

SPATIAL PRACTICE IN TERRY PRATCHETT'S *GOING POSTAL* AND ITS UKRAINIAN TRANSLATION

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Terry Pratchett's novel *Going Postal* constructs the city as a deliberately shaped fictional space that imitates familiar reality while simultaneously ironising urbanism, governance, capitalism, and systems of communication. It is the thirty-third novel in the *Discworld* series, centred on the character of the conman Moist von Lipwig, who is forced to restore the decayed Ankh-Morpork Post Office. Ankh-Morpork is an entirely fictional city; however, it functions as an ideologically charged model of society, a self-sufficient chronotope that shapes not only the narrative framework but also a locus for socio-critical reflection. In T. Pratchett's work, the city operates as a site of interaction between various discourses (power, magic, bureaucracy, public opinion), ironically exposing the flaws inherent in reality. Its hybridity is shaped by the combination of different historical cultures and subgenre models (detective, adventure, and magical subgenres), which opens up the possibility of multiple interpretations. Thus, Ankh-Morpork emerges as a multifaceted metaphor of the city – a living organism, because “*a humdrum city day requires a thousand unseen things to happen like clockwork, because it is only a couple of meals away from chaos*” [6, p.10].

To conceptualise this multi-layered urban space, the study draws on Henri Lefebvre's triad, which approaches space not as a neutral container, but as a product of social relations, knowledge, and practice [4, p. 33]. H. Lefebvre distinguishes between spatial practice (the lived and enacted use of space), representations of space (its conceptual and institutional organisation), and representational space (its symbolic and affective dimension). Within fantasy narratives, this triad proves particularly productive, as fictional worlds simultaneously operate through embodied action, structured systems, and symbolic meaning. In this context, spatial practice becomes especially significant, as it foregrounds the everyday, repetitive, and bodily actions through which urban space is produced and sustained. In *Going Postal*, such practices emerge most clearly in the routines of the Post Office, where space is not restored through abstract administration, but through repeated action, rhythm, and embodied engagement.

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A representative illustration of spatial practice in the sense proposed by H. Lefebvre, treated here as indicative of broader patterns in translation and intermedial transfer, is the following excerpt:

'I bang the stamp on the ink pad here, then bang it, sir, bang it on the letter. There! See? Done it again. Same every time. Stamped.' [5, p. 145]

– *Б'ю штампом по цій ось чорнильній подушечці, потім б'ю, мій пане, б'ю ним по конверту. Ось! Бачите? Ще один є. І так щоразу. Промарковано* [7, с. 105].

This fragment demonstrates the embodiment of spatial practice in its bodily, rhythmised form. The repetitive ritual of stamping, which at first glance appears insignificant, acquires the status of an action through which the character (and, along with him, the Post Office) returns to life. Space is restored not through an administrative decision or reconstruction, but through the repetition of a gesture that establishes the rhythm of the institution and returns it to functioning as a living everyday practice. In this context, the stamp emerges not merely as a tool, but as a bodily embodiment of rhythm, which is also articulated on the linguistic level through the repetition of *bang* in the character's speech. This effect is partially transformed in translation. Although the Ukrainian book translation generally conveys the meaning of the original and attempts to reproduce the rhythm through the repetition of the verb *б'ю*, the construction *Done it again* is rendered as *Ще один є* (*Got another one*), which shifts the focus from the process of the action to its result.

This scene also receives a distinct realisation in the television adaptation, where spatial practice is not only verbalised but physically performed. The intermedial comparison makes it possible to observe how rhythm, repetition, and bodily action are reconfigured across media and how these elements are further transformed in Ukrainian audiovisual translation. The analysis is based on two Ukrainian voice-over versions – the *K1 studio* translation (*Зсув по пошті*) and a multi-voice voice-over *Багатоголосий закадровий* version (*Поштофікація*):

'I get this stamp. This stamp. And bang it on the ink pad. And then, sir, then, I bang it. Bang it on the letter. There.' [1, ep. 1, 00:46:34].

In the first Ukrainian audiovisual translation (*K1 studio*), the translation presents spatial practice more as an instruction than as a rhythmised bodily ritual:

– *Я...беру печатку. І б'ю по штампельній подушечці. А потім...Потім беру і вдаряю нею по листові. Отак* [3, ep. 1, 00:46:34].

In particular, the repetition *this stamp*, which in the original functions as a bodily indication and a means of rhythmisation, is lost, whereas *я...беру печатку* neutralises this repetition and reduces the utterance to an informative description. The verbs *б'ю* and *ударяю* are semantically close to *bang*, yet the

absence of their repetition weakens the rhythmic pattern. Moreover, the final *There* marks the culmination of the action, whereas *Отак* frames it as a logical conclusion.



Fig. 1. The postman is stamping letters [1, ep.1, 00:46:34]

In the *Багатоголосий* version, the line is rendered through a different translational approach:

– Я беру штамп. Оце́й штамп. Змочую у чорнильній подушечці. І тепер я його штампую, ставлю печатку на лист. Сюди [2, ep. 1, 00:46:34].

The repetition is partially preserved (*Оце́й штамп*), yet the subsequent actions acquire a more descriptive character (*штампую, ставлю печатку*), which reduces the dynamism of the original *bang it*. The adverb *Сюди* indicates the direction of the action, whereas *There* in the original functions as a marker of a completed strike. As a result, spatial practice is not so much reproduced as a bodily action as it is rationalised through description.

Thus, both translation variants, while oriented towards semantic accuracy and the conventions of voice-over dubbing, partially lose the rhythmised corporeality of the action. At the same time, this effect is partially compensated by the visual level of the scene (gestures, intonation, acting), which sustains the performative nature of spatial practice.

The analysis confirms that spatial practice in *Going Postal* functions as a fundamental mechanism of urban space production, realised through repetitive, embodied actions that generate institutional rhythm and sustain the city as a dynamic system. The examined example demonstrates that this dimension of space is particularly sensitive to translation, as shifts from enactment to description lead to the attenuation of its rhythmised and corporeal qualities. At the same time, the intermedial perspective reveals that the transformation of spatial practice is not limited to loss: while verbal translation tends to rationalise

and stabilise the action, the audiovisual mode redistributes its performative potential across visual means, intonation, and delivery. Consequently, the reproduction of spatial practice in translation emerges as a complex, multi-layered process, in which the bodily and rhythmic dimensions of space are reconfigured rather than fully preserved.

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