the references and allusions outlined in study guides are presented as fact. Consequently, they provide frames and scenarios for modelling characters based on interrelations that readers would not necessarily make. Issues of how to read a text and the prioritising of privileged interpretations (Mason & Giovanelli, 2017) are therefore foregrounded when applying my characterisation model to a text that has received more critical attention.

Finally, as with Pratchett's work, Goodreads provides evidence of interrelations made by 'everyday' readers (or at least non-professional readers):

Move over Bram Stoker. Move over H.P. Lovecraft. Fade away into oblivion, Edgar Allan Poe. Disappear down the depths of obscurity, Stephen King. Your narratives are not nearly as coldly brutal, your premonitions not nearly as portentous (Samadrita, Oct 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012).

For me, "The Handmaid's Tale" is a powerful novel that is in my mind next to Saramago's "Blindness," another book that left me sleepless (Tatiana, Nov 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

The last novel they made me feel this way was Never Let Me Go (Adina, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

The account reminds me of, and is probably written trying to somehow emulate, "The Diary of Anne Frank." It ends in a very Coen Brothers fashion! (Fabian, Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

The concept is venerable, following on in the tradition of dystopian classics, such as Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World*. Despite its Chaucerian title (Kevin Ansbro, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Serena Joy's knitting is a compulsive form of reproduction with sinister echoes of Dickens' Madame Defarge in *A Tale of Two Cities* (Cecily, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

The most striking thing about these reviews is the range of interrelations made by readers. Although representative of a mere fraction of the available content, the six extracts contain seven marked reference to specific texts and seven marked generic references (for example, *Chaucerian*, *dystopian*, *Bram Stoker*). While some reflect common interrelations (Atwood herself contextualises *The Handmaid's Tale* as 'a classic dystopia, which takes at least part of its inspiration from George Orwell's *1984*' - Atwood, 2014: 516), others seem relatively unique (for example, the Coen brothers). Access to Atwood's own commentary on the inspirations behind her work allows more detailed analysis here. For instance, while *Brave New World* may seem like a logical interrelation as it shares a dystopian theme, Atwood cites the text as an example of the female character types she wanted to dispel with Offred's character (Atwood, 2014) – thus a general interrelation made by a reader in fact misses the subtler contrast intended by the author. As with any narrative interrelations we might speculate as to the reasons behind the links offered. This is especially relevant due to the literary status of Atwood's work, as readers may wish to align themselves with levels of knowledge they perceive necessary to fully appreciate the text. In light of the prescribed interpretations discussed above, this question become even more salient.

### 6.6.3 Dummy narratives in Gilead

*The Handmaid's Tale* has a more complex attachment to the idea of dummy narratives than Pratchett's work. The first reason for this is Offred's presentation of the narrative itself as a story, foregrounded quite early in the text (extract 23).

23. I would like to believe this is a story I'm telling. [...] Those who believe such stories are only stories have a better chance.  
If it's a story I'm telling, then I have control over the ending. [...]  
It isn't a story I'm telling.

It's also a story I'm telling, in my head, as I go along.  
Tell, rather than write, because I have nothing to write with and writing is in any case forbidden. [...]  
I'll pretend you can hear me.  
But it's no good, because I know you can't (*HT*: 49-50).

This description admits simultaneously that the narrative is a story and is not, is intended for an audience but will probably never have one, and is not written so may lack verifiability. In doing so, it creates a story world in which the tale itself is a dummy narrative, created by the narrator for the dual purpose of processing events in a way that maintains her own sanity (a presentation of mind style also running through this theme) and in the hope of being heard at some undefinable point in time, by some unknowable audience ('I tell, therefore you are' – *HT*: 279 – she explains later). This blatant admission that the tale is, or may be, fabricated, is emphasised throughout the text (extracts 16, 24 & 25).

