

Charles University in Prague
Faculty of Education
Department of English Language and Literature

BACHELOR THESIS

Stylistic Analysis of Petersons's 12 Rules for Life and Harari's Sapiens
Stylistická analýza Petersonových 12 pravidel pro život a Harariho Sapiens
Petra Sodomková

Supervisor: PhDr. Klára Lancová, Ph.D.
Study Programme: Specialization in Education
Branch of Study: English Language and German Language

2021

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that no other sources have been used than those listed in bibliography. This thesis was not submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree or a diploma to any other university or institution.

Prague, 13th April, 2021

.....

Petra Sodomková

I would like to express my gratitude to my family members, who were all of great help and support during the writing of this thesis, and to my friends, who made sure I had an unforgettable time during my studies. Last but certainly not least, I am eternally thankful to my supervisor PhDr. Klára Lancová, Ph.D., whose valuable advice and patience made the whole experience of writing this thesis and studying at Charles University brilliant.

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis endeavours to identify, interpret, and compare the various stylistic means used in two non-fiction books, namely 12 Rules for Life by Jordan B. Peterson and Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari. The main aim of this thesis is to establish which means the two aforementioned authors opted to use, why these particular choices were made and what effect they have on the reader. Attention is paid predominantly to humorous examples and the reasons which cause their humorous charge to manifest itself. These means are theoretically substantiated in the first part of the thesis and then discussed from the analytical perspective in the practical part.

KEYWORDS

non-fiction, register, style, genre, lexical choice, figures of speech, phraseme

ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na nalezení, interpretování a porovnání různých stylistických prostředků, které se objevují ve dvou knihách ze žánru literatury faktu, jmenovitě 12 pravidel pro život od Jordana B. Petersona a Sapiens od Yuvala Noaha Harari. Hlavním cílem této práce je určit, jaké prostředky již dříve zmínění autoři zvolili, proč zrovna je a jaký mají vliv na čtenáře. Pozornost je věnována především humorným příkladům a důvodům, díky kterým se humornými jeví. Tyto prostředky jsou nejprve teoreticky podloženy v první části práce a poté diskutovány z analytického hlediska v části praktické.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

literatura faktu, registr, styl, žánr, lexikální výběr, řečové figury, frazém

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction | 6 |
| 1 Theoretical Background | 8 |
| 1.1 Main Linguistic Concepts..... | 8 |
| 1.1.1 Stylistics and Style | 8 |
| 1.1.2 Register..... | 10 |
| 1.1.3 Genre | 11 |
| 1.1.4 Academic Register | 11 |
| 1.2 Categories with Humorous Charge | 12 |
| 1.2.1 Register Discrepancy..... | 12 |
| 1.2.2 Figures of Speech | 13 |
| 1.3 Categories without Humorous Charge | 17 |
| 1.3.1 Use of Language Periphery | 17 |
| 2 Language Material and Methods | 19 |
| 2.1 Authors | 19 |
| 2.1.1 Jordan B. Peterson..... | 19 |
| 2.1.2 Yuval Noah Harari | 19 |
| 2.2 Book Summaries | 20 |
| 2.2.1 Jordan B. Peterson – 12 Rules for Life | 20 |
| 2.2.2 Yuval Noah Harari – Sapiens..... | 20 |
| 2.3 Public Reception of the Analysed Books | 20 |
| 2.3.1 Jordan B. Peterson – 12 Rules for Life | 21 |
| 2.3.2 Yuval Noah Harari – Sapiens..... | 21 |
| 2.4 Methods | 22 |
| 3 Analysis | 25 |
| 3.1 12 Rules for Life..... | 28 |
| 3.1.1 Examples with Humorous Charge..... | 28 |
| 3.1.2 Examples without Humorous Charge | 46 |
| 3.2 Sapiens..... | 50 |
| 3.2.1 Examples with Humorous Charge..... | 50 |
| 3.2.2 Examples without Humorous Charge | 65 |
| 3.3 Implications | 69 |
| Conclusion | 71 |
| Bibliography | 72 |

Introduction

This thesis aims to identify, interpret, and compare the various stylistic phenomena used in two non-fiction books, namely *12 Rules for Life* by Jordan B. Peterson and *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari. Several categories have manifested themselves as prominent after completing the collection of the language material for the analysis. The full list of categories comprises register discrepancy, metaphor, personification, simile, irony, allusion, alliteration, repetition, and pun.

Although the literature deals with serious topics and there is possibly nothing inherently humorous about genuine life advice or the history of humankind, the authors nevertheless manage to appeal to the general public since they use a particular language to which people are able to relate to, gain knowledge from and perhaps most importantly be amused by at the same time. While some other non-fiction works may seem unpalatable due to their sole purpose of mediating information, *Sapiens* and *12 Rules for Life* do not share this characteristic.

Humour constitutes a paramount feature of both books and thus accounts for the major part of the analysis. To begin with, numerous figures of speech aid as a means of painting vivid imagery to illustrate any points made or to acquaint the reader with unknown claims, such as metaphors, similes or allusions, which further add to the relevance of the books among other writings and provide additional perspectives without having to clarify some already established data of past creations, relying on the ability of the reader to recall their meaning. Furthermore, the employment of informal register, particularly when a rather complex subject is discussed, serves to retain the relatability and not overwhelm the reader with pure facts, and simultaneously exemplifies the matter so that it can be understood in a practical manner.

However, a large volume of formal language is preserved as the books still aim to tackle their topics accurately and in a well-founded, presentable, and eloquent fashion. Such examples were included as well to showcase the variety of the register both authors demonstrate in the books.

Therefore, both an already conversant reader and an unfamiliar one may highly likely benefit from these two publications.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter **Theoretical Background** endeavours to supply an adequate theoretical basis to the fundamental ideas upon which this thesis is built, such as the discipline of stylistics, the register, or other relevant concepts and terms. Illustrative examples from the practical part were attached to the corresponding categories for further explanation.

The second chapter, which is called **Language Material and Methods**, is concerned with an introductory overview of the two authors and their books, which are the primary source for the practical material that is dealt with in the analysis. Moreover, this chapter contains an in-depth description of the methodological process with which the analysis was approached and executed. Lastly, the main questions of the thesis are described.

The third chapter **Analysis** presents the individual practical examples, which were divided into a set of categories and investigated in detail. Each book offers material of both humorous and non-humorous character. The results of the analysis are then summarized and consequent implications are inferred.

1 Theoretical Background

The following pages attempt to provide adequate theoretical foundations for the thesis with the emphasis put on the most relevant general linguistic concepts and the particular categories of various means that have proved significant during the analysis.

1.1 Main Linguistic Concepts

1.1.1 Stylistics and Style

As several linguists agree, it is difficult to thoroughly encompass all that the term ‘stylistics’ conveys. Crystal and Davy refer to it as the study of style, the form of which is defined as “the selection of language habits” and “the occasional linguistic idiosyncrasies which characterise an individual’s uniqueness” (2013: 9). In addition, the two authors see style as able to “refer to some or all of the language habits shared by a group of people at one time or over a period of time” (2013: 10). With this perspective outlined, a more specific aim of stylistics according to Crystal and Davy is then “to analyse language habits with the main purpose of identifying ... those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social context, to explain why such features have been used and to classify these features into categories based upon a view of their function in the social context” (2013: 10).

Vachek mentions the ambiguity with which the word ‘style’ is commonly perceived in multiple fields even outside of linguistics, and suggests that the best description yet has been made by Vilém Mathesius in his papers on the issues of Czech and General Linguistics, which Vachek himself translates as an “individual, unifying character found to be present in any work resulting from intentional activity” (1991: 114). As a consequence, Vachek indicates that stylistics examines “the prerequisites and possibilities found in the concerned language system for the purpose of providing the utterances of that language with the above-mentioned sort of unifying character” (1991: 114).

Burke sees stylistics simply as “the study and analysis of texts” (2014: 1). He traces its origins to the ancient Greece, and he also sets forth ‘lexis’ as the third canon of ancient rhetoric, which is today referred to as ‘style’ (Burke 2014:1).

Simpson recognizes this linguistic discipline as “a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*” (2004: 2, cursive in original), which is

“interested in language as a function of texts in context” (2004: 3). Simpson attributes stylistics a great amount of importance as he realizes its potential to indicate different functions of text and therefore enables its interpretation (2004: 2). He finds that occupation with this linguistic discipline leads to greater exploration of language and mainly the creativity connected with its use. As a consequence, one is enriched and gains a better understanding of texts in general (Simpson 2004: 3).

Biber and Conrad perceive style as a perspective of a text variety, which “analyses the use of linguistic features that are common in text” (2019: 2), while the “style features reflect aesthetic preferences, associated with particular authors of historical periods” (2019: 2). They also state that when it comes to fiction primarily, authors often develop their particular style, which can be recognized due to the length of sentences or their structure and complexity, such as the language of Virginia Woolf or Ernest Hemingway (Biber and Conrad 2019: 18).

One of the main features of stylistics from the perspective of Toolan is that “it persists in the attempt to understand technique, or the craft of writing” (2013: preliminaries). He deems its purpose to be the searching for any “pattern, repetition, recurrent structures, ungrammatical or ‘language-stretching’ structures [and] large internal contrasts of content or presentation” (2013: 2). Although he focuses on fiction, this can be applied to non-fiction works as well.

In the opinion of Bradford, “stylistics enables us to identify and name the distinguishing features of literary texts, and to specify the generic and structural subdivisions of literature” (2005: introduction).

The last definition is borrowed from Leech and Short, according to the lines of whom style “refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose” (2007: 9). Subsequently, the focus of stylistics is supposedly to “relate the critic’s concern of aesthetic appreciation with the linguist’s concern of linguistic description” (Leech and Short, 2007: 11).

As a synthesis of all aforementioned definitions, this thesis perceives stylistics as the study of different means by which an author achieves various goals. These goals usually represent the effort to compose writings which people can gain knowledge from and be enthralled by, and also the desire for the reading of the book to be an attractive experience.

1.1.2 Register

Halliday and Hasan introduce the essential ideas, which compose the register: field, mode and tenor. They claim that “the field is the total event, in which the text is functioning, together with the purposive activity of the speaker or writer” (1976: 22). Mode describes either the spoken or written channel and the “genre, or rhetorical mode, as narrative, didactic, persuasive and so on” (1976: 22). Finally, tenor concerns the social background of the participants and therefore describes the roles of the two or more parties involved. Halliday and Hasan then summarize register as a “set of meanings, the configuration of semantic patterns, that are typically drawn upon under the specified conditions, along with the words and structures that are used in the realization of these meanings” (1976: 23).

Leech et al. base their approach on Halliday and Hasan – register is supposed to “refer to language variation according to use” (1985: 9). A further division into three rather similar subcategories is introduced: tenor, mode and domain. Tenor characterises the level of formality, mode considers verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication in a certain medium, and domain addresses how the environment and field of interest affect the language (Leech et al. 1985: 9).

According to Biber and Conrad, register denotes “a variety associated with a particular situation of use” and “covers three major components: the situational context, the linguistic features, and the functional relationships between the first two components” (2019: 6). Furthermore, they mention the different circumstances, contexts, and purposes, which all influence the situational characteristics, and even specify that for the linguistic features to be significant, they have to be “pervasive in some registers but comparatively rare in other registers” (2019: 9). The term “register of academic prose” (Biber and Conrad 2019: 10) is greatly relevant to this thesis and accurately labels the approach of the authors whose works are dealt with in the analysis, although there are some deviations to be found from the general form of said register.

Register and Dialect

Since these two terms can be easily confused, it is important to offer a specification. As opposed to a register, a dialect is “a manner of speaking peculiar to an individual or class or region” (Cuddon 2013: 196). As Biber and Conrad claim, there are two most common

kinds of dialects: geographic dialects, which correspond to speakers of a certain location, and then social dialects, which refer to speakers from a demographic group (2019: 11). Their focus is put on “linguistic features that are not associated with meaning differences” (Biber and Conrad 2019: 11), such as phonological or grammatical phenomena, unlike the features of register, which are actually meaning-oriented. Moreover, Biber and Conrad regard the differences among individual dialects as “largely conventional, expressing a person’s identity within a social group” (2019: 12).

1.1.3 Genre

A genre might be understood as a perspective from which a text is categorized. It “focuses on the conventional structures used to construct a complete text within the variety, for example, the conventional way in which a letter begins and ends” (Biber and Conrad 2019: 2). In other words, a genre determines the “culturally expected way of constructing texts belonging to the variety” (Biber and Conrad 2019: 16). As Halliday and Hasan agree, “a particular text, or a genre, may exhibit a general tendency towards the use of certain features or modes rather than others” (1976: 332). More generally, a genre in literature corresponds to the “division between poetry, prose and drama; and then further (sub-)genres can be distinguished within each” (Wales 2014: 188). Wales then introduces genre as “set or cluster of structural and stylistic properties that have come to be associated with them” (2014: 188).

1.1.4 Academic Register

The majority of examples in the analysis were chosen due to their deviation from the standard form of an academic register. Thus, it is appropriate to outline its major aspects.

The primary characteristic is its “focus on communicating information rather than on developing a personal relationship” (Biber and Conrad 2019: 111). What is more, in contrast to fictional prose writing, academic works aim to provide the reader with new discoveries with authority, a high degree of trustworthiness, relevance, and the ability to support these claims with sufficient expertise on the part of the author, while not directly interacting with the reader (Biber and Conrad 2019: 116).

1.2 Categories with Humorous Charge

Defamiliarization

The notion of defamiliarization, originally introduced by Viktor Shklovsky, a Russian formalist, constitutes an important premise for language to be able to transcend its original meaning. This notion is summarized by Burke in his statement that “by undoing the familiarity of things, observers are led to examine what otherwise would fall in a sort of automatic, habitual kind of attention” (2014: 88). As a result, among other effects, language may become humorous. It declares that the attention of the reader is captured by disrupting the conventionality of the way language is used. However, it is emphasized that the perception of such disruptions is largely subjective and thus depends on the individual reader and many aspects regarding him, such as personal experiences, age, preferences, gender, cultural background and more (Burke 2014: 88).

1.2.1 Register Discrepancy

According to Ross, humour can manifest itself as a result of “a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke” (2005: 7). In other words, there is a discrepancy between the typical use of a word and the way the word is presented by a particular author under particular circumstances. The word ‘discrepancy’ may be understood as ‘disharmony’, ‘inconsistency’ or ‘incongruity’, all expressions meaning two (or more) sides, which stand in certain disagreement with each other. The circumstances in which the words are to be found are of vital importance. These circumstances represent ‘the context’.

