The Writings of Terry Pratchett:

First Steps Toward a Scholarly Annotated Bibliography

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to provide the beginnings of the first scholarly annotated bibliography of Terry Pratchett's works, from his very first book through to the stories that follow his famous Discworld series. While Terry Pratchett was actually knighted for his services to literature, and although his novels are extraordinarily well known in many circles, there is an astonishing lack of academic focus on his works and his literary skill. While there are critical works written about Pratchett, and even theses that address issues in his works, there is as of yet no academic annotated bibliography.

The L-Space web site is currently the main source of collecting information about Pratchett and his works. Unfortunately, the L-Space is merely a collection—it consists of snippets more than of analysis. My thesis attempts to begin filling a significant gap by providing annotations of detailed reviews and scholarly essays dealing with Pratchett's works. I hope that this thesis will be just the first phase of a much more comprehensive project. Ideally, my work will be as useful for students of Pratchett as the published bibliographies of the distinguished scholar John R. Roberts have been for the study of such seventeenth-century English poets as John Donne, George Herbert, and Richard Crashaw, or as the bibliography of R. Neil Scott has been for the study of Flannery O'Connor. Other bibliographers might easily be mentioned as models, but Roberts and Scott have produced works that are models of their kind. They are models I hope to emulate in my thesis.

I have preceded the bibliography itself with an explanation of the Discworld books and other works by Pratchett. This explanation is then followed by the annotations themselves, which include my own commentary on each annotation. Pratchett has written more novels than the Discworld series alone, and several of them take place without the Discworld as a backdrop at all, but his Discworld series is

one of his most well-known. Roberts and other serious scholarly bibliographers have set a standard toward which I will aspire in my own work.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Terry Pratchett is one of England's most prolific writers. His books have sold millions of copies, and they continue to be as popular today as they were when first published. Colin Smythe, Pratchett's agent, remarks:

> In 2001, it was reported that during the first 300 weeks' existence of the British Booktrack's (now called Bookscan) weekly bestselling chart, over 60 titles had continuously been in the top 5,000 bestselling titles, and the author with the most titles in this listing was Terry with twelve novels, *The Colour of Magic, Guards! Guards!, Pyramids, Soul Music, The Light Fantastic, Reaper Man, Interesting Times, Sourcery, Men At Arms, Equal Rites, Mort* and *Wyrd Sisters*. By 2008 only twelve titles remained in that category, and three of those were Terry's - *The Colour of Magic, The Light Fantastic,* and *Mort*. No other author had more than one. *The Bookseller*'s article announcing this fact therefore crowned him 'evergreen king'. (http://www.lspace.org/about-terry/biography.html)

Pratchett's awards range from an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Bristol to his appointment as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his services to literature. Pratchett has written over fifty books in the Discworld series, and over a dozen non-Discworld novels. He has collaborated with various authors, including mathematician Ian Stewart and biologist Jack Cohen. Far from offering mere fantasy, his collaborations with Stewart and Cohen deal with complex mathematical and scientific questions that the Discworld raises about our own. Pratchett focuses mainly on writing satire, though often that satire becomes fairly critical in commenting on the issues faced by society today. He is also well known for his use of humorous footnotes.

Pratchett's works break down into three sections: the Discworld series, the non-Discworld series, and collaborations. The Discworld series can be further broken down into eight sections: Rincewind, Witches, Death, Watch, Ancient Civilisations, Young Adult, Industrial Revolution, and Science. *The Colour of Magic, The Light Fantastic,* and *Mort* remain bestsellers, two of which are novels from the Rincewind section, with *Mort* being from the Death section. Many reviewers seem kindly inclined towards several of the books in the Watch section, with a nod towards a few Young Adult books.

The sheer number of novels that Pratchett has written should astound the average reader. Furthermore, the relative absence of attention to Pratchett by academics is also surprising. Given the fact that he has written well over thirty volumes in the Discworld alone, an annotated bibliography would seem to be necessary. There are masses of summaries online, as well as articles and reviews, but there is no comprehensive published and carefully annotated bibliography. This thesis will help to correct this problem by presenting such a bibliography.

The commentaries I have annotated were chosen for several reasons. Firstly, I wanted to concentrate on commentaries that indicated an understanding of the work reviewed. Whether the commentator approves of the novel or not is not my concern: however, I wanted to concentrate on commentators who *did* explain some of the intricacies presented in Pratchett's writings. The critics I selected come from all walks of life, and many are authors themselves. The admiration that a significant majority of them feel for Pratchett is not the main reason they have been chosen, but it *is* an apt example of Pratchett's ability to engage the reader.

Secondly, multiple discussions of individual works have been selected to highlight major themes in Pratchett's works. In order to build a strong case for an author whose works transcend mere fantasy, I have tried to deal with multiple examples of commentaries about his works. The fact that most commentators seem to latch onto many of the same themes relatively quickly speaks to the importance of the themes themselves. Moreover, these themes are present and significant in day to day life, rendering them ageless and making Pratchett's writings likely to remain continuously relevant.

Thirdly, the commentaries themselves have been analysed for their content. Many of the commentators are concerned with the life of the author behind the written page, and their concern shows in their commentaries. Pratchett has obviously stepped into the forefront of many commentators' minds. Moreover, his characters seem to have taken on a life of their own, as can be seen in many discussions of Pratchett's works. These characters call attention to the individual flaws of real people, and the novels not only suggest needed corrections to common behaviour but also provide comedic relief in a world that seems to reflect the dark struggles of our own.

The annotations offered below help to show the astonishing breadth of Pratchett's works. Pratchett writes not merely as a fantasy author but as an author who can keenly see social problems around him and has written works to help us see what these problems actually are. If we can take steps to solving them, so much the better. His characters seem to find resolutions—and, if they don't, there are tangible, real reasons why. Pratchett rejects simple storybook endings. Some of his novels are necessarily heavier in tone than others because of the serious issues they tackle. Pratchett has been writing for a

considerable length of time, and his novels showcase the progress and the evolution of his writing. This thesis therefore annotates a wide array of discussions of his works.

My larger project, of which this thesis is merely the first stage, should contribute to a fuller understanding and appreciation of Terry Pratchett as a writer, especially among academics and the students they teach.

BRIEF SURVEY OF PRATCHETT'S WRITINGS

Pratchett's works break down into three sections: the Discworld series, the non-Discworld series, and collaborations. The Discworld series can be further broken down into eight sections: Rincewind, Witches, Death, Watch, Ancient Civilisations, Young Adult, Industrial Revolution, and Science. *The Colour of Magic, The Light Fantastic,* and *Mort* remain bestsellers, two of which are novels from the Rincewind section, with *Mort* being from the Death section. Many reviewers seem kindly inclined towards admire several of the books in the Watch section, with a nod towards and some enjoy a few of Pratchett's Young Adult books. It is the Discworld series that earned Pratchett his literary fame. The Discworld is a flat world that sits on the back of a turtle, supported by four elephants. The sun and moon really do go around the Discworld, with an elephant occasionally having to lift a leg to let them go past. A magical field coruscates across the Disc, illuminating the rainbow on the rimfall, as the waters crash over the edge of the Disc into nothingness. The rainbow is the colour of magic, octarine--which Rincewind apparently finds it to be a bit of a greenish-purple. The Discworld has places that are eerily similar to our own, with Ankh-Morpork resembling London. Likewise, characters in the Discworld series are reminders of their real-world

counterparts. Far from being mere fantasy tales, the Discworld stories often offer social, political, and human satire. Pratchett more often than not seems to be mocking the fantasy genre into which he has been placed by critics and readers. Unlike the magic of most books and movies, the magic of Discworld has rules and pretty severe consequences. This curious fact is discussed in great depth in the Science novels, which were written with collaborators. These novels call upon the skills of mathematician Ian Stewart and biologist Jack Cohen, who help provide real-world counterparts to Pratchett's magical world. In fact, reading these novels might make it hard to determine which world makes more sense—ours or theirs.