24. I made that up. It didn't happen that way. Here is what happened (*HT*: 273).

25. This is a reconstruction. All of it is a reconstruction (*HT*: 144).

We are constantly reminded that Offred is constructing her narrative from memory – a narrative which itself was used to help her construct her own self in these strange circumstances. What we are reading, she suggests, is doubly removed from reality – a dummy narrative produced cathartically, as 'Offred finds a way to give away all her bottled-up emotions, traumatic experiences, and on top of that, a way to confess' (Namjoo, 2019: 95).

The relationship between the main narrative and the epilogue adds complexity to the text's status as a narrative: the status of the main story as a dummy narrative is foregrounded by the commentary in the epilogue's historical notes, and the historical notes are themselves a dummy narrative. The historical notes, as dummy narrative, offer an ironic reading of the tale from an emotionally detached and historically distant position and foreground several themes that are key to modelling Offred's character (for example, it offers its own mind-modelling of Offred and its own narrative interrelations). As Hogesette suggests,

the ironic "Historical Notes" epilogue [is] an ending that demands a rereading of her novel. Significantly, though, this rhetorically induced rereading does not go unguided, for the epilogue's ironic information provides readers with an example of how not to read Atwood's novel and thereby directs readers toward a proper reading of both the novel and Offred's narrative (Hogsette, 1997: 263).

In this instance the dummy narrative does not represent knowledge held by the character in question, but about them and therefore offers a novel application of the intertextual device. In addition, it foregrounds the characterisation process itself and the assumptions readers may have made in their initial engagement with the text. As Nuttall argues, 'the narrative is often viewed as a critique of the very acts of writing, reading and interpretation involved in our engagement with literature, and representations of reality more broadly' (Nuttall, 2019: 84).

## **6.7 Chapter conclusion**

Applying my revised model of characterisation to *The Handmaid's Tale* has enabled me to provide further evidence of the application of schematic knowledge and textual features in developing impressions of character. By considering a more complex first-person narration, the analysis has also illustrated more robustly the role of language in forming impressions of experientiality and the impact of this on attributing and modelling character minds and mental functioning. The Rhetorical Processing Framework has again been shown to provide a comprehensive approach that combines all these elements, structuring analysis of the use of foregrounded language to focus of reader attention, the application of character-relevant scenarios to frame comprehension and the combination of textual and mental prompts to engage readers with character by foregrounding the embodied nature of their experience. I have also been able to illustrate more vividly how readers use narrative interrelations to infer character traits and blend character-relevant information from different textual and mental sources., and how these processes can be utilised and complicated by authors to further foreground and enhance character-relevant detail and processing.

# 7. Conclusions & future directions

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This chapter provides an overview of the findings of the thesis, along with a summary of the impact of the research, the limitations of the study and possible future applications and extensions for my revised model of characterisation.

## 7.1 Key findings

The overall aim of this thesis has been to refine existing models of characterisation in order to address problems which they have retained from the models of comprehension on which they are based. As a result, the characterisation process is made more accessible in terms of the application of these models to text analysis. In order to achieve this, I began with an initial analysis of a short section of Pratchett's work that aimed to highlight areas of the existing models requiring further expansion. This allowed me to narrow my focus to four different research questions. My first research question asked to what extent and in what ways existing knowledge structures and mental models influence and interact with the processing of surface text in characterisation. To answer this I used Chapter 2 to outline the role of knowledge structures (specifically, schemata and prototypes) in comprehension. As a result, I was able to show that without category and schematic structures, it would be very difficult to account for how the expanse of knowledge and experience the reader brings to a text is effectively stored and applied. Viewing these structures from a Construction Integration perspective is helpful as it offers an explanation for how basic schematic structures act as an organisational tool for the activation of associated knowledge. The construction of mental models can also be viewed as a process of spreading activation across a network of nodes. The role of mental models in constructing impressions of character is likely to be visual and/or cultural in nature, the text-driven foregrounding of character-relevant cues in the text is integral to how these models are formed, as this information triggers character-relevant information in the reader. However, the individual nature of readers will ultimately govern the complexity of any mental model of character. In

addition, Chapter 2 explored my second research question, concerning how information from different sources is combined to form an impression of character and how this can be modelled. Here, Conceptual Blending provides a viable approach as it illustrates how schematic structures form input spaces from which more complex mental models, in the form of blended space, are extrapolated. This is applicable to all types of information, as all existing knowledge is stored in schema-like structures at some level of comprehension, whether in a mental lexicon, a cultural model, a social schema or a mental archive of intertextual references.