From the perspective of linguistics, the connotations of the words appear often in an antonymous relationship. From the perspective of extralinguistic concepts, they come from unrelated fields.

An illustrative example of register discrepancy is provided below:

12RL1 “If a larger bird ever dared to sit and rest in any of the trees near our birdhouse there was a good chance he would get knocked off his perch by a kamikaze wren” (Peterson 2018: 3).

1.2.2 Figures of Speech

As specified by Alm-Arvius, figurative language is based on “formulations that have some kind of extended or transferred meaning” (2003: 9), and therefore represent an efficient way of conveying information. The major reason for the employment of this type of language can be ascribed to the ability of words and phrases to “represent a more general notion than that evoked by its basic and literal kind of application” (2003: 10). She mentions the notion of ‘polysemy’, a closely related term, which resembles the “semantic variability in the use of language elements” (Alm-Arvius 2003: 12), in other words, the possibility for one phrase to have more than one meaning based on the context in which it emerges.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech, in which “one field or domain of reference is carried over or mapped onto another on the basis of some perceived similarity between the two fields” (Wales 2014: 265). Wales also claims that metaphors contribute to a better understanding on the side of the reader, as they can serve as a simpler exemplification or clarification of a rather complicated or unknown matter (2014: 265).

Goatly inquires into the differences between the literal sense and the figurative sense. He proposes that “in the limiting, absolutely literal case the proposition expressed will share all the semantic properties of the speaker’s thoughts” (Goatly 1997: 16). The notions of these two senses are closely related to metaphors, as their various employment results in the semantic “fuzziness” (1997: 17), which is a major premise for any metaphor. This idea suggests that a degree of ambiguity is indispensable when employing figurative language, as it allows for the transition between the literal and figurative sense (Goatly 1997: 21). Goatly then concludes that “the only difference between literal and metaphorical language is the degree of gap between a speaker’s thought and the proposition expressed” (Goatly 1977: 22).

As metaphor presents itself as paramount in the analysis, it is important to attempt to comprehend why that is. Lakoff and Johnson provide valuable insight into the nature and meaning of metaphorical language, as they suggest that “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action” (2003: 4). They present various metaphorical concepts, which allow for this figure of speech to powerfully convey meaning

with the help of extralinguistic experiences. The concept might be e. g. “argument is war” in sentences like “Your claims are *indefensible*.” or “I *demolished* his argument” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 5, cursive in original), which consequently allow for related ideas and vocabulary such as winners, losers, opponents, or the act of attacking, defending, planning or strategizing. They continue their theory by proposing that “though there is no physical battle, there is a verbal battle, and the structure of an argument – attack, defense, counterattack, etc. – reflects this” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 5). As a result of this way of thinking about the world, it has become common to use such concepts in everyday mind processes. Thus, “the metaphor is not merely in the words we use – it is in our very concept of an argument. ... We talk about arguments that way because we conceive of them that way – and we act according to the way we conceive of things” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 6).

The text sample below portrays the expedience and power of metaphorical use:

12RL16 “I am not saying that there is no hope of redemption. But it is much harder to extract someone from a chasm than to lift him from a ditch. And some chasms are very deep” (Peterson 2018: 94).

Personification

This figure of speech is based on the transfer of animate or human qualities onto an inanimate or abstract object (Wales 2014: 314). Examples of personification can be usually easily recognizable in texts, as their structure is a rather obvious one. As Paxson claims, this structure unites the qualities of a ‘personifier’, who “is a mobile and active human being, endowed with speech, and representative of a specific psychological, physiological, and ideological constitution” (2009: 40), and a ‘personified’, which stands for something that “can be found among a range of abstract essences, inanimate objects, animals, etc” (Paxson 2009: 40).

The aforementioned structure can be observed in the following example:

S29 “Over the next 300 years, the Afro-Asian giant swallowed up all the other worlds. It consumed the Mesoamerican World in 1521, when the Spanish conquered the Aztec Empire, It took its first bite out of the Oceanic World at the same time, during Ferdinand Magellan’s

circumnavigation of the globe, and soon after that completed its conquest” (Harari 2014: 186).

Simile

According to Wales, similes can be observed when “two concepts are imaginatively and descriptively compared” (2014: 383). They are mostly connected using the expressions ‘like’ or ‘as’. Cuddon adds that a simile is created when “one thing is likened to another, in such a way as to clarify and enhance an image” (2013: 657). Wales also sees a close relation to metaphors, as the “two fields of reference are similarly juxtaposed” too (2014: 383).

The following text sample illustrates the concept of hard work on the behaviour of a harvester ant:

S32 “The anxious peasant was as frenetic and hardworking as a harvester ant in the summer, sweating to plant olive trees whose oil would be pressed by his children and grandchildren, putting off until the winter or the following year the eating of the food he craved today” (Harari 2014: 113).

Irony

A phrase is ironic when “the words actually used appear to contradict the sense actually required in the context and presumably intended by the speaker” (Wales 2014: 240). Wales claims that ironic statements can convey indirect criticism, which might be even well concealed if no supporting aspects indicate its presence, such as intonation and facial expression (2014: 240). However, irony does not only express oppositeness in a few sentences, as Cuddon demonstrates in Friedrich Schlegel’s approach to irony as “an entire way of looking at the world, a broad philosophic vision” (2014: 372). In the opinion of Gurillo and Ortega, “ironic utterances are echoic because the speaker transmits an attitude of dissociation from the echoed opinion” (2013: 1), and they also introduce the notion of an “ironic environment [which] includes the speaker’s expectation, an incongruity between expectation and reality and the speaker’s negative attitude towards this incongruity” (2013: 2).

The underlined sentence below exemplifies the employment of irony:

12RL36 “Our anxiety systems are very practical. They assume that anything you run away from is dangerous. The proof of that is, of course, the fact you ran away” (Peterson 2018: 25).

Allusion

Allusions can be summarized as a literary device in which “a reference is being made to an existing text” (Ross 2005: 37), or as “an implicit reference, perhaps to another work of literature or art, to a person or an event” (Cuddon 2013: 25). Wales also states that allusions might be perceived as “a continual ‘dialogue’ between the text given and other texts/utterances that exist outside it” (Wales 2014: 235).

The employment of an allusion might be clearly recognized in the text sample below:

12RL41 “No one knew what the hell they were doing at those parties. Hoping for a cheerleader? Waiting for Godot?” (Peterson 2018: 82).

Alliteration

Alliteration occurs when two or more words have the same letters, usually in the initial position, and in this case a consonant (as opposed to assonance, which has the same characteristics, only relating to vowels). Wales sees alliteration as a common part of “popular idioms, tongue twisters and advertising language” (Wales 2014: 15). Its main function is usually emphasis. Consequently, it also “aids memorability” (Wales 2014: 15), as the words are more easily connected to each other due to the use of the same letters. Cuddon agrees that this figure of speech was especially prominent in Old English, where it created the “essential part of the metrical scheme” (2013: 22).

In this example, two cases of alliteration can be found:

S43 “Hunter-gatherers had no money. Each band hunted, gathered and manufactured almost everything it required, from meat to medicine, from sandals to sorcery” (Harari 2014: 194).

Repetition

Repetition, i. e. the production of identical words or phrases, is predominantly employed for the emphasis or intensification of said expressions. As reported by Wales, it is commonly used mainly in literature for children and Old English poetry (Wales 2014: 366).

The example below shows its emphasizing function:

S47 “The depressing findings from the Danube Valley are supported by a string of equally depressing findings from other areas” (Harari 2014: 67).

Pun

Pun is understood as a “play upon words”, which is often intentionally carried out with humour (Cuddon 2013:572). Ross explains a pun as an expression in which there is “the possibility for two meanings being understood from the utterance” (2005: 8). Wales agrees that it is a polysemous or a homonymous word which is needed for the two meanings to be juxtaposed (2014: 349). The main point of a pun lies therefore in the ability of the reader to relate one word to two fields, which are not commonly interconnected.

A pun can be discovered in the following text sample:

12RL46 “Lobsters have more in common with you than you might think (particularly when you are feeling crabby—ha ha)” (Peterson 2018: 1).

1.3 Categories without Humorous Charge

The examples in this category do not possess any humorous charge. However, the examples remain distinctive of the language of the author, showcasing a versatility of the author’s interests and abilities.

1.3.1 Use of Language Periphery

A language is a system with several layers. Its most central units constitute the most frequently used expressions. Towards the outer parts of the system lies the language

periphery, that is to say that for one reason or another, such expressions are less commonly integrated into speech.

Hyams suggests that “the periphery includes, among other things, exceptions or “relaxations” of the settings of core grammar and the idiosyncratic features of the language which are governed by particular lexical items” (1987: 3). These lexical items may include formal expressions, terminology of various specialized fields, slang, jargon, literary language and more.

Level of Formality

Leech et al. propose the concept of formality to be seen as a scale on which one extreme implies the highest level of formal language, e. g. in the language of legal documentation, and the second extreme is characteristic of informal language, such as talking with a close family member (1985: 145). Leech et al. also name the most prominent terms that correlate with formality: “politeness and impersonality” (1985: 145). The basic principle is that higher formality is preserved when in contact with unfamiliar people or authorities. In addition, higher formality is usually connected with words of Latin or Greek origin, which tend to be longer in comparison to those of Anglo-Saxon origin.

The three examples below portray the inclusion of scientific terms, formal expressions, and literary language respectively.

12RL54 “Very little of your retina is high-resolution fovea—the very central, high-resolution part of the eye, used to do such things as identify faces” (Peterson 113).

S57 “Trapped in this vicious circle, blacks were not hired for white-collar jobs because they were deemed unintelligent, and the proof of their inferiority was the paucity of blacks in white-collar jobs” (Harari 2014: 159).

S51 “A similar fate befell the mammoth population of Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean (200 kilometres north of the Siberian coast)” (Harari 2014: 74).

2 Language Material and Methods

This chapter introduces both authors of the books that will be analysed in chapter 3. Summaries from six reviews in total are added to supply the thesis with a general overview of the reactions the books have received from their readers since they had been published. At the end of this chapter, the methodology of the analytical process is described.

2.1 Authors

2.1.1 Jordan B. Peterson

Doctor Jordan Bernt Peterson is a clinical psychologist as well as a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto, Canada, who was born and raised in Northern Alberta. He has published two books so far, ‘Maps of Meaning’ and the bestselling piece ‘12 Rules for Life’, which has been translated into 50 languages. Being a prolific researcher, he managed to compose over a hundred scientific papers together with his colleagues and students, while also putting together two online programs focusing on personal development. He was nominated as one of Ontario’s Best University Lecturers five times. In 2016, he began sharing his lectures online, which quickly brought about immense popularity, and is now regarded as one of the most influential public figures (www.jordanbpeterson.com).

2.1.2 Yuval Noah Harari

Apart from being the author of ‘Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind’ and more, Professor Yuval Noah Harari is also a historian and philosopher. He studied at the University of Oxford where he acquired his PhD. Furthermore, he is interested in global issues such as the climate and the future of both humans and animals. Harari received an honorary doctorate and his books have been awarded as the “Knowledge Book of the Year”, the “Academic Book of the Year” or “the most thoughtful and influential economic book of the year”. He now gives lectures in Israel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (www.ynharari.com).

2.2 Book Summaries

2.2.1 Jordan B. Peterson – 12 Rules for Life

Jordan B. Peterson has accumulated a lot of valuable advice over the years of his practice as a psychologist. The most important principles, which should tremendously improve anyone's life if they decide to live accordingly to them, have been selected and assembled into one book – The '12 Rules for Life'. Peterson elaborates on the importance of taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions, being honest, caring, and behaving in a way that doesn't just benefit one person, but also his family and the community he lives in. However, he doesn't urge people to just be 'happy' and 'nice', he emphasizes the fact that one has to accept that suffering is necessary and get in touch with his cruel and malevolent side too so as to fully understand what he is capable of, and only then is one ready to face up to the challenges of life.

2.2.2 Yuval Noah Harari – Sapiens

Yuval Noah Harari's book Sapiens is exactly what the subtitle says: 'A Brief History of Humankind'. The author summarizes the course of 6 million years over which humans have evolved from chimpanzees to highly intelligent creatures reigning from the pinnacle of the food pyramid. Harari focuses on the main turning points of this development, such as revolutions, new inventions, new beliefs and values, but not only does he deal with the past, he provides great insight to the present and makes predictions for the future as well. Although the topic may sound like a tedious history essay to some, Harari keeps the attention of the reader by frequently using witty remarks and captivating observations so that it is more accessible to the general public.

2.3 Public Reception of the Analysed Books

I based this chapter on six reviews in total, three for each book, to demonstrate the public opinion of both 12 Rules for Life and Sapiens. I used online magazines as the source, namely The Guardian, The Irish Times, The New Yorker and The Independent.

2.3.1 Jordan B. Peterson – 12 Rules for Life

Kunzru describes Peterson’s writing as “delivered in a baroque style that combines pull-your-socks-up scolding with footnoted references to academic papers” and states that “the effect of the book is bizarre, like being shouted at by a rugby coach in a sarong” (Kunzru 2018). He dismisses 12 Rules for Life by saying that Peterson is unable to abide by his own rules that he so adamantly promotes and that getting to the end of the book brings the reader a great sense of relief.

On the contrary, Humphreys claims that although Peterson doesn’t offer any ground-breaking revelations, it certainly is “wise, provocative, humorous and also maddeningly contradictory (as all deep and truthful studies of human nature must be)” (Humphreys 2018).

Sanneh also acknowledges the book’s merit in *The New Yorker*. In spite of the incessant intensity with which Peterson speaks even about the most ordinary topics, Sanneh regards his advice as “unobjectionable, if old-fashioned: he wants young men to be better fathers, better husbands, better community members” (Sanneh 2018).

It is therefore clear that ‘12 Rules for Life’ has received both praise and critique, caused innumerable debates and became a controversial piece among the readers. Although some find it unbearable, pretentious, or deficient, there is a large amount of those who view it as helpful and reasonable.

2.3.2 Yuval Noah Harari – Sapiens

Strawson commences with the commendable qualities Harari’s *Sapiens* possesses, such as the fact that it’s captivating, entertaining, educational and eloquently composed. However, he feels that the writing becomes gradually filled with exaggerated statements, sensational comments and reckless conclusions. (Strawson 2014)

Parker adopts an appreciative stance. He says that Harari “did not invent Big History, but he updated it with hints of self-help and futurology, as well as a high-altitude, almost nihilistic composure about human suffering” (Parker 2020). He compliments the absence of neologisms, which are often used in nonfiction publications to draw more attention, and concludes with saying that Harari’s ideas are well expressed and concatenated.