The Rincewind collection discusses the adventures—and misadventures—of Rincewind, the failed wizard. He is a coward, and unashamed of it. He did not graduate from the illustrious Unseen University, but has maintained his wizard status due to one of the "Great Spells" being lodged irretrievably in his mind. While most of the Rincewind stories tend to feature scenery going by fairly quickly, as Rincewind runs away, the character begins to develop and slow down a bit. In our world he might have made an excellent scientist. Rincewind keeps finding himself thinking of ways to "harness the lightning" (*The Colour of Magic* location 932, par. 1) which no one else seems to understand. Upon meeting the Disc's first tourist, from what we would call China, Rincewind is hopeful that this "Counterweight Continent" has perhaps found solutions for problems that do not involve magic. While the inhabitants of this continent do have more sophisticated technology, it is nonetheless powered by the same magical forces that Rincewind is tired of. Despite a penchant for cowardice, Rincewind finds himself in a rather heroic position more often than not. The Luggage—a sentient, mobile luggage

carrier with hundreds of little legs and a homicidal inclination—makes its presence in *The Colour of Magic*, and has become a fixed character in the Rincewind series.

The Witches collection follows the events of the Witches of Lancre, a small town in the mountains. They should not be confused with scantily clad women dancing in the moonlight, however—they would be quick to point out that while it's all well and good to dance around in one's undergarments, it gets chilly up in the mountains and there are thistles and such. And they certainly don't worship the moon, or need any of those silly trinkets. Real witches don't, anyway. The acerbic Granny Weatherwax is the head witch, followed by Nanny Ogg. Poor Magrat Garlick is the romantic, rather hopeless third witch, who does actually like using the various trinkets Granny Weatherwax despises. Their adventures take them all over the disc, and they even come head to head with the misogynistic wizards. The theme of equality becomes dimly present in these novels, with the characters being forced to admit to themselves that there might not be many differences between the genders. Witch magic, Granny asserts, is more "headology" than anything else—you tell someone they're going to get better, and they do. If you mumble a few words over some flavoured water, and make it seem awfully mysterious, then, well, they might just believe in themselves that much harder. Nanny Ogg is no less powerful than Granny, but she provides the cheerful, whimsical counterpart to Granny's stern expressions. Double entendres abound when Nanny speaks, though she'll grin toothlessly and order another beer instead of being ashamed.

The Death collection follows the routines of Death—an anthropomorphic personification. Yes, he is a tall skeleton with a hood and a scythe. However, he's a bit curious as to what the humans do before he gets to meet them, so he takes on an

apprentice. *Mort* focuses on this apprentice, and on unrequited love, but Death gets to experience humanity. While Mort struggles with the idea of some people so young having to die, Death in turn struggles with the idea that humans are so caught up in things like golf. Death mentions to Albert, his manservant, that he thinks he has a solution for humans and their "golf problem":

> I CAN SEE WHERE THEY ARE GOING WRONG, ALBERT.
> "Yes, master?"
> YES, THEY PUT THE LITTLE HOLE SUCH A LONG WAY AWAY, WITH LOTS OF ROUGH GROUND IN BETWEEN. THIS MAKES IT VERY DIFFICULT TO GET THE LITTLE BALL INTO THE HOLE. THEREFORE THE SENSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION IS TO PUT THE HOLE VERY, VERY CLOSE TO THE TEE, THUS ENABLING A COMPLETE ROUND OF GOLF TO BE COMPLETED IN MINUTES.
> "Yes, master, but people wouldn't think that was much fun."
> BUT IT WOULD LEAVE THE REST OF THE DAY FREE FOR SENSIBLE ACTIVITIES.
> "They're not usually fun either, sir."
> REALLY? FILING, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS A CERTAIN QUIET SATISFACTION ALL ITS OWN.
> "People don't look at it like that, sir."
> THEY PREFER THIS GAME, WHICH SEESM TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN ONE-MAN HOCKEY PLAYED VERY SLOWLY ON AN ATROCIOUSLY-MAINTAINED PITCH?
> "It seems like that, sir." (*Death's Domain* p 8)

The Death novels are not always whimsical. There are moments that are incredibly compassionate, especially when kittens are involved. Mort nearly upsets reality altogether by trying to save the life of a princess—and when he complains bitterly about there being no justice, Death intones: "THERE IS NO JUSTICE. THERE IS JUST YOU" (*Mort* p 139). However, his time among humans seems well spent—he becomes that much more humane, and begins to understand some of the silly things that humans do. Death also becomes aware of how precious time really is when, in one of the novels, he finds time is actually counting down for him for the first time. Death is actually quite a likeable

character, and his presence more often than not is reassuring or comedic rather than morose.

The Watch series follows the bedraggled group of men who form the City Watch of Ankh-Morpork. Pratchett notes that quite often watchmen are introduced so that the hero can massacre them: "their purpose in any work of heroic fantasy is identical: it is, round about Chapter Three (or ten minutes into the film) to rush into the room, attack the hero one at a time, and be slaughtered. No one ever asks them if they want to" (*Guards! Guards!* 7). The character development of Samuel Vimes begins here: he starts as a depressed drunk fed up with life. However, the novels chart his ascent to eventually becoming commander of the City Watch. His unending search for justice and desperate desire to remain separate from the darkness within him drive the novels and create a character difficult to dislike. The Watch series introduces characters from all over the Disc, including dwarves, trolls, werewolves, and even vampires. One of the many underlying themes present in the Watch is that of equality. The Disc has its own flavour of discrimination: "speciesism." As Granny Weatherwax puts it, "Racism was not a problem on the Discworld, because —what with trolls and dwarfs and so on— speciesism was more interesting. Black and white lived in perfect harmony and ganged up on green" (*Witches Abroad* location 5067, par.1). Acceptance, modernisation, and the marching of change all queue up in the Watch series, taking the reader along with them as they change the face of the Disc in a manner not too different from change in our own world. The idea of freedom, and emancipation from slavery, is a very compelling theme that gives the Watch series real importance.

The Ancient Civilisation series includes *Pyramids* and *Small Gods* and provides more background information for the rest of the series. *Pyramids*, of course, involves the civilisation that modern readers might confuse with ancient Egypt. While the book does discuss the kingdom of Djelibeybi, the main theme actually concerns change and modernisation. It further discusses the importance of belief, as the Djelibeybi belief system comes to life by accident, terrifying the high priest who had used it to suppress change in his country. "Seeing, contrary to popular wisdom, isn't believing. It's where belief stops, because it isn't needed any more" (*Pyramids* 216). *Small Gods* also discusses the power of belief, and the ramifications of using belief to chain people to superstition. This novel can be easily seen as dealing with issues relevant to the rise and fall of religions in our world, and to the violence that often follows someone questioning the current belief system. *Small Gods* also introduces Disc philosophers, who offer pithy maxims such as "We're philosophers. We think, therefore we am" (*Small Gods* 137). While one could easily see this novel as a declaration against religion, Pratchett himself says that he receives mail from fans who find it supporting both positions:

> ...a lot of mail about Small Gods [sic] is split between 1) pagans who say that it really shafts the Big Beard In the Sky religions and 2) Christians who say that it is an incredibly pro-Christian book. I suspect the latter is because Brutha displays tolerance, compassion, charity, steadfastness and faith, and these are now considered Christian virtues (i.e., virtues that modern Christians feel they should have...) ("Words from the Master")

Both books help to flesh out the Discworld, and the belief systems that drive it.