My discussion in Chapter 2 foregrounded the significance of surface text in activating knowledge structures and as a basis for constructing mental models. In order to justify a more prominent role for surface text in my revised model of characterisation, Chapter 3 introduced theories not already included in existing models of characterisation. In doing so, it addressed my second research question regarding how the role of surface text in character comprehension can be effectively modelled. In conjunction with the significance placed on the role of surface text in controlling reader attention and processing by the Rhetorical Focussing Principle, I was able to use the Idiom Principle to show how the style inherent in the units of meaning selected by authors allows chunks of text to be recognised and processed by the reader. The existence of the mental lexicon and pattern grammar that form the basis of how we recognise units of meaning provides a way of explaining how more surface text (or at least, more information provided by the surface text) is carried forward than a proposition-based account would suggest. When explored in conjunction with the emphasis on text style and the control of reader attention put forward by the Rhetorical Focussing Principle, it is clear that the style of the surface text plays a crucial role in the comprehension process.

Chapter 3 also explored my third research question: how intertextual reference can be included in the characterisation model to reflect its central role at all levels of processing. The Narrative Interrelation Framework proved integral to answering this question as it provides a detailed way of modelling the degree to which the influence of intertextuality in characterisation is unique to individual readers, both in terms of reader knowledge and regarding wider social issues of reader identity. Firstly, a relatively knowledgeable reader will be able to build a more complex mental model of character than someone who has little

knowledge of relevant intertextual instances. Secondly, the sharing of narrative interrelations may be influenced by the identity a reader wishes to create for themselves. As narrative interrelations beyond the analyst's can only be ascertained from reader response (unlike intertextual references, which can be implied from the text), the context and purpose of reading and interrelating is key to a robust understanding of the process and its role in characterisation.

In chapter 4 I explored existing theories of character in order to establish what exactly my model was attempting construct. While many theories of character focus on what they are (trait-based or person-like, flat or round) or where these impressions are formed (in the text or in the mind), a more relevant enquiry into character concerns the type and complexity of knowledge and the mental processes needed to infer and model character. For example, viewing character as a tool for reasoning is a more accurate depiction of how readers construct and utilise character information in the text. Theories of how traits, motivations, consciousness and mind style are attributed based on textual cues are particularly helpful in verifying the importance of surface text in the comprehension of characters. However, the role of these textual features can be reimagined as one of prompting narrative interrelations, as reader knowledge about fictional characters (both character types and specific characters) is central to the modelling process. This is because the interplay of type-based expectations and text-based character information creates a resonance which adds to a sense of character as imitated person as opposed to character as type. Consequently, readers are able to apply the same emotional experiences and responses to fictional characters as they do to interactions with and perceptions of real people. In this sense, intertextuality is also at work in the attribution of minds to characters and the emotional engagement readers have with them. By providing generic frameworks and possible story worlds, the narrative interrelations made by readers guide the construction of fictional minds. Mind-modelling and affective processes in fiction provide insights into why readers engage with characters and, consequently, influence the ways in which character is modelled during reading.

The two character analyses in Chapters 5 & 6 illustrate that my revised model of characterisation is applicable to, and useful for, providing robust analysis of differing character types. Firstly, they verify the claim that the Rhetorical Processing Framework provides a cohesive basis on which to structure a multi-level analysis of character, as it emphasises the importance of surface text, schematic information and experiential engagement in text processing. Secondly, my analyses foregrounds the role of intertextuality in character modelling, both as a way of relating new character information to existing character types and instances, and as a device for defying expectation and modelling character as more person-like. In addition, by exploring the various textual and mental sources of information responsible for characterisation, my analysis successfully illustrates the blended nature of character comprehension. Finally, discussing characters that are portrayed in such linguistically different ways provides an opportunity to explore and verify the applicability of the Idiom Principle as the central method with which all other elements of the model are triggered.