Forbes highlights the humour and the courage of Harari delving into the topic of humankind, stating that it is a “brave and bracing look at a species that is mostly in denial about the long road to now and the crossroads it is rapidly approaching“ (Forbes 2014). Not all passages of the book are equally strong in his eyes, but he assigns it to the fact that *Sapiens* covers a wide range of information.

Having compared the reviews, it seems that ‘*Sapiens*’ obtained more acclamation and is generally less criticized than Peterson’s ‘12 Rules for Life’, which might be the anticipated result. Peterson provides his own opinions on how to behave and live one’s life correctly, and although he as a clinical psychologist bases a lot of his beliefs on scientific research, the society will be divided into those who live according to those ‘rules’ and those who defy them, which inevitably creates certain tension. However, Harari presents a more historically focused (and thus less personal) writing and a distance can be more easily preserved.

2.4 Methods

The two books were both chosen for the analysis due to their admirable ability to present a broad and serious topic in a non-fiction form to a large readership, whilst also accompanying the facts with entertaining observations.

The process of deciding what examples to include in the analysis was commenced by closely scrutinizing the language of both books while reading them. Firstly, every phrase or sentence was highlighted if it seemed humorous or deviated otherwise from the non-personal formal style of academic prose in which scientifically oriented works are generally expected to be composed. The amount of context needed for every example to be sufficiently substantiated had to be considered. While the formality of the language can be observed, broadly speaking, in the single sentence in which the formal word occurs, the humorous examples need more background information for them to become apparent or to be comprehended by the reader who has no former knowledge of the two works. Some of the examples would even require whole pages to be cited so that the gist of the joke was entirely evident and in such cases an attempt was made to concisely paraphrase the context in the analysis found under each individual text sample.

The expression 'text sample' was introduced as the most fitting description of the cited examples that are presented in the analysis, since they vary in length from a few words up to several sentences. In addition, they do not always comprise a whole paragraph either, in some cases they are taken from the middle of one or they come from the end of one and extend to the beginning of another one.

Subsequently, text samples from each book were compiled into a collection and divided into categories which were inferred from my former knowledge of stylistics, semantics, and lexicology, and also from several publications tackling the aforementioned fields of linguistics.

The perception of humour is largely subjective and might be vastly different for every person reading the books, and therefore the criteria according to which a phrase is selected as humorous stems primarily from a personal point of view, and although supported by theoretical writings on relevant topics, it may not appear satisfactory to everyone.

The categories of metaphor and register discrepancy became gradually the most represented ones. Large amounts of metaphors were omitted from the analysis due to the constrained length of the thesis, however, the most presentable examples were chosen for a sufficient demonstration. Nonetheless, the category of metaphor remains the most extensive.

Formal expressions that are to be found in chapters 3.1.2 and 3.2.2 were checked in four different online dictionaries, which all state the formality of the word in their description. Namely, they were the Cambridge Dictionary (www.dictionary.cambridge.org), Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com), Collins Dictionary (www.collinsdictionary.com) and a Czech-English online dictionary Seznam.cz Slovník (www.slovník.seznam.cz). The expression was then categorized as formal when at least three out of four dictionaries supported the idea. The same process was carried out with scientific and literary terms. The etymology of the expressions was searched through the Online Etymology Dictionary (www.etymonline.com).

During the search for the text samples, enough examples had been already gathered after reading through the first halves of both books. Given the length of the thesis, it was then decided to base the analysis on these parts only. The trend depicted in the analysis remains more or less similar throughout the rest of the pages, so this decision may influence the results only mildly.

The text samples in all categories are arranged chronologically according to the pagination of the books they were taken from. However, if a group of text samples builds its relevance on obviously identical concepts, they are put together. This is the case of the examples **S10, S11, S12** and **S13**.

The main question to be explored in thesis is following:

How do the two authors adjust their language so that their writing appears enticing to the wide public, although the discussed topics are of factual scientific character?

One subquestion arises thereafter:

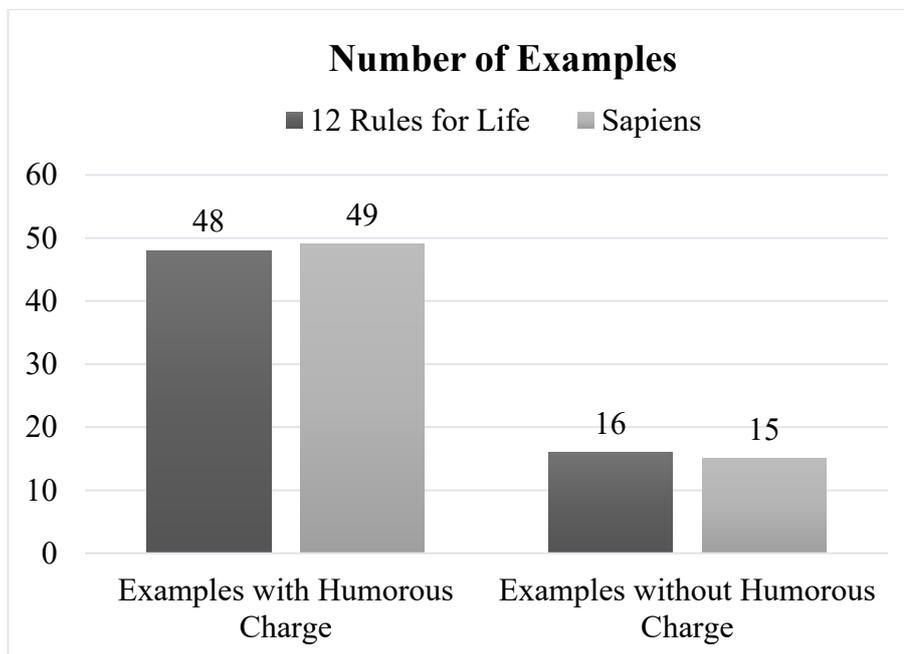
Which stylistic means manifest themselves as dominant throughout the work and why is it these in particular?

3 Analysis

The analysis is constructed so that each text sample is followed with its interpretation and discussion of its meaning. These text samples are categorized according to their type. Two abbreviations were established to number the individual text samples: the first abbreviation is **12RL1** with the last digit changing successively in regard to the order of the examples, signalling that they were taken from the book 12 Rules for Life. The second is **S1** with the last digit changing too, but this time marking the examples found in the book Sapiens. These abbreviations then refer to the respective text samples throughout the whole thesis for greater orientation and clarity. The most important parts of the text samples are underlined, the remaining sentences constitute the context.

The etymology of individual examples in Chapters 3.1.2 and 3.2.2 was found using the Online Etymology Dictionary (www.etymonline.com).

Figure 1: Number of examples found in the two analysed books.

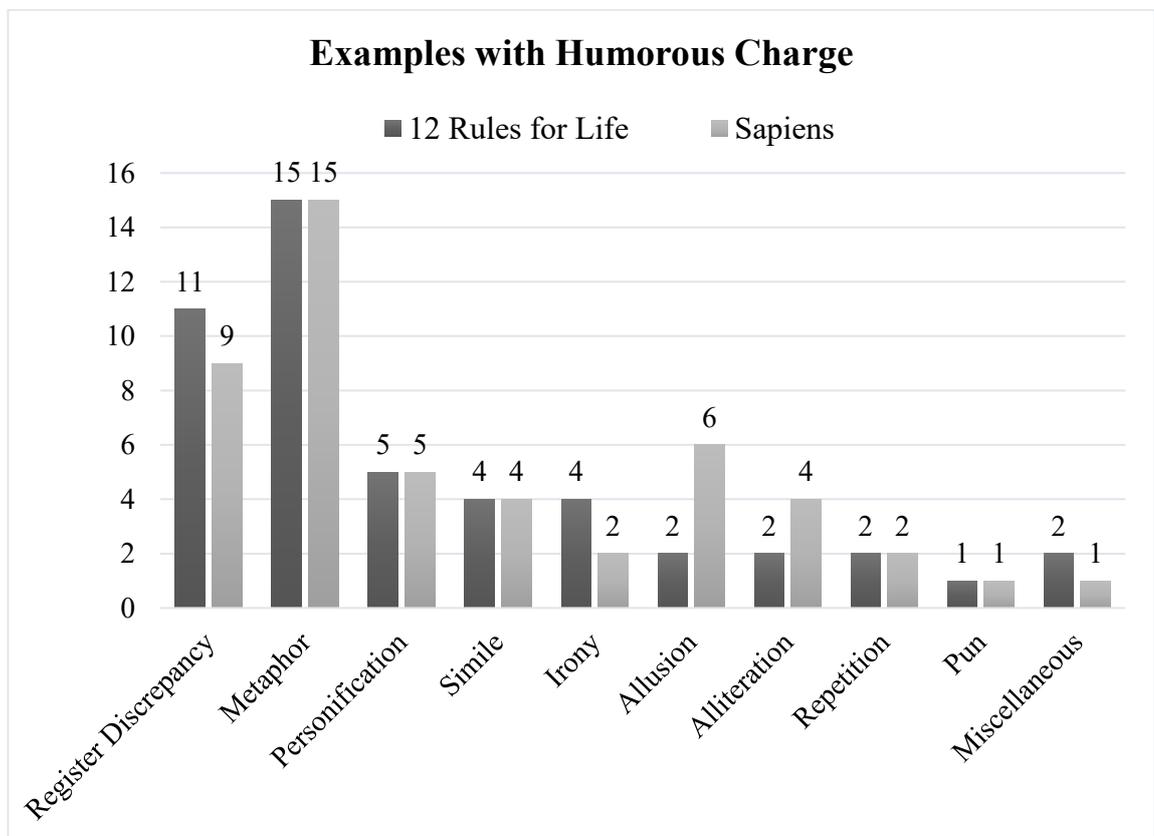


As **figure 1** indicates, the number of examples taken from one book is almost equal in comparison to those from the second book within a category. However, the number of examples that have been classified as humorous is substantially higher than the number of

non-humorous examples. That is because the humorous aspect has been deemed the main focus of this thesis for its greater variety and appeal. Thus, these numbers should not be seen as telling about the quality of the author’s language, but rather as a brief overview of what the analysis consists of. The total number of examples taken from each book is 64.

The number of researched pages of the two books in which the analysis has been carried out is **283** pages of *12 Rules for Life* and **243** pages of *Sapiens*. As aforementioned in chapter 2.4, the first halves of both books offered a sufficient number of examples to be analysed due to the length constraint of this bachelor thesis. The numbers imply that the examples in *12 Rules for Life* might be more sparsely distributed and thus more pages were needed for a comparable collection to *Sapiens*, however, as the attempt of the thesis was to cover as many identical categories as possible, it might be only a result of this approach.

Figure 2: Number of examples with humorous charge from both books.

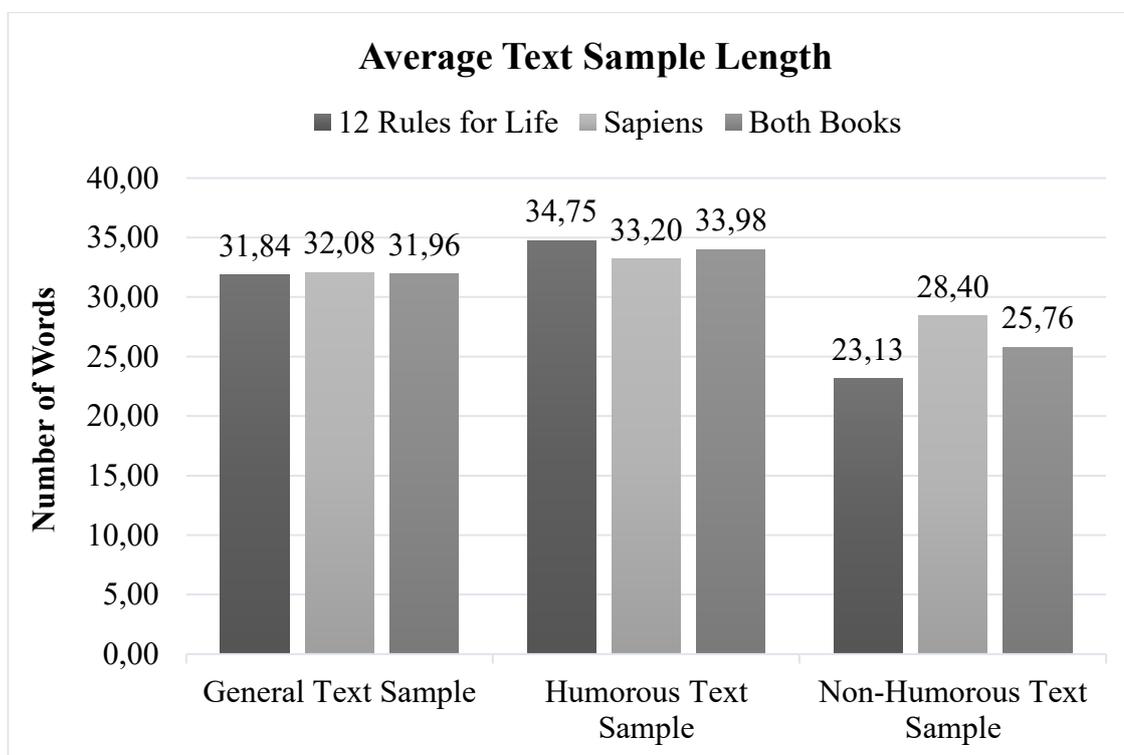


According to the data gathered from **figure 2**, the categories of Register Discrepancy and Metaphor have manifested as paramount. The reason for that is theoretically supported in chapter **1.1.2** and also elaborated on further in the implications of the analysis in chapter **3.3**. The remaining categories are several figures of speech, such as Personification and Simile with a fairly high number of examples as well, following with Irony, Allusion and Alliteration. The main differences between the two books can be observed in the category of Irony, Allusion and Alliteration. The category of Repetition and Pun are the least prominent of all with only one or two examples from each book. Lastly, the category of Miscellaneous presents a few other unclassifiable types, which were evaluated as illustrative for a more complete picture of the stylistic approach of each author.

The number of text samples which belong under the superordinate term ‘Use of Language Periphery’ have demonstrated a division into three main subcategories. The majority falls under formal expressions, as there are 10 in 12 Rules for Life and 12 in Sapiens. The other two are literary expressions, 3 in both 12 Rules for Life and Sapiens, and scientific terminology from various fields, 3 in 12 Rules for Life. The fact that Sapiens has no example included in the category of scientific terminology, again, should not indicate that the author did not provide any in his writing. However, other text samples were chosen preferentially over this category because of their better quality or attractiveness, as the aim was to select the most distinctive ones while maintaining the limited length of the thesis.

