

WHY TERRY PRATCHETT REMAINS THE BEST COMICAL WRITER IN ENGLISH
LITERATURE

(Name)

(Course name)

(Date of submission)

Why Terry Pratchett Remains the Best Comical Writer in English Literature

Terry Pratchett is arguably one of the most beloved English writers. His books are being sold and read worldwide. However, the genre in which the author worked makes it possible to question whether his popularity is caused by Pratchett's literary genius or by the fact that he wrote literature for wide audiences—one that does not require a lot of effort to understand. Indeed, comical writing is often disregarded as a low one in which it is easy to please audiences. However, people sharing this view tend to forget that not every comedy is equally good. In other words, it still takes talent and hard work to make audiences fall in love with one's writings, even comical ones—and Terry Pratchett managed to do that perfectly. In fact, he remains the best comical writer in English literature, because in his writings he mirrors the society in which he lived, and makes readers ask important questions about themselves and the world around them.

An example of Pratchett's depiction of reality through creating unrealistic fictional worlds is the author's satire on the life of academia. It was difficult for the author—aiming at tackling important contemporary issues—to avoid being involved in academic satire. The genre received a massive boost in the 20th century because of the quick growth of the university system and the increase in the role universities played in societies.¹ Therefore, Pratchett used the technique of de-familiarizing to depict issues familiar to the reader in unfamiliar settings. His use of satire is gentle, as the author hints to the reader that his writings serve as mirrors of reality.² This approach allows the author to communicate his point about the imperfections of a system without offending or alienating the readers who might be directly associated with the phenomena satirized by Pratchett. In other words, instead of laughing at the reader, Terry Pratchett lets the

¹ Wojciechowski, Mary Alice. *Who's Afraid Of The Wicked Wit?: A Comparison Of The Satirical Treatment Of The University System In Terry Pratchett's Discworld And Evelyn Waugh's Decline And Fall*. Master's thesis, Georgia State University, (2014), 6.

² Ibid, 41.

reader laugh at him.

Another factor that makes Terry Pratchett one of the greatest English writers ever is the courage with which he addresses complex social issues in his writing. Thus, in several of his books, the author challenges narrative conventions of heroic characters that are destined to save the day in a time of turmoil. Instead of that, Pratchett focuses his narrative on ordinary people whose moral integrity saves their societies from utter collapse.³ The satirical effect achieved by this twist in the narrative reveals the author's personal approach towards the ideas of social responsibility and agency of each citizen. Thus, Pratchett exemplifies the point that, in the time of crisis, it is counterproductive for people to try to delegate their responsibilities to some "hero" who would come and save them.⁴ The 20th century saw numerous tragic examples of situations when people fell into the trap of failing to stand up against inhumane and oppressive regimes. These examples made Pratchett create narratives that would make readers willing to try and stay strong in times of uncertainty without scaring them by pictures of dystopian catastrophes.

All in all, it is safe to say that Terry Pratchett is the best comical writer in English literature, as his satire leads the reader to a serious discussion about important social issues. Important topics do not feel at odds with the playful and grotesque tone of the stories. On the contrary, the de-familiarization applied by Pratchett enables readers to look at the issues addressed in his books objectively, as if they were not affected by them.

³ Smith, Eve. "Civil Disobedience or War, Terrorism and Unrest in Terry Pratchett's Discworld." *Comedy Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012), 32-33.

⁴ Ibid, 37.

Bibliography

BSmith, Eve. "Civil Disobedience or War, Terrorism and Unrest in Terry Pratchetts Discworld."

Comedy Studies 3, no. 1 (2012): 29-39. doi:10.1386/cost.3.1.29_1.

Wojciechowski, Mary Alice. *Who's Afraid Of The Wicked Wit?: A Comparison Of The Satirical*

Treatment Of The University System In Terry Pratchett's Discworld And Evelyn Waugh's

Decline And Fall. Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 2014.



Super quick custom essay samples on any topic

Get your paper ASAP



Fast delivery



Qualified writers



Plagiarism-free papers

URGENT ORDER