The Young Adult (Discworld) novels stem from the Witches series. These titles include *The Wee Free Men*, *A Hat Full of Sky*, *Wintersmith*, *I Shall Wear Midnight* and *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*. *The Wee Free Men* begins the Tiffany Aching storyline, which follows the adventures of a young woman who views life incredibly practically. She is described as the sort of girl who, when presented with a fairy tale involving an old woman and an oven with children being baked, would ask why on earth someone had an oven that large in the first place and why children would be unintelligent enough to climb into it. She is the sort of person who "read the dictionary all the way through. No one told her you weren't supposed to" (*The Wee Free Men* 12). Tiffany turns out to be the very witch that the Nac Mac Feegles—the Wee Free Men themselves—need. *A Hat Full of Sky* continues Tiffany's progress towards being a witch, and further discusses the influence of witches at home, and the importance of having a home. *Wintersmith* showcases the "morris dance," which supposedly welcomes winter at the end of summer. On the Discworld, though, belief is a powerful force, and interrupting the morris dance, however accidentally, has ramifications for young Tiffany. *I Shall Wear Midnight* is the final book in the Tiffany Aching series, and has Tiffany struggling to overcome the Discworld equivalent of the Salem Witch trials, orchestrated by the "Cunning Man." *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* follows a different track, and is a parody of the Pied Piper. It follows the tale of Maurice, a sentient cat, and his band of rodents who have also gained sentience thanks to their proximity to Unseen University. "He'd realized there was something educated about the rats when he jumped on one and it'd say, 'Can we talk about this?', and part of his amazing new brain had told him you couldn't eat someone who could talk.

At least, not until you'd heard what they'd got to say" (*The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* 10). With names like "Hamnpork" and "Dangerous Beans," these loveable rodents end up teaching Maurice what it means to establish your own identity despite what people have decided for you.

The Industrial Revolution novels include *Moving Pictures*, *The Truth*, *Monstrous Regiment*, *Going Postal*, and *Making Money*. All of these novels present changes that our world has dealt with, like the establishment of currency, newspapers and books, steam, and film. With such dramatic changes come fear, uncertainty, and often violence. Pratchett deals with these in his usual way: he offers scathing societal criticism, satire, and parody. *Going Postal* and *Making Money* are the beginnings of the Moist von Lipwig series, which later added *Raising Steam* and *Snuff*. Themes such as racism, discrimination, equality, and acceptance of change are eloquently discussed and displayed in these novels. The wizards of Unseen University, William de Worde and Moist von Lipwig, each find themselves facing a new era, and whether or not this chance is accepted—and how it alters them all—is entirely up to them. The wizards inevitably realise that chance is a constant, and that they are particularly susceptible to trends. William de Worde learns the power of words—especially the written word—and the value of the truth (for a given value of truth). Moist von Lipwig is "offered" the chance to start his life anew by Lord Vetinari, and he learns what it's like to live life as a (mostly) honest individual. Throughout the various novels, background characters come to the foreground, Ankh-Morpork changes, and the Disc slowly evolves.

The Science novels of Discworld consist of *The Science of the Discworld, The Science of the Discworld II: The Globe, The Science of the Discworld III: Darwin's*

Watch, and *The Science of the Discworld IV: Judgement Day*. Written in collaboration with Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart, these books oscillate between the fantasy of Discworld and the science of reality. The Wizards of Unseen University have set up an experiment to see what a universe without magic would be like. They take the reader on a tour of how our world came into existence, and its potential end. These books feature some extremely complex and intricate science, math, and philosophy, all tied in with the questioning and curious Wizards. The writers' enthusiasm for math and science are very obvious, and the comparison to the Discworld helps the reader to understand and see the parallels between the two worlds.

The last of Pratchett's collections of works are non-Discworld texts and collaborations. Apart from the Science of Discworld series, Pratchett has also collaborated with authors Neil Gaiman and Stephen Baxter. *Good Omens* discusses the unusual cooperation of a demon and an angel coming together to prevent the apocalypse. Their motivation for undertaking this prevention is nothing noble, however, but simply results from their feeling rather comfortable with the lives that they have found. They would rather not deal with an apocalypse upsetting everything. *The Long Earth*, *The Long War*, and *The Long Mars* involve travelling, not in time, but in space—and by the unusual method of "stepping" between worlds. Other non-Discworld books include *Truckers*, *Diggers*, *Wings*, *The Carpet People*, *Strata*, *The Unadulterated Cat*, *Only You Can Save Mankind*, *Johnny and the Dead*, *Johnny and the Bomb*, *Nation*, and *Dodger*. Pratchett has also written several anthologies: *A Blink of the Screen*, *A Slip of the Keyboard*, and *Dragons at Crumbling Castle*. A full list of his works includes short stories, maps, miscellaneous works (including cookbooks, board games, etc.), theatre

adaptations, companion novels, graphic novels, diaries, calendars, and many more (Anon., "Bibliography").

As even these brief summaries will suggest, Pratchett's novels are not only numerous but also complex, and they have already begun to generate intelligent commentary that scholars and students would benefit from knowing. Introducing some examples of that commentary, and providing convenient synopses of them, is the purpose of the main section of this thesis.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

For the reader who might want to know about Terry Pratchett at a glance, and the sort of books he has written, Alison Flood has managed to compile several reviews into one. She assuages the fear that Pratchett's decent into early onset Alzheimer's (diagnosed in 2007) would prevent him from producing more side-splitting books. Far from Discworld taking so much out of him that he cannot carry on, Flood notes that Pratchett finds that "Narrativia," a goddess of his own creation, has become very much permanent in his life. He is even having a statue made of her—Roundworld (our worlds) now has its very own literary goddess.

Flood notes that the Discworld series started out as "an affectionate lampoon of the sword-and-sorcery fantasy genre." She argues that this unfortunate placement in the category of "fantasy" has kept it out of academic view. However, over the years, Pratchett's works have "become an increasingly sophisticated swipe at contemporary society, pointing out the ridiculousness of everything from Hollywood to the postal service, newspapers, banks and football." Pratchett believes that if "you've been a good boy and worked at what you're doing, then the goddess Narrativia will smile on you." Thus, serendipitous events in his works seem to happen all by themselves—like the creation of Ronnie Soak, who is actually Kaos (Chaos).

Flood bemoans Pratchett's lack of academic recognition. She reports that the distinguished novelist A. S. Byatt believed that his book *Thief of Time* ought to have been nominated for the Booker prize, one of the most prominent of all literary awards in the world. However, because it was a fantasy novel, it wasn't, and it wasn't until 2001 that

Pratchett received an award at all. While he has been knighted for his services to literature, Pratchett himself seems to think that this honour was more of a satirical gesture, though perhaps fitting for a master of satire. His devoted fanbase has allowed him to bring more media attention to causes he holds dear. In particular, he has been concerned with Alzheimer's and with publicly backing assisted dying.

This review is an excellent source for a reader who has more than a passing understanding of the Discworld series and has taken up interest in the author. Flood discusses the various books Pratchett is still working on, and plans to publish, while giving life to the man himself. So often an author becomes merely thinly visible behind the words he writes, and Pratchett is no exception. His ongoing struggle with Alzheimer's is something that Flood clearly thinks the reader should note, and his stance on assisted dying is mentioned in an objective way. Flood leaves it to readers to reach their own opinions about this controversial issue.

After briefly passing on a history of Pratchett himself, Flood alludes to her own conversations with the author, noting his vibrant humour, wit, and constantly fizzing mind. She thinks that his works borrow from the G. K. Chesterton school of fantasy. Works of this sort, she asserts, "take that which is familiar and everyday and therefore no more seen, and pick it up and turn it around and show it to the reader from a new point of view, so that once again they see it for the first time." Pratchett's methods are especially evident in his Tiffany Aching series, penned for young adults, which feature a protagonist who views fairy stories literally, turning things upside down to further engage and intrigue the reader.