The individual text samples are of varying length, as demonstrates **figure 3** below. The average length of a text sample throughout the whole analysis is 31,96 words, as the first part of the diagram shows. The shortest example only has 7 words (example **12RL58**), whereas the longest one is composed of 143 words (example **S26**). The length varies mostly in regard to the category into which the text sample is put – non-humorous text samples are shorter, as they do not require a great amount of context for their functionality, whereas humorous examples need more background to build their meaning successfully. These results were calculated with the help of the word counting function in Microsoft Word.

Figure 3: Average length of humorous text samples, non-humorous text samples and all text samples in general.



3.1 12 Rules for Life

3.1.1 Examples with Humorous Charge

The following text samples share a certain humorous charge, which means that they build its humorous potential in a particular manner, e. g. in the discrepancy of the varying fields the words come from or in the clash of higher formality with informality. Either way, a deviation emerges from the neutral academic register, which was explored in chapter 1.1.4. Sometimes, the causes of the humorous charge cannot be fully separated from one another, since they are closely related or fully intertwined, and so the division of the examples into the individual categories in the analysis is made according to their most prominent features or they are mentioned repeatedly and discussed from a different perspective in multiple categories. This characteristic applies for chapter 3.2.1 too, as it focuses on the same categories but within the second book Sapiens.

Register Discrepancy

The first category builds its humorous charge upon the conflict of two separate areas within one unit, whether it is the lexical choice of words coming from two dissimilar fields, the different levels of formality, or perhaps the incongruous combination of various register modes, as explained in chapter 1.1.2 (p. 10) and chapter 1.2.1 (p. 12).

12RL1 “If a larger bird ever dared to sit and rest in any of the trees near our birdhouse there was a good chance he would get knocked off his perch by a kamikaze wren” (Peterson 2018: 3).

The humorous antonymous relationship can be perceived in the connection made between a kamikaze pilot, who would deliberately fly his plane filled with explosives to enemy units to cause them immense damage, and a wren, which is a minuscule bird that does not usually pose any form of a threat. This connection therefore links the distant area of military strategy with ornithology.

12RL2 “Sometimes it is known as the Matthew Principle (Matthew 25:29), derived from what might be the harshest statement ever attributed to Christ: “to those who have everything, more will be given; from those who have nothing, everything will be taken.” You truly know you are the Son of God when your dicta apply even to crustaceans” (Peterson 2018: 10).

The strength of this example of register discrepancy lies in the conflicting combination of a principle taken from the Bible, one of the most sacred texts in the world, and a group of arthropods, which most certainly do not obey any rules gathered in a book because they were advised to do so, and yet they still behave in accordance to it. That is perceived as evidence of the amount of power the Son of God ultimately possesses.

12RL3 “To the lobsters, however, dinosaurs were the nouveau riche, who appeared and disappeared in the flow of near-eternal time” (Peterson 2018: 13, cursive in original).

‘Nouveau riche’, a French phrase meaning ‘newly rich’ and usually derogatorily implying someone who has acquired a large amount of money at a recent time, is viewed from the perspective of evolution in the sense of a ‘novelty’ here. The arrival of dinosaurs would seem as something new for lobsters, since they had already existed long before. Additionally, personification is what adds to the humorous charge too, as lobsters are assigned the human quality of considering the arrival of dinosaurs in any way.

12RL4 “Eco-activists, even more idealistic in their viewpoint, envision nature as harmoniously balanced and perfect, absent the disruptions and depredations of mankind. Unfortunately, “the environment” is also elephantiasis and Guinea worms (don’t ask), anopheles mosquitoes and malaria, starvation-level droughts, AIDS and the Black Plague” (Peterson 2018: 16).

The sudden turn of the author to the reader in the middle of a sentence causes the humorous charge in the text sample above. Peterson elaborates on the meaning of the word ‘nature’, which is often seen as more desirable than something artificial. However, nature does not only consist of pleasant things, which he also demonstrates with the enumeration of diseases and dreadful natural phenomena, and even mentions something called ‘Guinea worms’, which he deems so repugnant that he decides to omit any further explanation of it.

12RL5 “It is Nature as Woman who says, “Well, bucko, you’re good enough for a friend, but my experience of you so far has not indicated the suitability of your genetic material for continued propagation” (Peterson 2018: 47).

The humour can be observed in the combination of different levels of formality. The expression ‘bucko’ is a slang term for a man, often meant to ridicule or even insult him, and is therefore highly informal. In addition, the phrase ‘you’re good enough for a friend’ is assembled mostly of words of Anglo-Saxon origin. However, the second part of the sentence differs significantly, as it contains words predominantly of Latin origin, which is linked to greater formality. Should informality be preserved, then the second part might be reformulated as ‘I don’t think you are good enough to be the father of my children’, but as the speaker here is (Mother) Nature, the original and more formal phrasing evinces a superordinate position in the social hierarchy.

12RL6 “As soon as we arrived, Chris and Carl wanted to buy some pot” (Peterson 2018: 84).

Peterson chooses to intersperse his psychological insights with his own personal stories, which sometimes date back to his boyhood. As he recounts his memories, he tends to use certain lexis which is more aptly resemblant of the immature youngster that he once was. Here he uses the word ‘pot’, a slang term for marijuana, which is a type of drug the vapours of which people inhale mainly for its calming effects and which teenagers are often well acquainted with.

12RL7 “Either the resentful person is immature, in which case he or she should shut up, quit whining, and get on with it, or there is tyranny afoot—in which case the person subjugated has a moral obligation to speak up” (Peterson 2018: 106).

Another example of a conspicuous change in the register can be found in the underlined phrase above. While having started the sentence with words of a somewhat neutral level, Peterson then mentions ‘immaturity’ again, a quality usually associated with young people and their tendency to speak in a highly informal or even vulgar manner, as a result of which it becomes fitting to use the formulations he chose. After the advice to the youth is concluded, he then returns to a more proper manner of writing, which reinforces the humorous contrast.

12RL8 “Then you ask yourself, “What could I do, that I would do, that would accomplish that, and what small thing would I like as a reward?” Then you do what you have decided to do, even if you do it badly. Then you give yourself that damn coffee, in triumph” (Peterson 2018: 112).

The employment of profanities in 12 Rules for Life is by no means accidental nor should it be taken as a manifestation of indecency. On the contrary, the author is aware of the audience he has, which are (according to his own words) mostly young men, who need to hear clearly what they should practice so that their lives can improve tremendously. However, such expressions are familiar not only to men, but arguably to most readers in general. Alongside the fact that people can relate to these words, ‘damn’ has an emphatic

function and thus it accentuates the fact that one should not forget to reward himself with something he finds enjoyable after accomplishing a meaningful goal.

12RL9 “Imagine that you would like your toddler to help set the table. It’s a useful skill. You’d like him better if he could do it. It would be good for his (shudder) self-esteem” (Peterson 2018: 153).

The discrepancy resides again in the sudden violation of the stream of written sentences with an expression of the movement the author makes as a reaction to what he is discussing. There is something sarcastic about it, for he states in the book that men’s confidence is unfortunately often seen as toxic and unwanted by the society, when in reality he considers it a crucial aspect of being a capable and caring partner to a woman and also generally a proper human being. The fact that he gives advice which may boost a man’s confidence could then be regarded as an almost controversial statement.

12RL10 “Life is suffering. That’s clear. There is no more basic, irrefutable truth. It’s basically what God tells Adam and Eve, immediately before he kicks them out of Paradise” (Peterson 2018: 189).

As it was the case in example **12RL2**, the mention of God may be regarded as an establishment of a certain degree of dignity with which any statement concerning Him should be carried out. Yet the author deliberately causes conflict between the divine dignity and the informal style of the expression ‘to kick somebody out of somewhere’, with the meaning of forcing somebody to abandon a place.

12RL11 “One forty-something client told me his vision, formulated by his younger self: “I see myself retired, sitting on a tropical beach, drinking margaritas in the sunshine.” That’s not a plan. That’s a travel poster. After eight margaritas, you’re fit only to await the hangover” (Peterson 2018: 250).

The words ‘plan’ and ‘travel poster’ are in an antonymous position. The client’s vision for the future was expected to be more serious and feasible, maybe even honourable, whereas he thought up a pleasant but temporary scene in which alcohol and an exotic destination play

the main role. The last underlined sentence even further supplies the argument with the fact that after carrying this plan out long-term, the consequences would be deplorable.

Figure of Speech: Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech which effectively likens one concept to another based on an obvious similarity they share. This figure with its effects is more thoroughly discussed in chapter 1.2.2 (p. 13-14).

12RL12 “The poor and stressed always die first, and in greater numbers. They are also much more susceptible to non-infectious diseases, such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease. When the aristocracy catches a cold, as it is said, the working class dies of pneumonia” (Peterson 2018: 4).

The society needs to be understood as a hierarchy of individual classes with the aristocracy at the top and the working class below it. As it is aforementioned, the lower classes contract diseases and suffer from stress and poverty more severely than the higher classes. It then becomes relevant to make thought-out choices in regard to potential mates, as the more resilient types (which are the mates from a higher class) have higher chances of staying healthy and being able to provide for a family. Although the debate here is originally oriented at birds and their social structures, it supports Peterson’s statement that hierarchies are spread widely among all living creatures and they are not merely a human invention.

12RL13 “When you don’t know what to do, you must be prepared to do anything and everything, in case it becomes necessary. You’re sitting in your car with the gas and brake pedals both punched to the mat” (Peterson 2018: 20).

Driving a car requires the ability of the person behind the steering wheel to alternate between a number of pedals – the gas, the brake, and possibly the clutch. Every pedal has its function, the two most important being the gas, which causes the vehicle to accelerate, and the brake, which causes it to stop. The concept of both pedals pressed to their maximum symbolizes two opposite extremes on one scale at the same time, which is an unsustainable approach from the long-term view, and not only is it not effective, it can even be harmful.

The same thing applies when referring to humans. It is incredibly exhausting to ensure that one is always prepared for any scenario that might occur, but at times people might deem it the only option.

12RL14 “You must put aside pleasure for security. In short: you will have to work. And it’s going to be difficult. I hope you’re fond of thorns and thistles, because you’re going to grow a lot of them” (Peterson 2018: 60).

Thorns and thistles are very sharp and prick one’s skin when touched. They symbolize the suffering that is essential for every person to undergo in life, such as the hardships with family members, friends or strangers, physical pain, loss, diseases and various other catastrophes which, although they are abundant in life, all serve to strengthen one’s character and force people to value everything they have more.

12RL15 “When you move, everything is up in the air, at least for a while. It’s stressful, but in the chaos there are new possibilities. People, including you, can’t hem you in with their old notions. You get shaken out of your ruts. You can make new, better ruts, with people aiming at better things. I thought this was just a natural development. I thought that every person who moved would have —and want— the same phoenix-like experience” (Peterson 2018: 84).

The main attribute of a phoenix, a mythological bird, is the fact that during his death he burns to ashes and from these ashes he is reborn again. Just like the bird starting a new life and leaving its past behind it, moving from one place to another offers one a fresh beginning.

12RL16 “I am not saying that there is no hope of redemption. But it is much harder to extract someone from a chasm than to lift him from a ditch. And some chasms are very deep” (Peterson 2018: 94).

The underlined sentence is concerned with no literal extraction. The proposition of raising a person from a low place is kept entirely at a figurative level, however, it can successfully illustrate the action of helping somebody who is experiencing negative

emotions that are typically synonymous with the connotations of being ‘low’ or ‘down’. Moreover, a difference is stressed between a chasm and a ditch, which even more specifically aids to conjure up images of the low place a person can find himself in and emphasizes the varying depth.

12RL17 “The world is still there, with its structures and limits. As you move along with it, it cooperates or objects. But you can dance with it, if your aim is to dance—and maybe you can even lead, if you have enough skill and enough grace” (Peterson 2018: 118).

When it comes to dancing, it can be claimed that the types of dances which are performed in pairs require good knowledge of the respective choreography and the ability to cooperate with your partner harmoniously. Leading in dancing is an advancement, since one must take on the responsibility of performing correct moves both for him and his dancing partner. This might be true when living life too; one proposes some actions, the world reacts back and vice versa. One has to gain enough self-confidence and experience to be able to lead, but the opportunity is at one’s disposal. The act of dancing then provides an appropriate equivalent to the argument that is described.

12RL18 “We skate, unconsciously, on thin ice, with deep, cold waters below, where unimaginable monsters lurk” (Peterson 2018: 140).

The activity of skating on a frozen body of water is inseparable from taking a risk of the ice breaking under the weight of one’s body. It depends on how solid the ice is and how careful the skaters are. However, if the ice is thin, as it is in the example above, the risk is high, and it can be a matter of time before it eventually breaks and a person disappears under the water. Such image might illustrate an imminent problem, a threat, which might have horrifying consequences but is often ignored for its temporary innocuousness or at least a hope for it.

12RL19 “Dad looked at me. He wanted to know. But he didn’t ask. And I didn’t tell. Don’t cast pearls before swine, as the old saying goes. And you might think that’s harsh. But

training your child not to sleep, and rewarding him with the antics of a creepy puppet? That's harsh too. You pick your poison, and I'll pick mine" (Peterson 2018: 152).

The first underlined example proposes the notion of not wasting one's energy or knowledge on something or someone who cannot appreciate it or does not deserve it. Peterson was telling a story of how he got a bad-tempered child to sleep, but the parent did not muster up the courage to ask him how he did it. The child was used to falling asleep to a video of the muppet 'Elmo' every day instead of learning how to go to sleep properly, and Peterson decided not to give advice to a man who is not curious enough to ask for it.

The second underlined example mentions poisons, which are substances that may have extremely damaging or even fatal consequences for the consumer. They refer to the fact that as the father in the story decided not to teach his child the correct manners or seek help to rectify it, Peterson chose not to share his valuable wisdom of putting the child to bed appropriately.

12RL20 "You just rejected the responsibility of discipline, and justified it with a continual show of your niceness. Every gingerbread house has a witch inside it that devours children" (Peterson 2018: 166).

This metaphor is built upon an intertextual allusion to the story of Hansel and Gretel, a fairy-tale published by the Brothers Grimm. The two young siblings discover a gingerbread cottage in the forest with a witch in it. The witch feeds them with gingerbreads and it is a delightful experience until the witch decides to eat the children. It then becomes apparent that the gingerbreads the children ate were only a perfidious means to make them fatter and thus more suitable as a meal for the witch. This alludes to the fact that behaving agreeably and politely when a situation requires a person to prove his strength of mind and morals, or maybe even cause some necessary conflict, is nothing commendable. It is quite the opposite.

