

ABSTRACT

Terry Pratchett is best known as the author of *Discworld*, a series of more than forty books and several short stories set in a world that is often described as humorous fantasy. Pratchett, however, uses this genre and its imaginative and satiric opportunities not only to tell stories, but also to mediate his own views on some of the major social themes such as feminism, religion, or racism. He uses the stereotypical fantasy roles and settings and subverts them to point out real world problems and issues.

The rise of popularity of the fantasy genre, especially satirical or humorous enables Pratchett to present his views to a broader audience, and to create a world mirroring and distorting the real one as to show the importance and impact of these issues on society. The fantasy setting also gives Pratchett the opportunity to create a world in which these themes can be illustrated and discussed freely.

The first chapter sets up Discworld as a Secondary World and presents the topics that will be discussed.

The second chapter deals with the many forms of racism in *Discworld*. The first part of the chapter discusses the standard, human-human type of racism, which is illustrated in the book *Jingo*. A subchapter is then dedicated to human-nonhuman and dwarf-troll racism, illustrated in *Thud!*, where Pratchett employs the possibilities of fantasy to reference real-world racism and its dangers. The second subchapter then briefly touches upon human-undead racism.

Religion is discussed in the third chapter. Pratchett's stance is illustrated using the novel *Small Gods*, which deals with faith and institutionalised religion. Pratchett's views on the relationship between humans and gods is addressed, as well as his approach to religion in general, which is twofold – on one hand he is aware of the importance of religion for society, on the other he calls for caution in the case of institutionalised religion and blind faith. A

subchapter is dedicated to the depiction of the afterlife in the novel, with emphasis on the power of an individual and of one's character.

The fourth chapter looks at the portrayal of feminism, and in relation to it sexism, in the books *Equal Rites* and *Monstrous Regiment*. Both these books have a female protagonist who struggles in a male-dominated world, and concentrate on the injustices inherent to a patriarchal society. One subchapter discusses the use of crossdressing to further illustrate the differences between the treatment of females and males in society, with those two experiences being put into immediate contrast. The second subchapter then examines the differences between witches and wizards, the unequal treatment of witches, and need for balance between the two – and, subsequently, between men and women.

This thesis aims to evaluate Pratchett's views on the issues of racism, religion, and feminism, their presentation in his works, and to argue that they constitute a part of his literary thesis, the goal of which is raising awareness about these topics and offering some personal opinions on their causes and possible solutions.

While the books mentioned are the primary sources for this thesis, other works from Terry Pratchett's bibliography are also referenced.