This review is an excellent source for those who want a quick overview of Pratchett's works in general. Flood offers a brief history of the man himself. She presents the wizard behind the curtain. His struggle with Alzheimer's, and his arguments for being open about this disease, further deepen a reader's connection to the man himself, and make us root for him to defeat this terrible affliction.

THE *DISCWORLD* BOOKS

The Colour of Magic is Pratchett's first Discworld novel. Lee Sibbald, a reviewer from fantasybookreview.co.uk, finds that the seriousness usually present in any sort of fantasy book is replaced with Pratchett's own version of humour. Sibbald finds, fittingly, that *The Colour of Magic* is an apt place to start for a reader new to the world of Pratchett. Furthermore, Sibbald claims that the novel's setting, Ankh-Morpork, is described with such vividness that it remains "implanted in the memory." Because Ankh-Morpork is the place where many of the later stories are set, this vividness is a good thing for the first Discworld novel. Sibbald takes his review one step further by asserting that *The Colour of Magic* is not just another fantasy novel, but is a "breath of fresh air," providing a needed break from the so-called "real"world. It just might, Sibbald claims, "stop you from taking life too seriously." He laughingly notes that this book alone might get a new reader hooked on Pratchett, and that there is nowhere to go but into the rest of the novels.

Sibbald, having already reviewed Pratchett's novel *The Colour of Magic* (see above), here continues with *The Light Fantastic*, the second novel in the Discworld series. Unlike the effortless humour present in *The Colour of Magic*, he finds that the humour in *The Light Fantastic* feels a bit forced. However, Sibbald admits that this is one of the best-written fantasy novels he has ever read. The main character gave him/her someone to root for, and he notes that Pratchett inserts new characters seamlessly. Cohen the Barbarian, now eighty-seven years old, enters the scene with a toothless flair that leaves Sibbald in stitches. He notes that Pratchett really puts life into his characters—even (ironically) when describing the ubiquitous DEATH. He argues that DEATH comes

on the scene in a way that, while he is the harbinger of literal death, still delights the reader.

Sibbald is captivated by *Mort*. This fourth book in the Discworld series focuses on Death—the character, that is, not the actual end of life. Sibbald chuckles that while Death comes for us all, he came to offer Mort a job. He marvels that Pratchett can take the rather dark theme of death and turn it into something warm, amusing, and remarkably insightful. Sibbald feels that Pratchett continues to delight the reader with excellent character portrayals, and he notes the consistent dry humour and "excellent social observations" that have "become the Pratchett trademark."

One of the many things about this novel Sibbald enjoys is the way Pratchett gives Death voice. Instead of focusing on some sort of difficult-to-follow phrasing, Pratchett merely has Death speak in capital letters. Pratchett tells the reader that each word slams into place with death-like certainty, and Sibbald agrees that the reader is "able to hear the coffins creak and the bells toll in your mind every time he speaks." Praising Pratchett for humour ranging from puns, irony, to ambiguous wit, Sibbald marvels that Pratchett has managed to keep them all fresh and never overplayed. He seems delighted that *Mort* made him/her smile, laugh, and think reflectively. Who else besides Pratchett, Sibbald wonders, could come up with the idea of Death going through a mid-life crisis?

Ryan Lawler declares that Pratchett is "a man who needs no introduction." Having made this declaration, Lawler praises Pratchett's third book in the Discworld series, *Equal Rites*. Unlike the first two novels (he argues), this book has a much more substantive plot and more coherent storytelling. Even further, it has the theme of equality

at its very centre. Furthermore, Lawler admits that it is this particular book that got him hooked on Discworld and even "showed the potential of fantasy writing."

While he finds that the story is executed quite well and draws the reader in, Lawler comments that he wishes the story had a more dramatic ending. However, he concedes that the character development drives the novel. The characters become real, tangible human beings with their own personalities and flaws. Lawler seems to enjoy the world presented in *Equal Rites* overall, but he seems a bit impatient. He complains that Pratchett slows down to describe how magic in the Discworld works, and that he takes the time to build the world a bit. Overall, however, Lawler finds the book well written and a story that will resonate with all readers.

Reaper Man follows *Mort* in the Discworld series, and Ana of thebooksmugglers.com finds herself in awe at the implications presented effortlessly in the novel. While she finds herself laughing uproariously at the various absurdities therein, she finds plenty of time to think about concepts Pratchett innocently introduces. Ana seems to find the themes of belief, moving on, and time especially meaningful. As the reader watches Death learn about time actually passing for the first time, Ana argues that this realization forces Death to finally understand his "harvest."

Ana finds the ending of the book to be "one of the most beautiful things I've ever read." The empathy, understanding, and meaning that the characters come to have for one another is, she thinks, incredibly heart-warming. Ana admits that she found the writing so compassionate that it "almost made my heart burst." She thoughtfully concludes that it is this humanising of death—or Death—that makes him a better character. Death gets to feel needed, as do other characters.

This review offers an excellent chance to see the emotion Pratchett can portray in his works. Instead of Death being cold, callous, and terrifying, he is a friendly individual trying very hard to understand the silliness of humans. Likewise, Pratchett implies that what happens after death is something we should fear less than we typically do. Pratchett spends very little time expanding upon what the character Death thinks about the results of death. Death seems to assume that since humans have so little time to begin with, they ought to focus on the time that they have, rather than focusing on what they don't know. Moreover, *Reaper Man* gives Death a chance to experience time for himself, which shows him just how precious those few seconds can really be. Ana rates this novel a 9—"Damn Near Perfection."

Joshua Hill enjoys *Guards! Guards!* immensely. He is thrilled at the way Pratchett takes traditional mythology, lore, and fantasy and subverts them in his own particular style. Hill even goes so far as to say that the reader will love Pratchett for it. Furthermore, Hill declares the characters in *Guards! Guards!* Are the most "cleverly written characters the Discworld will ever produce." The relatively new Night Watch has its roster expanded, and Hill feels that this novel is important to read early in the series, as this novel is where much of the world is created and explained and where underlying currents of later novels begin.

While Hill finds that Pratchett has not yet reached his current levels of "polished brilliance," he still finds the twists and turns of *Guards! Guards!* hilarious and redemptive. He asserts that the writing is not bad and that it never jars the reader out of the story. However, he muses, the stylistic level Pratchett reaches in his later works forces readers of his early books to settle for less. Hill recommends this book for the

making clear the history of events and characters that spear later on in the Discworld series.

This is an excellent review for readers curious about the depth of the Discworld series. It establishes the importance of each novel in linking to the whole, but it also shows that *Guards! Guards!* stands on its own merits. The Discworld is shown to be brilliantly created, with characters that take on a life of their own. Each series arc has its own conclusion, but the series are inevitably tied to one another. Some characters that do not prominently feature in some series nonetheless have their backgrounds further embellished and filled out in other works.

Hill continues by reviewing *Feet of Clay*. He admits that he finds that this novel resembles a cop novel, which isn't exactly what he expected. However, Hill still believes that Vimes and Vetinari are two of the "cleverest characters ever written," as their stories are filled out much more strongly in *Feet of Clay*. The story is very clever, he believes, and he thinks that it certainly has plenty of twists to keep the reader on their toes.

Hill warns the reader that people who gush about Pratchett's genius tend to be talking about his later books. More accurately, Hill finds that people are generally talking about Pratchett's genius and brilliance set up in the early novels then later developed. Hill believes that the author grew as the stories did, and that the characters introduced in earlier books are eventually filled out and set out on their own. Hill seems to be calling for the reader to be patient and give the Discworld a chance. The early books, like *Feet of Clay*, are (he thinks) necessary for providing background and history for the rest of later novels. The 10/10 brilliance, Hill claims, comes later.