12RL21 "People who are very ill (or, worse, who have a sick child) will inevitably find themselves asking this question, whether they are religious believers or not. The same is true of someone who finds his shirtsleeve caught in the gears of a giant bureaucracy—who is

suffering through a tax audit, or fighting an interminable lawsuit or divorce” (Peterson 2018: 175).

Getting a sleeve caught in the gears represents unintentional involvement in something undesirable. As the gears are turning, the fabric of a sleeve gets easily caught in it and it gets pulled into the machinery, albeit involuntarily, and being suddenly affected by bureaucracy might be seen as the same operation.

12RL22 “My client had a son. She perpetuated none of this with him. He grew up truthful, and independent, and hard-working, and smart. Instead of widening the tear in the cultural fabric she inherited, and transmitting it, she sewed it up” (Peterson 2018: 180).

This passage is taken from Chapter 6 which is called “Set your house in perfect order before you criticize the world” (Peterson 2018: 173). Peterson makes an argument here that people are often raised in miserable conditions, but they do not have to transfer their suffering further onto their children. They can choose to learn from their pain, deem it a lesson and behave more responsibly so that their offspring do not have to experience it as they did. This message is well illustrated by the underlined example. One’s heritage is compared to a fabric full of tears, but as the woman decided not to continue with the abusive behaviour, she metaphorically ‘sewed it up’. The processes work well together, for a tear in a fabric symbolizes two sides parting – just like the responsible rational side and the instinctive emotional side of a person. By sewing the fabric up, she averted a tragedy in the form of disintegration of the whole unit, here implying the child.

12RL23 “Solzhenitsyn’s writing utterly and finally demolished the intellectual credibility of communism, as ideology or society. He took an axe to the trunk of the tree whose bitter fruits had nourished him so poorly—and whose planting he had witnessed and supported” (Peterson 2018: 183).

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is the author of the book Gulag Archipelago, which is an extensive and elaborate record of the appalling events which occurred under the rule of the communist party in numerous labour camps in the twentieth century in the Soviet Union. He himself experienced these camps and suffered greatly but managed to collect a large amount

of memories and reports to describe it truthfully. His figurative axe is the book that he wrote which served to destroy communism with its honest depictions of the horrors that the ideology produced. The trunk of the tree symbolizes the country which did not provide sufficient care for its inhabitants, and the bitter fruits are the products of the ideology such as several work prisons and countless deaths.

12RL24 “To accept the truth means to sacrifice—and if you have rejected the truth for a long time, then you’ve run up a dangerously large sacrificial debt. Forest fires burn out deadwood and return trapped elements to the soil. Sometimes, however, fires are suppressed, artificially. That does not stop the deadwood from accumulating. Sooner or later, a fire will start. When it does, it will burn so hot that everything will be destroyed—even the soil in which the forest grows” (Peterson 2018: 253).

The metaphor above is extended to a large degree. It sustains through multiple lines and builds a whole imagery with one concept (here the burning of a forest) and might be therefore called a ‘sustained’ or ‘extended metaphor’ (Wales 2014: 267). The accumulation of suppressed thoughts and lies in the unconscious mind, with which a person hasn’t dealt with in a long time, might later result in dangerous nervous collapses, and Peterson appeals on the reader to take action so as not to let that happen. The image of such catastrophe is supported by the image of a burning forest with all of its deadwood that catches fire easily.

12RL25 “You must remove the beam in your own eye, before you concern yourself with the mote in your brother’s” (Peterson 2018: 263).

Eyes cannot bear direct sunlight and so the natural reflex is to look away, otherwise one’s vision ceases to function. Having a mote in the eye represents a similar concept, as it leads to the eye watering and closing so that it can dispose of the unwanted object. In both cases, one’s vision is compromised and therefore nothing can be observed. However, if a person is deprived of sight, he is certainly not in a suitable position to comment on the state of somebody else. Peterson basically asserts that people should focus on themselves before they decide to criticize others.

12RL26 “After all, if you’re not the leading man in your own drama, you’re a bit player in someone else’s—and you might well be assigned to play a dismal, lonely and tragic part” (Peterson 2018: 283).

Such metaphors which employ the concept of a drama or a game are very frequent, mainly because of the many similarities that can be perceived between the concept and reality. What is more, they offer myriad opportunities for the realization of such similarities with the phrases such as ‘the leading man’, ‘a bit player’, or ‘playing a role’. It is stated that unless one resolves to be the protagonist of his own life play, an unimportant role may be all that will remain for him to fulfil.

Figure of Speech: Personification

Personification occurs when a humane quality is ascribed to an inhumane object, animal, or abstraction. A more in-depth description is offered in chapter 1.2.2 (p 14).

12RL27 “Chris had a psychotic break in his thirties, after flirting with insanity for many years” (Peterson 2018: 86).

The act of flirting is an exclusively human strategy, but it is ascribed to an abstract concept of ‘insanity’. The flirting itself in this case might not symbolize a pleasant or playful experience of pursuing somebody. More likely, it signals a fluctuating tendency towards a negative mental state.

12RL28 “Was it the nihilistic philosophy he nurtured that paved the way to his eventual breakdown?” (Peterson 2018: 86).

The abstract term ‘philosophy’ adopts the ability to pave a way, which is a figurative expression as well. Ways are paved so that it is easier to walk through the area, and paving a way illustrates the process of making a process more accessible or uncomplicated.

12RL29 “Beavers build dams. They do so because they are beavers, and beavers build dams. They don’t think, “Yeah, but I’d rather be on a beach in Mexico with my girlfriend,” while they’re doing it” (Peterson 2018: 193).

The human brain sends signals to its owner to force him to avoid any pain or stress that he might be exposed to. Although having a job and working daily is a strenuous activity, it is crucial as people need to earn money. The majority of people even find their jobs very tiresome or difficult and wish they were somewhere else instead. However, beavers do not think of their dam building as a means to earn money. They do it instinctively, which is why the comparison with the common human reaction of wanting to go on holiday instead of spending days at work is humorous.

12RL30 “It was deceit that killed hundreds of millions of people in the twentieth century” (Peterson 2018: 262).

Deception is what a large part of the world has experienced when it was forced to obey the various ideologies that caused millions of deaths, although they initially promised equality, peace, justice, freedom, or abundance of necessary goods. But deceit itself does not kill masses, it was the people and their vile deeds.

12RL31 “To tell the truth is to bring the most habitable reality into Being. Truth builds edifices that can stand a thousand years. Truth feeds and clothes the poor, and makes nations wealthy and safe. Truth reduces the terrible complexity of a man to the simplicity of his word, so that he can become a partner, rather than an enemy. Truth makes the past truly past, and makes the best use of the future’s possibilities. Truth is the ultimate, inexhaustible natural resource. It’s the light in the darkness” (Peterson 2018: 273).

Contrary to the text sample **12RL30**, the quality of being truthful is deemed the purest approach to life which can bring harmony.

Figure of Speech: Simile

Similes are comparative structures of two ideas which have something in common, constructed with the use of words 'like' or 'as'. They are further discussed in chapter 1.2.2 (p 15).

12RL32 “A flexed lobster extends its appendages so that it can look tall and dangerous, like Clint Eastwood in a spaghetti Western” (Peterson 2018: 8).

A conspicuous intertextual allusion is incorporated within this simile, which compares a lobster in a position with his appendages up to Clint Eastwood, a famous American director and an actor, who is known for several western movies in which he is frequently holding guns in his hands and displaying how powerful and dangerous he is.

12RL33 “You drag your years behind you like a running dog with tin cans tied to its tail” (Peterson 2018: 83).

Having anything tied to one's body automatically creates some burden that one has to then bear. The tail of the dog indicates to the back of his body, which alludes to the past years that are being dragged behind, and cans often make a great noise which cannot be ignored, so they might insinuate some unresolved issues that are manifesting themselves in the present too.

12RL34 “How else are they ever going to puzzle out what is acceptable? Infants are like blind people, searching for a wall. They have to push forward, and test, to see where the actual boundaries lie (and those are too-seldom where they are said to be)” (Peterson 2018: 149).

As it is described, both blind people and infants need to test for boundaries around them so that they know where it is safe and where dangers might hide. The danger for a blind person lies in the possibility of getting hurt by traffic or walking into a wall or another person, whereas the most dangerous thing for children is supposedly not being taught what they can do and what they should avoid so that they grow up into capable adults.

12RL35 “She does not question authority or put her own ideas forward, and does not complain when mistreated. She strives for invisibility, like a fish in the centre of a swarming school” (Peterson 2018: 251).

One fish in a whole school of them is usually unrecognizable from the rest, as they are all alike. The woman Peterson was telling the reader about was striving to be just like those fish, lost among the crowd with no lust to deviate.

Figure of Speech: Irony

Irony resembles a contradictory sense or causes an incongruence between the expectation and the understood reality of the meaning of an expression. More about irony can be found in chapter 1.2.2 (p. 15).

12RL36 “Our anxiety systems are very practical. They assume that anything you run away from is dangerous. The proof of that is, of course, the fact you ran away” (Peterson 2018: 25).

Typically, one needs a sufficient reason in order to be afraid. If a person runs away from something, he assumes that anything he fled is worth getting away from. However, it is the other way around in this example, which is what makes it ironic. The act of running away itself is deemed a reason to run away in the first place and it does not function from the perspective of causality – the idea that a cause has got an effect.

12RL37 “This is just one of the many things that make psychologists so wonderful – :)” (Peterson 2018: 35).

Peterson himself is a psychologist, which is why it is ironic to make such a compliment to them, and he even adds the graphic representation of smiling created from a colon and a bracket – an ‘emoticon’.

12RL38 “Because of his rigid and inflexible attitude, my client’s actions had already been subjected to several restraining orders. Restraining orders work best, however, with the sort of person who would never require a restraining order (Peterson 245).

This statement possesses an ironic element. It is said that if a person does not need to be restrained, then the order to restrain him is the most successful. The same might be said about e. g. people with no health issues proving that the medicine they are consuming must be working. The problem which is not there in the first place then has the effect of making the solution to the problem effective without actually demonstrating any effect at all.

12RL39 Advice is what you get when the person you’re talking with about something horrible and complicated wishes you would just shut up and go away (Peterson 277).

Peterson speaks about the ability to listen when people share their troubles and how simple but not helpful it is to offer advice to others, as it mainly projects the advisor’s thoughts and ideas onto the helpless person without solving anything inside of him. The author eventually gives his own definition of advice, which is diametrically different to what is generally understood under this term.

Figure of Speech: Allusion

An allusion represents a reference to another text or certain historical context. This figure of speech is further elaborated on in chapter 1.2.2 (p. 16).

12RL40 “Furthermore, he’s large, healthy and powerful. It’s no easy task to switch his attention from fighting to mating. If properly charmed, however, he will change his behaviour towards the female. This is the lobster equivalent of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, the fastest-selling paperback of all time, and the eternal Beauty-and-the-Beast plot of archetypal romance” (Peterson 2018: 11).

As Peterson himself suggests, *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a very popular erotic trilogy, in which the male protagonist displays a tremendous amount of strength, power and readiness to fight, which are all traits that mating lobsters share too. However, when it comes to

eventually being ‘charmed’ by a woman (or a mate in the case of lobsters), both the man and the animal then resort to being secure and caring. The comparison between the concept of a seductive story and the reproduction of crustaceans is where the humour occurs, as the fields are significantly dissimilar.

12RL41 “No one knew what the hell they were doing at those parties. Hoping for a cheerleader? Waiting for Godot?” (Peterson 2018: 82).

Peterson describes how dismal and purposeless the parties he experienced as a young adult were. He mentions ‘Waiting for Godot’, which is a famous absurd drama written by Samuel Beckett. The two protagonists of said drama are waiting throughout the whole play for somebody called Godot, but the figure never actually appears on the scene. After the drama became successful, the phrase ‘waiting for Godot’ began to symbolize ceaseless and useless waiting for something that is not going to happen. The irony of this allusion might arise also from the fact that most of the people attending these parties would rarely have any knowledge of such drama whatsoever.

Figure of Speech: Alliteration

Alliteration occurs when a letter, usually the initial one, is repeated throughout more words closely to each other. Its further definitions might be found in chapter **1.2.2** (p. 16.)

12RL42 “You must put aside pleasure for security. In short: you will have to work. And it’s going to be difficult. I hope you’re fond of thorns and thistles, because you’re going to grow a lot of them” (Peterson 60).

12RL43 “Observing the consequences of teasing and taunting enables chimp and child alike to discover the limits of what might otherwise be a too-unstructured and terrifying freedom” (Peterson 2018: 147).

As aforementioned in **Chapter 1.2.7**, alliteration serves mainly for greater memorability and emphasis.

Repetition

The occurrence of the same words conspicuously close to each other is called repetition and it serves mainly for emphasis. Chapter 1.2.2 (p. 17) offers more details on this figure.

12RL44 “Many, perhaps even most, of the adults who abuse children were abused themselves as children. However, the majority of people who were abused as children do not abuse their own children” (Peterson 2018: 181).

12RL45 “Beavers build dams. They do so because they are beavers, and beavers build dams. They don’t think, “Yeah, but I’d rather be on a beach in Mexico with my girlfriend,” while they’re doing it” (Peterson 2018: 193).

Both examples of repetition serve to emphasize the point that is made within them – whether it concerns the importance of the message or strives to make an obviously simple statement even more apparent.

Pun

A pun is a play on words, which is built upon an aspect which allows for the ‘duality’, e. g. the sound of the word, its graphic form etc. Puns are discussed in chapter 1.2.2 (p. 17)

12RL46 “Lobsters have more in common with you than you might think (particularly when you are feeling crabby—ha ha)” (Peterson 2018: 1).

The quality of somebody feeling ‘crabby’ means ‘sulky’ or ‘bad-tempered’ and therefore describes their mood. On the other hand, the root of the adjective ‘crabby’ is the noun ‘crab’, which is an animal from the same biological group as lobsters, and therein lies the pun, as the ambiguity of the sentence links these two fields of knowledge together at the same time.

Miscellaneous

The examples in this category could not be incorporated into the previous ones, as they did not correspond with either of them. However, their contribution was found important and they are therefore discussed here.

12RL47 “How hard can I hit Mommy? Until she objects” (Peterson 149).

A syntactical conflict occurs in those two sentences, which results from the incongruity of the phrases ‘how hard’ and ‘until she objects’. The question asks after an adverbial of measure, e. g. ‘slightly’, ‘just a bit’ or ‘with all your strength’, but instead, a time-related response is received.

12RL48 “Then the sickening of experience itself as action predicated on falsehood fails to produce the results intended. If you don’t believe in brick walls, you will still be injured when you run headlong into one” (Peterson 272).