## **7.2 Impact & applications**

This study has enhanced the understanding of how we perceive and interact with fictional characters by using an interdisciplinary approach to expand existing models of characterisation. As my analyses show, this can be applied to enhancing understanding of all types of fictional character and so enhance the fields of literary criticism and cognitive linguistics. In addition, my findings have applications for modelling the ways in which we construct real people as characters. The Rhetorical Processing Framework's central notions of rhetorical focusing, scenario use and emotive response can be applied just as easily to non-fictional text, and so provides a useful tool for the characterisation of real people. Likewise, the ways in which known characters and types from various cultural and intertextual sources are used as models can equally be applied to modelling how we understand and interact in the real world. Finally, by understanding characterisation as a process of Conceptual Blending, we can gain a greater understanding not only of how

people model and interact with people, but how these processes can be disrupted and relearnt (in order, for example, to address issues of negative stereotyping and discrimination).

### **7.3 Limitations & future directions**

My research has gathered a limited amount of empirical reader-response data from the online reading group Goodreads. While this has been sufficient to lend support to my claims, additional empirical reader response data from other sources would allow me to further verify my ideas. Specifically, setting up studies in which I recruit my own participants, whether online or in person, would allow me to collect more detailed data based on targeted text sections relevant to character. This method would also allow me to address individual areas of the characterisation model by creating targeted questionnaires or tasks for participants. Specifically, I would be interested in exploring further the role that emotional responses play in reader perceptions of character.

Also of interest to my future work in this area is how characterisation is influenced by intertextual references and reader responses to and engagement with such references. As Mason suggests, 'examining instances of such points of contact being made by readers reveals that the range and type of interrelations subsequently made can vary significantly in terms of salience, intensity and impact on the individual's reading experience' (Mason, 2014: 189). This would take as a starting point work by Mason (Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Mason, 2019) on the importance placed on cultural literacy and knowledge about texts over the reading process itself, and the negative emotions and responses this may cause in readers who lack such cultural literacy and fail to make narrative interrelations that are seen as correct in such models of cultural knowledge. While this approach will allow me to gain a better idea of reader responses to characters in future work, it would have been of little use without the development of the theoretical model on which to base the research. For this reason, and owing to the time and size limits of this thesis, I prioritised the theoretical side of the characterisation process in order to address the issues with existing models. As a

further development of the exploration of intertextuality in this research, I would also like to apply my model to an analysis of intertextuality beyond the page. In the case of Pratchett's and Atwood's work, this would involve looking at the role of factors including fan conventions, fan fiction and TV adaptations. I would be particularly interested in examining the role of the internet and social media in building intertextual networks, which expands the notion of intertextuality itself significantly (Allen, 2011).

Another area of development for the theories presented here is the use of corpora. The use of corpora in this research has been limited to existing collections, which I have used to verify my own intuitions about language use and foregrounding. While this is a valid approach, as outlined in Section 1.5, the construction of an annotated corpus of Pratchett's work could allow me to highlight any key stylistic patterns relevant to characterisation. This would follow research such as McIntyre & Archer's (2010) application of quantitative corpus-based methods to McIntyre's (2005) qualitative analysis on mind style in Alan Bennett's *The Lady in the Van*. This explores semantic domains and key words using WMatrix and highlights future potential for exploring character mind style with semantic tagging. A similar approach would allow me to test and expand my findings about the mind styles created by Pratchett and Atwood for their characters. A Pratchett corpus would also allow me to trace the development of the language used by and about Pratchett's witches over the history of the Discworld series to identify any key patterns or developments, and how these may have influenced their characterisation. An Atwood corpus could assist in looking for patterns in characterisation across her novel for different characters.

Finally, an application of the central tenets of my model – rhetorical focussing and the mapping of intertextual scenarios – to other texts would be a useful way of testing my findings. These could be different examples of equally explicit characterisation, or examples of subtler character construction.

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