Hill celebrates *Jingo*, arguing that it stands on its own against later novels in the Discworld series. It is in *Jingo* that Hill finds character development at one of its highest points in Pratchett's fiction, and he enthusiastically enjoins readers to experience it for themselves. While Hill seemed a bit perturbed at the "cop novel" feel of *Feet of Clay*, his discomfort is assuaged in *Jingo*. He considers the "chase" in this novel clever, intricate, and brilliant enough to hook his interest. He urges readers to pick up this novel, if they haven't already.

The City Watch series arc continues in *The Fifth Elephant*, which Hill remarks is one of his favourite Discworld books. Indeed, he ranks it a whopping 9.8/10. Hill is fascinated by the growth of Ankh-Morpork, and he finds the underlying current of change intriguing. With the invention of things like the clacks (our telegraph), the world becomes that much smaller—and the characters travel to Überwald, to Hill's delight.

The story pace picks up considerably once the characters arrive in Überwald, and the narrative excites Hill enough that he doesn't want to spoil the story for the readers. He is, however, content to say that Pratchett has outdone himself in the action scenes. He reports that readers will encounter dwarves, vampires, and werewolves, all with Hill's beloved Sam Vimes in the mix. Hill considers their depiction detailed and intricate, with new (and existing) characters brilliantly introduced and described.

Hill raves that *The Fifth Elephant* is nothing short of "stellar." He admits that he's reread it multiple times. Hill states that it is the least humorous novel in the series, but he believes that with that loss of humour comes a chance for more ingeniousness. Furthermore, Hill asserts the importance of the dwarf lore developed in this novel, giving a solid foundation for later books. The characters lose none of their brilliance because of

the loss of humour, and Hill thinks *The Fifth Elephant* is such a stand-out text that he adamantly claims readers really should pick up this book.

Joshua Hill considers *Night Watch* "simply one of the greatest pieces of English literature." Moreover, Hill finds that this particular novel could stand on its own, even out of the Discworld series itself. Hill praises the intricacy of *Night Watch*, claiming that Pratchett weaves a story of such great depth and brilliance that "either Pratchett is a genius, or he was on the phone to Sam Vimes who told the tale to him."

Hill finds the characters deep and three-dimensional and the villain scary enough to elicit a physical response. He finds the time travel aspect of the novel particularly deep. Hill declares that the skill Pratchett employs to stitch time back up after it's been unravelled is nothing short of mind-blowing. Furthermore, Hill finds his favourite characters deepened, with their own stories filled out and expanded upon.

A. S. Byatt finds herself captivated by the emergence of Death in *Night Watch.* While she agrees with other critics that this novel is a wonderful read, she argues that Pratchett has darkened his imagination and that Death is not quite as comforting as he had been before. In previous novels, she argues, Death was almost humorous: curiously comforting in his stiff, not-quite-right politeness as he ushered each soul into whatever the individual decided their soul's fate should be. Not so in *Night Watch*, Byatt claims. The world has become darker, nastier, and particularly twisted.

Rather than focusing on *Night Watch*, Byatt muses over the fate of the characters in this and in other novels. She claims that the defenders of good and common sense are becoming exhausted. Characters like Vimes and Granny Weatherwax are forced to make heavy decisions rife with serious implications. Byatt complains that she does not like

stories that have characters going back in time—or forward—to see themselves. She fears that this thins the reality the character delicately stands upon, and she regretfully admits that this thinning is present in *Night Watch*.

Curiously, it is not the appearance of the many heroes of the present day Watch that ameliorates Byatt's fears. It is the discovery of Reg Shoe, alive in the past instead of the zombie of his present. Instead of suffering a gruesome, horrid death with no resolution, Reg Shoe dies heroically. It is perhaps Pratchett making it particularly clear that Reg will not remain buried for long that grants Byatt some comfort. No, he is not the brain-eating sort of zombie—he is functional, albeit green and smelly, and is fervently bent on achieving equal representation for the undead in the world. After all, he declares, there are more of them than there are of the living. Byatt seems thrilled to meet Reg before his untimely demise, however temporary. However, she does find the young versions of many other characters tenuous at best because of the time travel, complaining that this device is a bit "sleight-of-hand."

It is curious to note that Byatt is concerned with the darkness present in *Night Watch*, and she contrasts her concern with the way "things are now" in present-day Ankh-Morpork. Even more intriguing to note is her perception of the almost intentional way that Pratchett sets up *Night Watch* with Death being an intruder, rather than the anthropomorphic personification many have come to know. Moreover, the thinning of the past seems to be a literary device that Byatt has latched upon, with every step a potential misstep that could bring the future crashing down. The protagonist is forced to help history through to its conclusion, hindered at every step by the antagonist, who is a terrifying character with cold, heartless cruelty in every word. Byatt considers *Night*

Watch a complex novel, indeed, forcing her to contrast it with other books Pratchett has written.

Joshua Hill laughs about *Making Money*'s plot. While it may seem over-the-top, he claims, it probably isn't, especially if readers make comparisons with their own world. Hill is also thoroughly entertained by, and appreciative of, Pratchett's ability to research. The book is set in a fantasy setting, yes, but Hill argues that there is a grain "or barn full," of truth to be seen.

One of the things that Hill finds so intriguing about Pratchett's worlds is his ability to take fantasy lands and make them as commonplace as our own. In fact, Hill argues, it is this commonplace setting that seems to make cities like London or Melbourne fantastic. Hill seems to think that witches, trolls, dwarves, and various other creatures that create dissent and issue in the Discworld are no different than the creatures each individual must face in reality—even if these creatures are not tactile things.

Hill believes that in this novel Pratchett has not reached his pinnacle as a writer. No, he declares—he reached it long ago, and has stayed there ever since. Pratchett's place in the competition (Hill asserts) is squarely with himself, not with other writers. Hill finds that *Making Money* stands quite well on its own merits and as a standalone book. However, he thinks that having read the other books in the series will make it that much more fun.

Patrick Ness quickly sees the parallels between *Making Money* and the real world. He presses the reader with one question: "if you've never read a Discworld novel, what's the matter with you?" Far from the novels being mere "fantasy," Ness contends that any of the Discworld books, including this one, deal with the heavy topics in life with a

brilliance that cannot be denied. Clearly Ness sees some connections between the various characters in the Discworld: he likens the behaviour of the 2007 candidate for mayor of London to the sort of buffoonery present in the various stories Pratchett pens.

Retracing his steps, Ness praises *Making Money* for continuing the criticism of greed and privatisation in *Going Postal*, the previous book. The current book, Ness argues, inspires questions about the very concept of money. Ness laughs at Pratchett's ability to take the readers in one direction, all the while spinning the tale in quite the other direction until the moment of revelation. Ness seems to take great pleasure in the development of Moist von Lipwig.

This review focuses on the questions raised and nagging questions left unanswered. This book is a fantasy story, yes, full of humour and puns. However, Ness argues that the edged questions about money and the way it is understood play a much more powerful role in the novel. He comes to the uncomfortable conclusion, citing one of the characters, that banks "will honour our promise to exchange a dollar for a dollar's worth of gold provided we are not, in point of fact, asked to."

It is the humanity of the books that seems to make them so appealing to Ness. Ness claims that Pratchett genuinely cares about the middle-of-the-road people whom he sets up stories around. Yes, they're taken advantage of, and hurt, but he gives them big hearts. Ness sees a significant amount of philosophy present in *Making Money,* and he hopes that Pratchett sees redemptive qualities in the people in this reality as well as his Discworld.

Joshua Hill praises *Going Postal* fervently. He appreciates the additional time devoted to the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, while admitting that this book is about Moist

von Lipwig. Despite his desire to have a book focused on Vetinari, Hill finds the writing in *Going Postal* brilliant and the characters well-defined. He has fallen in love with the side characters introduced in this novel, and he is convinced that the readers will, too. Aside from praising a plot that, Hill claims, will never make you lose interest, Hill also believes that characters like Groat and Stanley will echo the parts of the readers that most people keep hidden—parts like strange compulsions, minor obsessive-compulsive disorders, and various other aspects of being human that can be a trifle embarrassing.