This example might be seen as an inconspicuous insinuation to all the supporters of postmodernism, which is a late 20th century movement which among other tendencies builds its ideas on the premise that no universal truth exists and even scientifically proven facts can be interpreted in infinite ways, which is a philosophy Peterson strongly protests against. He takes an object which is undeniably real, a wall, and points out that although postmodernists may come to an agreement that no walls exist, they will still be harmed if they crash into it.

3.1.2 Examples without Humorous Charge

Use of Language Periphery

The following text samples include expressions which are not considered to be the central elements in a language system. On the contrary, they all belong to the language periphery. They are either highly formal words, literary phrases or scientific terms.

12RL49 “But order is sometimes tyranny and stultification, as well, when the demand for certainty and uniformity and purity becomes too one-sided” (Peterson 2018: 41).

The term ‘stultification’ indicates negative a quality which hinders any progress or entertainment. The roots can be found in Latin ‘stultificare’ with the translation ‘causing to become slow, foolish or obtuse’, and belongs to formal expressions.

12RL50 “In its positive guise, chaos is possibility itself, the source of ideas, the mysterious realm of gestation and birth” (Peterson 2018: 46).

Gestation is a biological term for pregnancy, the period of a child’s development inside a woman’s womb. It originated from the Latin verb ‘gestare’, meaning to bear, to carry.

12RL51 “The most profound religious symbols rely for their power in large part on this underlying fundamentally bipartisan conceptual subdivision” (Peterson 2018: 46).

The origin of this political term lies in the French ‘partisan’, earlier also the Latin ‘partem’, both signalling an adherence to a party, a part, or a division.

12RL52 “It is the confession of a miserable, arrogant sojourner in the underworld of chaos and despair” (Peterson 2018: 88).

A sojourner is a literary name for a temporary inhabitant of a certain place. The term has its origins in Latin: ‘sub + diurnare’ means ‘to last long’.

12RL53 “But Christ himself, you might object, befriended tax-collectors and prostitutes. How dare I cast aspersions on the motives of those who are trying to help?” (Peterson 2018: 90).

This formal expression means ‘to defame’ or ‘to slander’. The word ‘aspersion’ comes from Latin ‘aspersio’ and means to sprinkle or strew, which relates to the spreading of false accusations.

12RL54 “Very little of your retina is high-resolution fovea—the very central, high-resolution part of the eye, used to do such things as identify faces” (Peterson 113).

A retina is the back part of an eye with the origin in the Latin ‘rete’ meaning a net. The connection can be made to the branched system of the blood vessels that are located there.

A minute opening in a bone or an organ, fovea, originally comes from Latin as well. Both terms are used in the medical field.

12RL55 “I have, similarly, seen parents rendered unable to engage in adult conversation at a dinner party because their children, four and five, dominated the social scene, eating the centres out of all the sliced bread, subjecting everyone to their juvenile tyranny, while mom and dad watched, embarrassed and bereft of the ability to intervene” (Peterson 2018: 134).

This deverbal adjective meaning ‘no longer possessing something’ is in the form of the past participle of ‘bereave’. An exception is observed here, as this formal term does not stem from Latin, but from the Germanic ‘berauben’, which can be translated as ‘to rob, deprive of’.

12RL56 “She put the spoon in front of him, waiting patiently, persistently, while he moved his head back and forth, refusing it entry, using defensive methods typical of a recalcitrant and none-too-well-attended two-year old” (Peterson 2018: 137).

A recalcitrant child is one that ignores orders and is difficult to be controlled. The formal term comes from Latin ‘re + calcitrare’, meaning ‘to kick back’.

12RL57 “Parents are the arbiters of society. They teach children how to behave so that other people will be able to interact meaningfully and productively with them” (Peterson 2018: 146).

An arbiter is a judge in an argument, another formal expression. The Latin origins are to be observed directly in the word ‘arbiter’, which means ‘a person who decides’.

12RL58 “Then he contracted an extremely serious disease” (Peterson 2018: 182).

The formal verb ‘to contract’ here possesses the meaning ‘to catch an illness’. It comes from the Latin ‘contractus’, the translation of which is ‘to abridge’ or ‘to establish’.

12RL59 “During his many trials, Solzhenitsyn encountered people who comported themselves nobly, under horrific circumstances” (Peterson 2018: 182).

The formal expression ‘to comport oneself’ means to behave in a certain way. The origins lie in Latin too, namely in ‘com + portare’, translated as ‘to bring together’ or ‘to collect’.

12RL60 “Whole peoples have adamantly refused to judge reality, to criticize Being, to blame God. It’s interesting to consider the Old Testament Hebrews in this regard. Their travails followed a consistent pattern” (Peterson 2018: 183).

The literary term ‘travail’ denotes a difficult and unpleasant experience. Coming from Old French and Latin, it is related to great suffering and exhausting labour.

12RL61 “God smites his wayward people, dooming them to abject defeat in battle and generations of subjugation” (Peterson 2018: 184).

The literary adjective ‘abject’ signifies extreme misery and unhappiness. It originated from the Latin ‘abiectus’, which might be translated as contemptible, low, or poor.

12RL62 “The future: that’s where you go to die (hopefully, not too soon). Your demise might be staved off through work; through the sacrifice of the *now* to gain benefit *later*” (Peterson 2018: 193, cursive in original).

A demise is a formal alternative for death, stemming from the Latin ‘dis + metre’ which can be explained as ‘to put away.’

12RL63 “If you cease to utter falsehoods and live according to the dictates of your conscience, you can maintain your nobility, even when facing the ultimate threat” (Peterson 2018: 204).

‘To cease’ means ‘to stop’ in a more formal manner. Its origins are to be found in the Old French ‘cesser’ with the same meaning.

Falsehoods are untrue statements. The first part ‘false’ is originally from the Latin term ‘falsus’, which means ‘deceived’ or ‘mistaken’. The word-forming suffix ‘hood’ from the German ‘heit’ signals a ‘quality’ or ‘manner’.

12RL64 “Truth builds edifices that can stand a thousand years” (Peterson 2018: 273).

The word ‘edifice’ is a formal term for an impressive building. The Latin origin ‘aedis’ means a ‘temple’ or a ‘building’.

3.2 Sapiens

3.2.1 Examples with Humorous Charge

Register Discrepancy

The first category builds its humorous charge upon the conflict of two separate areas within one unit, whether it is the lexical choice of words coming from two dissimilar fields, the different levels of formality, or perhaps the incongruous combination of various register modes, as explained in chapter 1.1.2 (p. 10) and chapter 1.2.1 (p. 12).

S1 “Our own species, *Homo sapiens*, was already present on the world stage, but so far it was just minding its own business in a corner of Africa” (Harari 2014: 15, cursive in original).

The idiom of minding one’s own business is synonymous to not caring about others and only focusing on oneself. The informality of this phrase, which is usually used in a rude way, and the fact that it said about a whole species that later manages to reign over the whole world creates the humorous charge.

S2 “A parrot can say anything Albert Einstein could say, as well as mimicking the sounds of phones ringing, doors slamming and sirens wailing. Whatever advantage Einstein had over a parrot, it wasn’t vocal” (Harari 2014: 24).

The utterance becomes humorous as a parrot is compared in his abilities to Albert Einstein, a magnificent physicist, who is acclaimed mainly for his theory of relativity. Therefore, he stands as a symbol of the pinnacle of human intelligence. Parrots cannot measure up to such advanced performance in physics, but they can reproduce almost any sounds they hear – even the most intricate sentences of Einstein’s. Therefore, the level of their verbal competence might be seen as equal.

S3 “Other males and females exhibit their submission to the alpha male by bowing before him while making grunting sounds, not unlike human subjects kowtowing before a king” (Harari 2014: 28).

Harari compares chimpanzees to people throughout the whole book. In this example, he demonstrates the similarities in regard to how both species showcase their respect to their leaders. Kowtowing is an informal way of describing bowing before an authority, but with a certain degree of disapproval of how much the person shows admiration and strives to please the one in the higher position.

S4 “Albert Einstein was far less dexterous with his hands than was an ancient hunter-gatherer” (Harari 2014: 43).

Continuing with Einstein as a norm of human prowess, the ancient hunter-gatherer gains advantage over him in his dexterity. Using such a well-known figure in making a contrast is an efficient way of demonstrating that a seemingly ‘underdeveloped’ species was actually advanced in his everyday activities, even so that he could surpass a Nobel Prize winner.

S5 “There is some evidence that the size of the average Sapiens brain has actually *decreased* since the age of foraging. Survival in that era required superb mental abilities from everyone.

When agriculture and industry came along people could increasingly rely on the skills of others for survival, and new ‘niches for imbeciles’ were opened up” (Harari 2014: 55).

Harari claims that the era of agriculture changed the necessity to be outstandingly skilled as opposed to the time before when being a forager was a strenuous manner of surviving. As a result of that, people were able to narrow their scope of knowledge. The disapproving term ‘imbecile’ mostly denotes an unintelligent person, and Harari uses it to demonstrate the contrasting brain capacities of Sapiens before and after farming was established as the primary source of food.

S6 “Of course, if diprotodons had been the only large animal to disappear at this time, it might have been just a fluke. But more than 90 per cent of Australia’s megafauna disappeared along with the diprotodon” (Harari 2014: 73).

Harari argues that humans are likely responsible for the extinction of many species. The disappearance of the majority of Australia’s megafauna would be a far too big a coincidence if one were to consider these events unrelated. The word ‘fluke’ might possibly be of an English dialectal origin, stemming from the German word ‘flügel’, which translates to a ‘wing’. Therefore, the presumption that informality is perceived more with words of non-Latin origin is maintained.

S7 “The evidence is circumstantial, but it’s hard to imagine that Sapiens, just by coincidence, arrived in Australia at the precise point that all these animals were dropping dead of the chills” (Harari 2014: 73).

To drop dead is an informal phrase that describes a sudden death. This passage was written close to the text sample **S6**, relating to the fact that Sapiens might account for one of the reasons the fauna of the world diminished.

S8 “Spanish patriots who admire Numantian heroism tend also to be loyal followers of the Roman Catholic Church – don’t miss that first word – a church whose leader still sits in Rome and whose God prefers to be addressed in Latin” (Harari 2014: 211).

Harari turns his attention directly to the reader in the middle of the sentence and stresses the importance of the word ‘Roman’ to prevent him from ignoring a piece of information which he deems crucial – the fact that Spanish patriots were the followers of the Roman Church. To do that, he employs the discrepancy between written and spoken text, and tells the reader what to focus on, as if he were a narrator sitting next to the person reading his book.

S9 “The standard imperial toolkit included wars, enslavement, deportation and genocide” (Harari 2014: 216).

A common toolkit traditionally includes tools such as screwdrivers, spanners, pliers, a hammer, or perhaps a file. In other words, it presents a set of objects from which a serviceman opts for the most effective one in order to repair what is necessary. However, the text sample above enumerates several appalling forms of harm done to people, which is why the concept of freely choosing one of these atrocities seems inappropriate.

Figure of Speech: Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech which effectively likens one concept to another based on an obvious similarity they share. This figure with its effects is more thoroughly discussed in chapter 1.2.2 (p. 13-14).

S10 “So the populations did not merge, but a few lucky Neanderthal genes did hitch a ride on the Sapiens Express” (Harari 2014: 19).

S11 “This opened a fast lane of cultural evolution, bypassing the traffic jams of genetic evolution” (Harari 2014: 36).

S12 “These wanderings were the engine of human worldwide expansion” (Harari 2014: 54).

S13 “The sectioning of Christianity and the collapse of the Mongol Empire are just speed bumps on history’s highway” (Harari 2014: 185).

The four examples above share the same metaphorical conceit of comparing the evolution of Sapiens to a ride on a road in a vehicle with all its features – dealing with speed, traffic jams, bumps on the road, or even the parts of a vehicle itself such as the engine.

S14 “The real difference between us and chimpanzees is the mythical glue that binds together large numbers of individuals, families and groups. This glue has made us the masters of creation” (Harari 2014: 42).

A glue is known for its typical ability to hold two or more things at one place so that they do not separate, and in this case the glue holds together people in one shared belief. It resembles the stories which people tell younger generations and which form the basis of religions and ideologies, namely also democracy, free market, or the value of money.

S15 “Instead of erecting mountains of theory over a molehill of tomb relics, cave paintings and bone statuettes, it is better to be frank and admit that we have only the haziest notions about the religions of ancient foragers” (Harari 2014: 62).

A mountain and a molehill are both expressions that describe elevated places in an otherwise flat area. In this case, they figuratively illustrate amounts of information. The striking difference that may be imagined between the height of a mountain and a molehill successfully creates a clear contrast between the two, as the author stresses the disproportion of the volume of theory on one hand and evidence on the other.

S16 “Both schools of thought are castles in the air, connected to the ground by the thin strings of meagre archaeological remains and anthropological observations of present-day foragers” (Harari 2014: 66).

Another image is introduced as a ‘castle in the air’, which is nowadays a fixed phrase for describing something unstable, imaginary or insufficiently founded. As the castles floating in the air resemble evolutionary theories, Harari figuratively fastens them to the ground by some archaeological findings on a thin thread, which might be understood as ‘supporting the theories with scarce evidence’.

S17 “However, humans appeared on the stage at just this critical juncture and pushed the brittle ecosystem into the abyss” (Harari 2014: 76).

Things get demolished when they fall from a high place, and the image of an object being pushed into an abyss, which is an immensely deep hole, further adds a dramatic element to the height difference between the edge and the bottom and also stresses the detriment of the consequent fall, which may result in malfunction, destruction or even death. The description of the ecosystem with the word ‘brittle’ then supports the whole imagery with the fragility of the falling object.

S18 “This ecological tragedy was restaged in miniature countless times after the Agricultural Revolution. The archaeological record of island after island tells the same sad story. The tragedy opens with a scene showing a rich and varied population of large animals, without any trace of humans. In scene two, Sapiens appear, evidenced by a human bone, a spear point, or perhaps a potsherd. Scene three quickly follows, in which men and women occupy centre stage and most large animals, along with many smaller ones, are gone” (Harari 2014: 80).

As demonstrated earlier in the example **12RL26**, a dramatic play is a very suitable concept to use as a metaphor, as it offers a plethora of opportunities for similarities to be found and is easily understandable for the reader. The whole text sample above treats an ecological catastrophe as a tragedy with its individual scenes, which is enacted chronologically just as the ecosystem gets more destroyed by humans.

S19 “Today I receive dozens of emails each day, all from people who expect a prompt reply. We thought we were saving time; instead we revved up the treadmill of life to ten times its former speed and made our days more anxious and agitated” (Harari 2014: 99).