It is this likability of characters and constant ability to read oneself in them that Hill seems to admire most. The inhabitants carry on a life of their own, and their home is so fleshed out that Hill is left in amazement. He seems to think that Pratchett must spend half his time writing and the other half researching, but he is dazed at the amount of background that goes into creating the novels' locations.

The honesty and underlying story beneath the main storyline leave Hill mesmerised. It is an excellent book, he declares, and he even offers it as a starting point for the Discworld series. Hill believes that Pratchett has written so many good works that it is impossible to critique his novels by comparing them with anything else besides other Pratchett novels. He claims that while Making Money is a very fine work, when compared to other Pratchett novels it falls just a trifle short. However, he reassures the reader, and declares this novel a "must have" on anyone's shelf.

Helen Falconer finds that *The Truth* is yet another of Pratchett's gems. Instead of perceiving mere fantasy in this novel, she finds that Pratchett's works are biting political satire. The protagonist of this novel seems near and dear to Falconer's heart, as all he wants to do is write down the truth. He is the Discworld's first newspaper writer, and

Falconer gleefully describes the many pitfalls that come with being willing to simply write down what happens. Moreover, she seems to identify with his chagrin when he realises that readers do not want the Truth, but instead want to read about something merely interesting. In summation, Falconer declares that "Pratchett has found his own way of turning lead into gold." Rather than thinking that his works have reached any apex of brilliance, Falconer concludes that "every one he has written is a treasure."

In reviewing *Raising Steam*, Ben Aaronovitch mentions that Terry Pratchett, until recently, unfortunately did not include maps in any of his fantasy novels. Because of Pratchett's insistence that the Discworld was "a place where stories happen," maps were generally an afterthought. However, in *Raising Steam*, Pratchett does include a map spread across the pages. This, Aaronovitch suggests, is because the Discworld has now plunged into the era of steam, necessitating the use of maps.

This review is an excellent source for readers who want to see how Discworld has progressed, and to be reassured that Pratchett has not lost his satirical touch. Aaronovitch's glowing descriptions of how the world is "painted in broad outline and great splashes of colour[,]" along with his assertion that the Discworld is beginning to take on further solidity, imply Pratchett's talent and continuing impact. Aaronovitch argues that if the series were ever cancelled, this development would "prompt national mourning and, possibly, death threats to the publisher."

Aaronovitch steps into a bit of seriousness for a moment when he acknowledges that some of the indirect allegory in *Raising Steam* could refer to militant Islamists and their willingness to commit violence to prevent change. However, he notes—with a touch of the same Pratchett satire he enjoys—that Pratchett's allegorical characters could also

"closely mimic evangelical Christians, or luddites, or just people who are afraid of the pace of change in the modern world." And thus the meat of the story comes into focus: while this novel is about a railroad being introduced to a fantasy world set where magic takes the place of science, people nonetheless prefer to be moved from point A to point B in a routine fashion instead of having to work out all those magical laws that would allow their transference. With such dramatic changes to a world come a search for meaning and belonging, and the delicate balance that must be sought between personal rights and freedoms.

Aaronovitch argues that Pratchett has not lost his ability to identify with the absurdity of the human condition. A significant part of the humour in his novels (Aaronovith believes) comes from the fact that readers can smile, laugh, and shake their heads knowingly because Pratchett's observations seem so very true. Humans are outrageous and silly—and what better way to point this out (Aaronovitch suggests) than by simply demonstrating the absurd things that people do on a daily basis?

Karin Kross asserts that *Raising Steam* is not an easy story for a new reader to jump into. With the emergence of the steam engine into the fantasy world of the Disc, Kross bemoans that Pratchett's works have become "a Dickensian mirror of contemporary western society, such that at times it barely even feels fantastical anymore."Kross argues that the multiple parallels with today's society have placed the Discworld at a tipping point.

However, Kross reassures the reader that the magic has not entirely left the Discworld. This is evidenced, she thinks, by the embodiment of the steam engine (Iron Girder) as a consciousness. Iron Girder has become her own goddess, partially through

the fervid imaginations and machinations of her creator. This, Kross states, could imply our own connection to technology.

This review is particularly excellent for the reader who wants to know the tone and overall impression of *Raising Steam*. Kross points out that this novel is a bit drier than Pratchett's previous works and that it employs more dark humour. Furthermore, injuries and death show up a bit more often than in other works. Kross complains that the plot takes its time, meandering across the pages—much like the railroad slowly being built across the Discworld. While the tension mounts, she says, it takes a while to see where it will end up and what the grand finale might be.

Kross also points out that the two plot threads—involving the railroad and its opposition—are "emphatically concerned with the forward momentum of history and society, and the ways in which those who refuse to move with the times will get quite thoroughly left behind." Additionally, she notes that Pratchett's position is emphatically clear. She thinks that this work, in particular, highlights the need for progress and tolerance.

Perhaps Kross's greatest fear about this novel is not that it is a bit darker than the others, but she suggests that the author's "embuggerance" (as he calls his Alzheimer's) may finally be catching up to him. Nevertheless, dismissing the thought from her mind—and calling her readers to do the same—Kross exults that the Discworld has taken on a life of its own. With such life, she claims, it must move forward into the modern era: just like ours did with the advent of the steam engine and the inevitable progress that followed. The Disc has changed entirely, and this change, Kross hopes, opens up the Discworld to more changes to come.

Sara Sklaroff's review of *Raising Steam* focuses on the humour in Pratchett's works. Love puns? Well, you'd better (Sklaroff believes), if this book is of interest—and she thinks a reader must be amused by silly names, smelliness, and so on. Oh, and French jokes. Sara Sklaroff pens this review with a light, giddy touch, revelling in a new novel that embraces the sense of humour she has come to know and love.

While this review cheers on the publication of a new novel—the author is clearly a Discworld fan—Sklaroff takes the time to point out some serious notes. She believes that far from a mere "fantasy novel," *Raising Steam* raises some serious questions about technology and reaction to change. As other reviewers have noted, this novel is more about reaction to change than about change itself. It is the reaction, Sklaroff believes, that creates rifts and challenges.

Sklaroff mentions that Pratchett employs his usual fun with words. He is, after all, forty books into his Discworld series. So, she quips, "why not?" His plays on words, along with names like "Bad Schüschein" and "Aix en Pains," are instant indicators of the silliness of language. Pratchett is a master of puns, and he often employs them in a subtle fashion. While a lighter review, this commentary is particularly excellent for showcasing Pratchett's style of writing.

Mark Bright finds *Raising Steam* to have a strong underpinning of intellectualism. Pratchett, he states, has decided to "try to answer the unfathomable" in writing this novel. Bright notes that many authors, as they age, insert their own distillations of wisdom into their works, attempting to teach their readers while providing entertainment. *Raising Steam* is no different, with the theme of progress being readily apparent.

This review is an excellent breakdown of the thematic progression of the novel. It also describes the philosophies Pratchett has laid out in an effort to teach his readers—or at least to pry their minds open in the way that only his satire can. Bright argues that Pratchett points out the various flaws in society, but gently, and reminds the reader that "when you've had hatred on your tongue for such a long time, you don't know how to spit it out."

Bright finds this work engaging because it tends to be more intellectual than other Pratchett works. He asserts that no author's writings should remain the same after over thirty years. Everyone, he claims, will love at least one of the novels in the Discworld series, and Bright clearly finds that he loves this one quite a bit. He also recommends this work for lovers of philosophy, as there is plenty of philosophizing in *Raising Steam.*

Joshua Hill, however, finds *Raising Steam* to have earned a tragic 9/10 instead of his usual 10/10. Hill concludes that for the first time since 1998 Pratchett's prose has "slipped up." However, he is quick to admit that this slippage is marginal. Hill is even quicker to excuse such slippage as resulting from Pratchett being forced to dictate his works rather than write. It seems that Pratchett has instilled such a love in his followers that his reviewers would be willing to write excuses for him when his work fails to impress, even to the smallest degree. Hill soothes readers by reminding them that the only thing missing from this particular novel is the polish that has made Pratchett's previous works a perfect ten.