A treadmill is a running machine in which the moving strip goes around infinitely so that a person can exercise on it. Revving the treadmill means increasing the speed of the strip, and the same thing happened to the post when messaging via internet was invented. As it was suddenly easier to receive an e-mail in comparison to a handwritten letter, the demands for writing messages were lowered and the quality of the writing decreased.

S20 “This was the turning point, they say, where Sapiens cast off its intimate symbiosis with nature and sprinted towards greed and alienation” (Harari 2014: 110).

Harari is addressing the fact that when people started farming, the population grew so rapidly that it demanded more and more place and food to survive. The symbiosis with nature, in other words the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, was replaced by never having enough and constantly inventing new solutions to gain something more. The verb ‘sprint’ further stresses the quick pace with which the change took place.

S21 “The humanities and social sciences devote most of their energies to explaining exactly how the imagined order is woven into the tapestry of life” (Harari 2014: 127).

The act of weaving a tapestry can be understood as an intertwining of individual threads together so that an image is created. The threads are close to each other and influence one another, as they weakest threads might imperil the adjacent to them when they break. Similarly, the order that is to be found in life concerns every part of it and cannot be separated from it.

S22 “There is no way out of the imagined order. When we break down our prison walls and run towards freedom, we are in fact running into the more spacious exercise yard of a bigger prison” (Harari 2014: 133).

The notion of anarchy is demolished, as Harari claims that breaking the rules of the established order does not set a person free, it only enables him to move from one prison to a larger one. Prisons are places with walls that cannot be escaped, but in some cases the prison has a meaning. If no rules apply, how does one know what is important and correct?

S23 “The highlight at any Swiss café is thick hot chocolate under an alp of whipped cream” (Harari 2014: 188).

The Alps are the highest mountain range in Switzerland, which makes the lexical choice in this metaphor very suitable, since whipped cream not only forms the shape of a mountain, the two images also correspond in their colour, as they are both white.

S24 “By the early sixteenth century, monotheism dominated most of Afro-Asia, with the exception of East Asia and the southern parts of Africa, and it began extending long tentacles towards South Africa, America and Oceania” (Harari 2014: 243).

Tentacles are octopi’s long body parts with which they can catch their prey to feed themselves. Extending a part of one’s body in a direction then demonstrates certain intentions, for the body part generally reaches to achieve something. The reaching in this case might mean desire for power or the intention to claim another territory after Afro-Asia.

Figure of Speech: Personification

Personification occurs when a humane quality is ascribed to an inhumane object, animal, or abstraction. A more in-depth description is offered in chapter 1.2.2 (p 14).

S25 “We are so enamoured of our high intelligence that we assume that when it comes to cerebral power, more must be better. But if that were the case, the feline family would also have produced cats who could do calculus” (Harari 2014: 9).

As Harari claims, the size of a brain does not necessarily determine whether a species will be intelligent or not. He substantiates his statement with the example of cats, since their brains are not minute but they still cannot deal with complex matters as humans do, and adds an utterly ridiculous field from the cat viewpoint – mathematics.

S26 “Within a couple of millennia, humans in many parts of the world were doing little from dawn to dusk other than taking care of wheat plants. It wasn’t easy. Wheat demanded a lot of them. Wheat didn’t like rocks and pebbles, so Sapiens broke their backs clearing fields. Wheat didn’t like sharing its space, water and nutrients with other plants, so men and women laboured long days weeding under the scorching sun. Wheat got sick, so Sapiens had to keep a watch out for worms and blight. Wheat was defenceless against other organisms that liked to eat it, from rabbits to locust swarms, so the farmers had to guard and protect it. Wheat was thirsty, so humans lugged water from springs and streams to water it. Its hunger even impelled Sapiens to collect animal faeces to nourish the ground in which wheat grew” (Harari 2014: 90).

This personification is stretched over numerous lines but nevertheless stems from one mutual aspect: wheat is given animate characteristics, such as the ability to demand, to like, to get sick, to feel defenceless, and have basic needs such as thirst and hunger. In this case, this enumeration stresses the complexity of care that had to be provided in order for the grain to grow properly.

S27 “In fact, though, Mother Nature does not mind if men are sexually attracted to one another. It’s only human mothers steeped in particular cultures who make a scene if their son has a fling with the boy next door. The mother’s tantrums are not a biological imperative” (Harari 2014: 164).

Harari compares the abstraction of Mother Nature to a human mother in their proclivity to disagree with what their children gravitate towards. He demonstrates the fact that a large number of people regard a plethora of matters natural or unnatural, however, the relation to the original state of nature is contorted, as the people are mostly just referring to societal traditions, morals, or principles. This point is something Peterson elaborated on too in the text sample **12RL4**.

S28 “Next time a mosquito buzzes in your ear, accuse her of unnatural behaviour. If she were well behaved and content with what God gave her, she’d use her wings only as solar panels” (Harari 2014: 166).

In addition to the previous text sample **S27**, Harari becomes amused at the idea of reproaching a mosquito for its evolution, as he states that winged insects have developed from their wingless ancestors over time, since it was beneficial for their bodies to have larger surfaces that the sun could reach and thus stay warmer.

S29 “Over the next 300 years, the Afro-Asian giant swallowed up all the other worlds. It consumed the Mesoamerican World in 1521, when the Spanish conquered the Aztec Empire. It took its first bite out of the Oceanic World at the same time, during Ferdinand Magellan’s circumnavigation of the globe, and soon after that completed its conquest” (Harari 2014: 186).

A continent is given the animate ability to eat. It metaphorically devours various empires, which illustrates the growing size of the area and the vanishing of the original ‘worlds’.

Figure of Speech: Simile

Similes are comparative structures of two ideas which have something in common, constructed with the use of words ‘like’ or ‘as’. They are further discussed in chapter 1.2.2 (p 15).

S30 “Most mammals emerge from the womb like glazed earthenware emerging from a kiln – any attempt at remoulding will scratch or break them. Humans emerge from the womb like molten glass from a furnace. They can be spun, stretched and shaped with a surprising degree of freedom” (Harari 2014: 11).

The concept of human birth is first compared to the process of firing a ceramic dish and then contrasted with the act of melting a piece of glass. As Harari suggests, humans are very flexible and can adapt to various environmental and cultural conditions and be taught a plethora of principles according to what rules his teacher abides by – just like the molten glass, which might change its form freely. When it comes to other mammals, they do not often share this quality, as the set of their capabilities is rather fixed.

S31 “Just as human politicians on election campaigns go around shaking hands and kissing babies, so aspirants to the top position in a chimpanzee group spend much time hugging, back-slapping and kissing baby chimps” (Harari 2014: 28).

Chimpanzees and humans share many traits and abilities because of the long evolutionary journey they have in common. As Harari proposes, even their societies are based on the same system of close relationships which need to be maintained. This can be perceived clearly in the behaviour of the leaders, both of humans and chimpanzees, as they strive to gain popularity among other members to then be elected for their positions.

S32 “The anxious peasant was as frenetic and hardworking as a harvester ant in the summer, sweating to plant olive trees whose oil would be pressed by his children and grandchildren, putting off until the winter or the following year the eating of the food he craved today” (Harari 2014: 113).

Ants are known for their devotion to labour. They have to gather enough food throughout the year so that they can survive in the depths of their anthills during the winter months. People had to learn to delay their immediate desires to consume any food that was available and to plan ahead so as not to die from starvation when there was a period of bad harvest.

S33 “Even if the market offers a good price, certain things just aren’t done. Parents mustn’t sell their children into slavery; a devout Christian must not commit a mortal sin; a loyal knight must never betray his lord; and ancestral tribal lands shall never be sold to foreigners. Money has always tried to break through these barriers, like water seeping through cracks in a dam” (Harari 2014: 208).

Water, as most liquids, is a substance which fills the area in its reach so that its surface is level throughout the whole vessel it is in and therefore it escapes through any tiny openings it encounters. Money is compared to that quality for its ability to compel people to be relentlessly preoccupied with earning more of it in whichever fashion they can conceive of, even for little profit.

Figure of Speech: Irony

Irony resembles a contradictory sense or causes an incongruence between the expectation and the understood reality of the meaning of an expression. More about irony can be found in chapter **1.2.2** (p. 15).

S34 “Superiors got all the good things in life. Commoners got what was left. Slaves got a beating if they complained” (Harari 2014: 149).

The verb 'get' is greatly versatile and can have many different meanings when translated according to which phrases it is combined with. Although slavery was an appalling phenomenon and the inclusion of this text sample does not intend to offend anyone, a certain humorous scheme can be perceived in the sentences of the text sample. The first two describe how both superiors and commoners acquired something in their possession, whereas the verb 'got' in the last sentence is connected with 'a beating', which results in an ironic aspect.

S35 “Many Americans nowadays maintain that their government has a moral imperative to bring Third World countries the benefits of democracy and human rights, even if these goods are delivered by cruise missiles and F-16s” (Harari 2014: 221).

There is a strong discrepancy between the words 'benefits' and 'goods' and the fact that they are delivered by cruise missiles and F-16s, which are means of combat. This leads to irony in the sense that the positive gifts might not be exactly what is eventually delivered.

Figure of Speech: Allusion

An allusion represents a reference to another text or certain historical context. This figure of speech is further elaborated on in chapter 1.2.2 (p. 16).

S36 “And even if a Neanderthal Romeo and a Sapiens Juliet fell in love, they could not produce fertile children, because the genetic gulf separating the two populations was already unbridgeable” (Harari 2014: 16).

The story of Romeo and Juliet might be the most famous romance story to ever exist. The tragic fate that awaited two young lovers, both descendants of two Italian families whose enmity stretched over generations, could not be averted even in spite of the great love they shared. In Harari's case, they represent two distinct genera, which would not be able to procreate as their genetic information was unfit to combine, however powerful their affection towards each other might have been.

S37 “The Faustian bargain between humans and grains was not the only deal our species made” (Harari 2014: 102).

Faust is the name of Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s famous play and simultaneously of the protagonist of that masterpiece, who signs a pact with the devil, Mephistopheles. The devil agrees to give Faust anything he demands during his life in exchange for his soul to belong to him once he admits that he feels delight. It could be rephrased as a contract in which a person can ask for any pleasure he is able to think of but he can never fully become satisfied or else he is doomed. More generally, it might just symbolize a very dangerous deal which is bound to have serious consequences. The word ‘bargain’ itself bears a humorous charge, as it typically denotes the economic process of an advantageous purchase where a buyer saves money or otherwise profits, and not the grave matter of life and death.

S38 “With each passing generation, the sheep became fatter, more submissive and less curious. *Voilà! Mary had a little lamb and everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go*” (Harari 2014: 103, cursive in original).

In this passage, Harari elaborates on the role cattle played for humans. He delves into the atrocities the Sapiens invented so as to ensure that they had enough food and wool. Then, introduced by a French phrase meaning ‘there it is!’, follows the underlined sentence, which is a line taken from a children’s nursery rhyme. Consequently, stark contrast emerges between the dismal reality of animal slaughter and the innocence of a song to which toddlers calmly fall asleep.

S39 “The teenage son of a medieval baron did not have a private room on the castle’s second floor, with posters of Richard the Lionheart and King Arthur on the walls and a locked door that his parents were not allowed to open” (Harari 2014: 128).

The historical context of England in the 12th century enables the intertextual allusion in this and the following text sample **S43**. The idea of a son having posters on the walls of a castle in that era creates a humorous conflict, since modern inventions are taken and transferred into medieval times.

S40 “The elite of ancient Egypt spent their fortunes building pyramids and having their corpses mummified, but none of them thought of going shopping in Babylon or taking a skiing holiday in Phoenicia” (Harari 2014: 129).

This time, the historical context takes the reader back to ancient Egypt, which dates back to approximately 3000 BC. The concept of an ancient Egyptian arranging a shopping trip or a skiing holiday is humorous again for its impossibility.

S41 “If, say, a Christian really wants to understand the Muslims who attend that mosque down the street, he shouldn’t look for a pristine set of values that every Muslim holds dear. Rather, he should enquire into the catch-22s of Muslim culture, those places where rules are at war and standards scuffle” (Harari 2014: 184).

It is important to mention Joseph Heller and his most well-known novel Catch-22 here. The gist of the story resides in the absurd and paradoxical idea that if a member of the military is mentally ill, then he does not have to participate in a battle. He must only ask the authorities to be exempted from that duty, but only a sane person is able to arrive at such thought, and therefore the person is not mentally ill and cannot be exempted. The phrase ‘catch-22’ then became related not only to soldiers but to any problems that cannot be tackled due to their inherent and contradictory paradox, and in this case, they refer to the problematic aspects of Islam.

Figure of Speech: Alliteration

Alliteration occurs when a letter, usually the initial one, is repeated throughout more words closely to each other. Its further definitions might be found in chapter **1.2.2** (p. **16**.)

S42 “In addition, the Industrial Revolution and the waves of immigration made the United States an extremely fluid society, where rags could quickly turn into riches” (Harari 2014: 158).

S43 “Hunter-gatherers had no money. Each band hunted, gathered and manufactured almost everything it required, from meat to medicine, from sandals to sorcery” (Harari 2014: 194).

S44 “Brawn gets converted to brain when a discharged soldier finances his college tuition with his military benefits” (Harari 2014: 199).

S45 “Hunter-gatherers picked and pursued wild plants and animals, which could be seen as equal in status to *Homo sapiens*” (Harari 2014: 236, cursive in original).

All the examples above feature alliteration, a figure of speech in which two or more words in a phrase have the identical initial letter.

Repetition

The occurrence of the same words conspicuously close to each other is called repetition and it serves mainly for emphasis. Chapter 1.2.2 (p. 17) offers more details on this figure.

S46 “The fact is that a jumbo brain is a jumbo drain on the body” (Harari 2014: 9).

Not only does Harari create a great repetition here, he also invents a spectacular rhyme within it, which aids for its memorability and comicality.

S47 “The depressing findings from the Danube Valley are supported by a string of equally depressing findings from other areas” (Harari 2014: 67).

Repetitions are most usually produced in order to emphasize or intensify the qualities of the words repeated, and this example does exactly that, namely stressing the severity of how depressing the findings were.

Pun

A pun is a play on words, which is built upon an aspect which allows for the ‘duality’, e. g. the sound of the word, its graphic form etc. Puns are discussed in chapter 1.2.2 (p. 17)

S48 “That evolution should select for larger brains may seem to us like, well, a no-brainer” (Harari 2014: 9).

The phrase visibly comprises of the word ‘brain’, is used in the context of talking about brains, and as a whole means something absolutely obvious, to which one does not need to give any additional thought, and therefore linked to the use of a brain as well.

Miscellaneous

The example in this category could not be put into the previous ones, as it did not correspond with either of them. However, its contribution was found important and it is therefore discussed here.

S49 “No Caledonian writer preserved Calgacus’ speech for posterity. We know of it thanks to the Roman historian Tacitus. In fact, Tacitus probably made it up” (Harari 2014: 216).

The fact that Harari decides to doubt allegedly the biggest ancient historian and the authenticity of his writing creates the humorous charge here. Tacitus lived in the first century and perhaps it would not be so difficult to make some historical events up in his position, as the author of Sapiens alludes to.

3.2.2 Examples without Humorous Charge

Use of Language Periphery

The following text samples include expressions which are not considered to be the central elements in a language system. On the contrary, they all belong to the language periphery. They are either highly formal words, literary phrases or scientific terms.

S50 “Thirdly, mass extinctions akin to the archetypal Australian decimation occurred again and again in the ensuing millennia – whenever people settled another part of the Outer World. In these cases Sapiens guilt is irrefutable” (Harari 2014: 74).

‘Irrefutable’ means ‘undeniable’ or ‘sure’. This formal alternative comes from the Latin ‘in + refutare’, which translates approximately to ‘not reject’.

S51 “A similar fate befell the mammoth population of Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean (200 kilometres north of the Siberian coast)” (Harari 2014: 74).

Stemming from the German ‘befallen’, which means ‘to happen’, has the exact same sense now too, and can be categorized as a literary expression.

S52 “Rather than heralding a new era of easy living, the Agricultural Revolution left farmers with lives generally more difficult and less satisfying than those of foragers” (Harari 2014: 89).

To ‘herald’ a new era is to formally signify its novel importance. The word has its origins in the Anglo-French ‘heraud’, which symbolizes an ‘envoy’ or ‘messenger’.

S53 “In the following chapters we will see time and again how a dramatic increase in the collective power and ostensible success of our species went hand in hand with much individual suffering” (Harari 2014: 109).

The underlined word might be understood as ‘alleged’ or ‘supposed’ in a more formal manner and originally stems from Latin, specifically the term ‘ostendere’, which means ‘to display’ or ‘to exhibit’.

S54 “The agricultural revolution is one of the most controversial events in history. Some partisans proclaim that it set humankind on the road to prosperity and progress. Others insist that it led to perdition” (Harari 2014: 110).

‘Perdition’ is a literary version of ‘damnation’ or a ‘punishment’. The original Latin form ‘perdere’ means ‘to destroy’ or ‘to ruin’.

S55 “When, in 1860, a majority of American citizens concluded that African slaves are human beings and must therefore enjoy the right of liberty, it took a bloody civil war to make the southern states acquiesce” (Harari 2014: 125).

A synonymous expression to the verb ‘to acquiesce’ might be a less formal ‘to agree’ or ‘to accept’. This term has its origins in the Latin word ‘acquiescere’ with the meaning of ‘to be content’ or ‘to repose’.

S56 “For instance, many scholars surmise that the Hindu caste system took shape when Indo-Aryan people invaded the Indian subcontinent about 3,000 years ago, subjugating the local population” (Harari 2014: 154).

‘To surmise’ means ‘to suppose’ formally. The roots lie in the Latin ‘sur + mittere’, which means ‘upon + to send’.

S57 “Trapped in this vicious circle, blacks were not hired for white-collar jobs because they were deemed unintelligent, and the proof of their inferiority was the paucity of blacks in white-collar jobs” (Harari 2014: 159).

The formal ‘paucity’ is a scarcity or shortage of something. The Latin origin ‘paucus’ bears the meaning of ‘few’ or ‘little’.

S58 “For thousands of years, philosophers, thinkers and prophets have besmirched money and called it the root of all evil. Be that as it may, money is also the apogee of human tolerance” (Harari 2014: 207).

The underlined formal term signifies a highest point – a peak. Originally from the Latin term ‘apogaeum’, it refers to the point at which the Moon is at its farthest place away from the Earth and therefore connects figuratively the concept of ‘distance’ between the current form and the origin.

S59 “For thousands of years, philosophers, thinkers and prophets have besmirched money and called it the root of all evil. Be that as it may, money is also the apogee of human tolerance” (Harari 2014: 207).

‘To besmirch something’ means ‘to damage its reputation’. It stems from the Old French ‘esmorcher’, which means ‘to stain’ or ‘to discolor’, and is seen as a literary expression.

S60 “No Caledonian writer preserved Calgacus’ speech for posterity. We know of it thanks to the Roman historian Tacitus” (Harari 2014: 216).

A speech for posterity is intended for the descendants, offspring, or simply for children, but in a formal manner. It comes from the Latin word ‘posteritas’ which means ‘future time’ or ‘after-generation’.

S61 “The old Arab elite looked upon these parvenus with deep hostility, fearing to lose its unique status and identity” (Harari 2014: 224).

People who are labelled with the formal term ‘parvenus’ have recently become affluent although they are not cultured or come from a low social position. The origins can be found in the Latin word ‘pervenire’, which means ‘to arrive’.

S62 “Despite their ability to legitimise widespread social and political orders, not all religions have actuated this potential. In order to unite under its aegis a large expanse of territory inhabited by disparate groups of human beings, a religion must possess two further qualities” (Harari 2014: 234).

This formal phrase might be reworded as ‘with support of an organization or a person’. The term ‘aegis’ allegedly refers to the shield of Zeus, which was made of goatskin, and a goat was called ‘aix’. The shield resembles the notion of protection.

S63 “First, it must espouse a *universal* superhuman order that is true always and everywhere” (Harari 2014: 234, cursive in original).

‘To espouse’ means ‘to be interested in and support’ on a more formal level. The Latin origin is ‘sponsare’, the translation of which may be ‘to adopt’ or ‘to embrace’ in the extended sense.

S64 “To enter heaven, believers had to participate in church rituals and do good deeds. Protestants refused to accept this, arguing that this quid pro quo belittles God’s greatness and love” (Harari 2014: 241).

The underlined formal phrase bears the meaning of ‘one thing for another’. It stems from the Latin relative pronoun ‘qui’, which is ‘who’, but in two different cases: ‘quid’ (nominative) and quo (ablative, a former case understood as ‘from where’). They are connected with the preposition ‘pro’, which means ‘for’.

3.3 Implications

This subchapter focuses on the discussion of the implications of the results of the analysis presented above.

The categories of Register Discrepancy and Metaphor have become apparent in their prominence among all the other means that were discovered. The frequency of their use might be attributed to their variability in construction. What is more, they offer the best opportunity to demonstrate the author’s creativity. The playfulness of employing conflicting phrases results in the writing coming across as more entertaining. The imagery that metaphors are able to create help to make the reader more immersed in the book, aiding deeper engagement and thus providing a more complex experience. That is not to say that personifications or similes are significantly behind in their effect, however, the vital part of a simile is the construction ‘a phenomenon like / as / another phenomenon’, which alludes to the relationship between the two concepts not being identical, but just overlapping to a degree, and therefore not possessing enough persuasiveness. Personifications are limited in the fact that they refer to abstract and inanimate ideas or animals, as a result of which an immense part of phenomena is omitted. By contrast, a metaphor claims that a phenomenon is exactly the same as another phenomenon, which ultimately strengthens the bond between them.

The most obvious differences between the two books have been found in the category of Allusion (see Fig. 2, p. 26. The diagram states that Harari employs allusions more often than Peterson, although the research would have to be carried out on a larger scale to be able to present more creditable results. The reason for the difference might be the fact that, since Harari’s book is preoccupied with history, several Harari’s allusions are based on historical

context. He then endeavours to make mocking statements about well-known and respected historical figures, which is an environment full of potential for humour. It does not require any special knowledge other than what the majority of readers would have already heard in their history lessons at school, and if it is not the case, Harari takes time to present the figures with enough context so that his humour is understood.

Peterson is concerned mostly with the present, not the past. Although he is guided by the Bible and refers to it often, he still uses less allusions than Harari. On the other hand, he employs irony more than Harari (see Fig. 2, p. 26). This tendency can have various explanations, one of which may be the reality of being a psychologist with years of experience and still having to convince people to be open enough to believe the most simple but fundamental truths might be the reason he opts for this device.

Apart from the above, the stylistic preferences of the two writers can be deemed very similar. They both intersperse their academic style of writing with a large number of figures of speech, as portrayed in the analysis. There are even similarities in the content of their language, e. g. in the use of profanities or pejorative words (**12RL7**, **12RL8** and **S5**), their turn to the abstract idea of Mother Nature (**12RL5** and **S27**), or in using the same metaphorical image of life being a dramatic play (**12RL26** and **S18**).

12 Rules for Life and Sapiens also demonstrate that the use of informality does not necessarily lessen the importance, respectability, or quality of a publication. On the contrary, it can aid to greater connection between the author and the reader, which is not a common aim when it comes to academic prose.

To conclude, there are more similarities than differences in the styles of the two authors, and apart from the fascinating content itself, their well-executed language style may be one of the reasons why both works are so tremendously popular.

Conclusion

The stylistic analysis of two non-fiction books has been chosen as a subject of this thesis, since it presented an attractive opportunity to carry out captivating linguistic research together with a detailed exploration of two books which I enjoyed reading. The process of composing the thesis helped to broaden my horizons regarding English language in a more in-depth manner, as many unknown works on the topic of stylistics and humour had to be delved into and inspected.

Chapter 1 (pp. 8-18) of this thesis attempted to offer adequate theoretical background to the linguistic concepts that were later discussed from a practical point of view in the analysis. Publications of several authors were cited in order to display the wide range of approaches which deal with stylistics and other relevant disciplines.

Chapter 2 (pp. 19-24) served to summarize the chosen books for the analysis, provided a description of the two authors, Jordan B. Peterson and Yuval Noah Harari, and compared a few reviews so that the reception of the books by the public could be understood. A subchapter is included, which depicts the methods by which the analysis was executed.

Chapter 3 (pp. 25-70) focused on presenting the text samples of the two books, which were selected for a deeper elaboration. The text samples were categorized and then discussed. There are three diagrams to be found at the beginning of this chapter, which supply information about the number of examples in each category or the average length of a text sample. The results which emerge from the analysis are then summarized at the end of this chapter and show the dominance of metaphor and register discrepancy in the writings.

The aim of the thesis was to identify and explain the most frequent stylistic means used in the two books and register discrepancies and metaphors have proved to be most important of them all because of their efficiency and diversity. Moreover, the thesis proves that due to these means, even scientific publications can be composed so that they are amusing and informative at the same time.

The main downside of this thesis might be its limited length, as a consequence of which the analysis could not include more examples and produce more accurate results. In the future, the thesis could be extended by adding another non-fiction publication to supply more material, or by involving the translations of the books into other languages and comparing stylistic phenomena and their meaning in their counterparts.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. Penguin Random House, 2015.

Peterson, Jordan B. *12 Rules for Life*. Random House Canada, 2018.

Secondary Sources

Alm-Arvius, Christina. *Figures of Speech*. Lund, Studentlitteratur, 2003.

Biber, Douglas, and Susan Conrad. *Register, Genre, and Style*. 2nd ed., New York, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Bradford, Richard. *Stylistics: The New Critical Idiom*. London and New York, Routledge, 2005.

Burke, Michael. *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*. London and New York, Routledge, 2014.

Crystal, David, and Derek Davy. *Investigating English Style*. London and New York, Routledge, 2013.

Cuddon, J. A, Rafey Habib and Matthew Birchwood. *A dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*. 5th ed., John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

Forbes, Peter. "Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari, book review: Eloquent history of what makes us human." *The Independent*, 4th Sep. 2014. www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/sapiens-yuval-noah-harari-book-review-eloquent-history-what-makes-us-human-9712106.html. Accessed 23rd Nov. 2020.

Goatly, Andrew. *The Language of Metaphors*. London and New York, Routledge, 1997.

Gurillo, Leonor Ruiz, and M. Belén Alvarado Ortega. *Irony and Humor: From pragmatics to discourse*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013.

Halliday, M. A. K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London, Longman Group Limited, 1976.

Harper, Douglas. "Online Etymology Dictionary", 2001-2021. www.etymonline.com. Accessed 1st Apr. 2021.

Humphreys, Joe. "The Gospel according to Jordan B Peterson." *The Irish Times*, 21st Apr 2018. www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/the-gospel-according-to-jordan-b-peterson-1.3463372. Accessed 23rd Nov. 2020.

Hyams, Nina. *The Core / Periphery Distinction in Language Acquisition*. 1987. The Ohio State University. *Institute of Education Sciences*, www.eric.ed.gov/?id=ED308716

jordanbpeterson.com www.jordanbpeterson.com/about. Accessed 12th Dec. 2020.

Kunzru, Hari. "12 Rules for Life by Jordan B Peterson review – a self-help book from a culture warrior." *The Guardian*, 18th Jan. 2018. www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jan/18/12-rules-for-life-jordan-b-peterson-review. Accessed 23rd Nov. 2020.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. London, The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Leech, Geoffrey, and Mick Short. *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*. 2nd ed., Harlow, Pearson Education Limited, 2007.

Leech, Geoffrey, et al. *English Grammar for Today: A New Introduction*. London and Basingstoke, The Macmillan Press in Association with the English Association, 1982.

Parker, Ian. "Yuval Noah Harari's history of everyone, ever." *The New Yorker*, 10th Feb. 2020. www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/02/17/yuval-noah-harari-gives-the-really-big-picture. Accessed 23rd Nov. 2020.

Paxson, James J. *The Poetics of Personification*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009. *eBook (Z-lib.org)*.

Ross, Alison. *The Language of Humour*. New York and London, Routledge, 2005.

Sanneh, Kelefa. "Jordan Peterson's Gospel of Masculinity." *The New Yorker*, 26th Feb 2018. www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/03/05/jordan-petersons-gospel-of-masculinity. Accessed 23rd Nov. 2020.

Simpson, Paul. *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students*. London and New York, Routledge, 2004.

Strawson, Galen. "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari – review." *The Guardian*, 11th Sep. 2014. www.theguardian.com/books/2014/sep/11/sapiens-brief-history-humankind-yuval-noah-harari-review. Accessed 23rd Nov. 2020.

Toolan, Michael. *Language in Literature: An Introduction to Stylistics*. New York, Routledge, 2013.

Vachek, Josef. *Chapters from modern English lexicology and stylistics*. Praha, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1991.

Wales, Katie. *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. 3rd ed., London and New York, Routledge, 2014.

ynharari.com www.ynharari.com/about. Accessed 12th Dec. 2020.