This review spends a brief moment on the work itself, but it seems caught up in lamenting Pratchett's fading glory as a writer. While Hill seems to find *Raising Steam* still to be a wonderful addition to any Discworld lover's library, he seems far more taken

by Pratchett's affliction. Terry Pratchett is, he declares, "simply one of the greatest writers to have ever lived." From the manner in which Patchett writes to his sense of humour—sometimes gentle, sometimes acerbic—Hill finds him absolutely unparalleled. It is because of this assertion that Hill finds Pratchett's struggle with Alzheimer's horrific. He mourns that Alzheimer's is "robbing us of one of the brightest stars, slowly, but inexorably."

Steven Padnick's review of *Snuff* quickly warns the reader that it would be beneficial to have read previous Sam Vimes novels. In fact, he states that he would not recommend it as a first trip to Discworld. Padnick argues that it is one of the few books in the entire Discworld series that cannot be read as a standalone. The main character of Vimes is too complex and too developed in previous works, Padnick claims, which would leave an unwary reader confused and lost.

With that disclaimer out of the way, Padnick states that *Snuff* reads as a "parody of Agatha Christie-esqe mysteries," with the oppressed individuals being goblins. Pratchett's renowned sense of humour is never absent and no less blunted, with the characters maintaining their charm. Padnick finds the main character's bafflement at country living hysterical, as is the influx of animal excrement. He points out that Vimes's discomfort with automatic respect might mimic Pratchett's own bemusement with his newly bestowed knighthood. However, Padnick cheekily notes that Pratchett "celebrated that by forging a sword out of meteorites, because Terry Pratchett is a BAMF."In other, slightly crude tongue-in-cheek words, Padnick finds Terry Pratchett a "badass motherfucker": who else, besides aforementioned badass, would forge a sword out of meteorites?

Moving away from light-hearted humour, Padnick delves into the seriousness always prevalent underneath the satire in a Pratchett novel. Padnick believes that the goblins of this book are treated horribly, creating many touching moments as they fight for recognition. Perhaps one of those most powerful moments in the novel, he believes, is when the goblins simply ask—not demand, Padnick is quick to point out—that there be justice for a murdered goblin girl. Padnick declares that this is an act of courage, because the underlying plot of the goblins being classified as vermin and subhuman belies any right to compassion. Asking humans--especially those who have treated them as undeserving of rights--to grant justice is a powerful literary device. Justice, by definition, is treatment that is morally right and fair: treatment the goblins have not had as of yet. In asking for justice, the goblins are asking to be treated fairly and morally, though they are not demanding or rioting for the status change they deserve. As such, it takes incredible courage to ask people who could easily dismiss them entirely for justice for a dead goblin girl.

Padnick's only complaint is that he finds the mystery a bit lacking. With Vimes being a solid and dependable character, and with Padnick having read the other Vimes novels, he believes that no one ever appears to be in real danger and that the tension seems partially fabricated. However, Padnick admits that *Snuff* continues to be a fun read and an excellent addition to the Discworld series. The goblins are, he notes, a fairly new addition to the increasingly-concrete Discworld, and their fight for a sense of belonging in their own world is quite compelling, with Padnick finding the final scene "genuinely moving."

Another review of *Snuff* focuses on the title itself. AS Byatt points out that snuff can be used to refer to "an old-fashioned stimulant to be kept in elegant boxes and snorted gracefully in society." However, "snuff" can also refer to an often unpleasant death. While there may seem to be no connection, Byatt argues that Pratchett has connected the two in *Snuff.*

Byatt muses on the parallels between the lives of the goblins and behaviour in our own society: "abuses of privilege, fiddling of expenses, blind eyes turned." She finds that the pace of the novel moves nicely, with Vimes being his usual self. While Byatt does not directly state the need to read other Vimes novels to be familiar with the character, her assertion that he is his "usual self" makes that need quite apparent.

According in Byatt, there is a significant level of sophistication prevalent in *Snuff*, especially when species rise up and become accepted in society. Byatt argues that Pratchett creates characters that take on such intricacy that readers really have no choice but to find them charming. Despite first impressions, she claims, many of the strange or irritating characters actually turn out to be quite helpful and useful as the novel progresses.

With a bit of tongue-in-cheek, Byatt mentions the prevalence of animal waste in the novel, which one of the characters calmly dismisses by saying, "this is what children of a certain age care about." Moreover, these fascinations with bodily excretions link to the "unggue pots" that the goblins make—pots described in a clear and intricate fashion that Byatt admires.

Byatt enjoys the leisurely pace at which this novel progresses. She finds that this gives the characters a chance to develop naturally, allowing the reader to get closer to the

characters than they might have otherwise. While the villain in this book is clear, Byatt argues that his lack of conscience is "a form of stupidity," and that it is this stupidity that creates true villainy. Overall, Byatt finds *Snuff* inventive, satisfying, complex, and exhaustive, with the footnotes there to assist the reader. She muses that the footnotes, while amusing to readers, might also be there to help the author, who quite obviously can't stop his mind from going at full tilt, dragging the reader with him.

Josh Roseman has a unique take on *Snuff*, arguing that the urgent, emphatic tone of the novel results from Pratchett's posterior cortical atrophy, requiring him to dictate his stories either to an assistant or a computer. Roseman claims that perhaps the feeling of trying to "shoehorn in all the ideas he's wanted to address in future Discworld books" is because Pratchett feels as though he will not have enough time to finish the series. Small revelations that may seem irrelevant to a new reader have heartrending implications for avid Pratchett fans: Vetinari learns who writes the crossword puzzles that he amuses himself with daily; Willikins the butler reveals more of his shadowy past; the Lady Sybil makes a solid change in the world.

Implications of the author's eventual demise aside, Roseman believes that the first third of the book is the best of it, and he is similarly enthralled with Vimes's discomfort and son's obsession with poo. Willikins, Vimes's butler, is jokingly referred to as "batman," though the parallels are not too far off. The emergence of the goblins, in this review, are more of a curious note to the storyline rather than the thought-provoking discussion of racial inequality mentioned by other reviewers. Roseman, however, notes that Vimes is quite "put-out" that the goblins are being treated so terribly. When Vimes is put-out, Roseman smirks, "things get done."

Roseman himself seems to be rushing to the end of his review, barely skimming over the last two thirds of the book. The book is "funny and interesting," he says, but nothing he hasn't seen before. He feels as though the plot seems to get a bit confusing and complicated near the second part. However, Roseman reminds the reader that *Snuff* is indeed a good book. While he doesn't necessarily agree with the title, he finds the writing as superb as ever. His last line has a glimmer of hope for the beleaguered author: "I am looking forward to the next one."

Pippa Jay was hesitant to read *Snuff*, afraid that this book would be the last of the Vimes series. While she notes the author's condition, she admits that her real fear is that the character—Sam Vimes—is himself aging. Jay's fears about the character place him solidly in the real world, with the bad guy being a literal thing that could tear away her beloved character. This review takes the Discworld to a concrete level, making it feel almost like a history rather than fiction. Unlike Roseman, Jay finds the first half of the novel off-key. She complains that the sections with the Watch are jarring and out of place. It wasn't until midway through the book, and the main character at his most uncomfortable, that she finally became comfortable. When Vimes is out of his element, she thinks, it appears that readers are most in theirs. Jay seems to find Miss Beadle of acute interest. Jay is the first reviewer to bring her presence to the forefront.

However, Jay thinks the villain does not come across as "evil enough." When compared to previous villains that Vimes has dealt with, Jay believes that the *Snuff* apparently does not deliver on that front. Despite the letdown, Jay discovers several "cool twists" involving the antagonist. No spoilers from her, though—readers will have to find out plot details for themselves. This book, she declares, is perfect for those who have

convictions about justice and karma. Notwithstanding her reluctance to praise the book unreservedly, Jay recommends *Snuff* as a must have for Pratchett admirers. Though the story itself does not have a sad ending, Jay found herself choked up at the end, fearing that she is bidding farewell to a character who has become nearly concrete to her and is dearly loved.

Joshua Hill, on the other hand, so enthusiastically recommends *Snuff* that he wishes there were an entirely new rating system dedicated to Pratchett. Hill praises Pratchett up and down, claiming that his books are best when taken slowly and enjoyed. "While there is an almost infinite amount of re-readability to Pratchett's works," he points out, "the first time is always special, and you want to savour it."

Hill also approached *Snuff* with caution, but he did so because the main character would be taken out of his element and forced to go on holiday. To his delight, his fears were assuaged quickly. Pratchett continued to deliver the same level of perfection he always has, according to Hill. He asserts that Pratchett writes "in a way that you just know he's made sure every word and sentence is perfect," but without displaying the arrogance or stuffiness of authors who continually re-edit their work.

The morals addressed in *Snuff* are never dogmatic, nor does Hill feel as though Pratchett is insisting on the reader believing what Pratchett believes. Hill seems to think that Pratchett suggests ideas as obvious, and the reader must do the rest. Unlike other reviewers, Hill seems to have no qualms with a first time Discworld reader picking up *Snuff* first. In fact, he seems surprised that someone might not have delved into the world of Terry Pratchett in the first place. Moreover, Hill finds that he cannot rate Pratchett books against anything but other Pratchett works, and so he gives *Snuff* a full 10/10.

Joshua Hill finds *Unseen Academicals*, the 37th novel in the Discworld series, to be a brilliant fantasy book. However, he admits that it was not as good as some of the other books Pratchett has written—not necessarily a bad feature, considering that *Unseen Academicals* still scored a 9.7/10. Hill admits that it rivals another book, *Night Watch*, in that it is not as side-splittingly hilarious, but "intelligently brilliant."

This review discusses how in depth the characters of *Unseen Academicals* are. It is an excellent source for readers curious about character development and evolution. Hill breathlessly declares the cast to be effortlessly portrayed and intelligently advanced. Characters that have appeared in other novels finally earn some time in the spotlight, making this a novel ideal for previous Discworld lovers.

Despite his obvious love for the book, and the series as a whole, Hill finds some of the grammatical errors and infrequent unpolished scenes problematic. He considers them not problematic enough to affect the score he gives the book, or enough to dismiss the book entirely, but enough that the failings gave Hill pause. One might see his other reviews and think that, perhaps, Hill notes these unhappy small errors because Hill fears for his literary idol's all too soon passing. This is yet another review that features the saddening fact that Pratchett has been forced to dictate the book—perhaps it is this anguish over Pratchett's battle with Alzheimer's that hones Hill's focus.

Arachne Jericho, on the other hand, focuses more on the work itself. She is very much aware of the man writing the book, but she chooses to focus her review far more on the complexity within the novel. This review is for those who need an in-depth look at the plot and development of the ever-present lessons in Pratchett's works. The book provides, Jericho quips, "an easy read with a heavy afterthought."

Jericho finds that *Unseen Academicals* combines the light sense of humour portrayed in Pratchett's early works with his heavy moments portrayed in later works. The complexity of the book itself comes in three parts, which Jericho spends time discussing. She seems to enjoy delving into the "Downstairs" world of Unseen University's campus—a world that involves the people behind the scenes. It is this reversal of common thought that Jericho finds compelling. When there is racism in *Unseen Academicals*, it comes from the educated Upstairs, not from the uneducated Downstairs.

Perhaps one of the heaviest issues that Jericho mentions is the idea of the main character—or one of them, certainly—accepting the "fact" that his race is bad and evil. Jericho calls this the "whip in the head" mentality, and she quietly points out the parallels to racism and injustice in the real world. "If your race is implicitly, not to mention overtly, put down for all your life," she muses, "this thinking is sometimes the result."

This review is compelling because it spells out some reasons why readers find Pratchett's characters alive and three-dimensional. The characters, Jericho argues, have their own moral dilemmas they have to struggle with, such as the fact that some characters view Nutt as a thing rather than a person. Jericho points out that even his rescuer, Lady Margolotta, is the one who put the "whips" in Nutt's head in the first place. And, painfully, it is the way that these characters think about Nutt that drives the way the reader views Nutt until the reversal appears. A lesson learned, perhaps, in judging too harshly from what others have declared is the "right way" to think.

This review focuses on the heaviness of this Discworld book, but it notes that the novel does have a happy ending (involving football). Jericho's consistent drawing of

parallels to real-world racism and sexism showcases Pratchett as more than just a fantasy writer. She seems to find that Pratchett is a "social satirist at heart," tossing in a few fantasy creatures to establish his role as a "fantasy" author.

Harry Ritchie approaches his review of *Unseen Academicals* a bit more cheerfully. After all, he chortles, the only reason that the Wizards of Unseen University got involved with a silly game like "foot-the-ball" in the first place was because they had no choice. When given the option between looking noble in robes and playing football in order to keep their food budget, the wizards hitch up their robes and defend their right to gluttony. Underneath the humour of it all is a complex interweaving of the legend of Romeo and Juliet, present in the form of two sets of characters.

Ritchie finds the comedy reliable. The phrasing, he thinks, is terrific fodder for amusement, and he seems to admire the way that Pratchett creates effortlessly funny lines. Some of these phrases describe events such as a lingering kiss as "a tennis ball being sucked through the strings of a racket." The light hearted, easily quipped humour present in *Unseen Academicals* gives Ritchie a moment of pause. He notes how remarkable it is that Discworld is still going strong at nearly forty books in and with Pratchett's continued writing "against the loudly ticking clock of his Alzheimer's diagnosis last year – and doing so with undimmed, triumphant exuberance." This exuberance is echoed in Ritchie's review.

David Kirby, on the other hand, seems to find *Unseen Academicals* rather old hat. He skips right over the undertones of racism, oppression, and thematic complexity to focus on the silliness of the wizards. Certainly, he complains, professors can be

impractical. While he relishes the "stylistic razzle-dazzle," Kirby feels as though the entire work is unsurprising and a cliché.

Curiously, his fixation on puns and the antics of the wizards drives his review, with no utterance whatsoever about anything else in the book. While Kirby's review allows us to see the sort of stylistic genius typical of Pratchett, it fails to deal with the complexity of the novel itself. Notwithstanding his status as a professor of English, Kirby seems to have found it unnecessary to touch upon the more serious notes of *Unseen Academicals*. In fact, it is a bit difficult to see what his opinion on the book actually is—or if he actually managed to read it all the way through.

Terry Pratchett himself commented on *Unseen Academicals*. While an author cannot strictly review his own work, he did provide some insight into what went into writing it. Strangely enough, he views several of the characters as having movement of their own. Writers have often reflected that they do not feel that they can control their characters: sometimes they just seem to write themselves.

Pratchett himself could not see the value in writing a book about football. He says he avoided football himself at school, and he jokes that he "was generally last to be picked before the fat kid." It was only after doing tremendous amounts of research that he connected the history of football (American soccer) with undertones from Shakespeare, and found that four characters were born before he quite had the chance to realise what was happening.

Furthermore, Pratchett reports, it was only when he gave his characters room to grow outside of their societal boxes that they began to come into their own. Indeed, some of the characters seem to know more about themselves than the author does. His

introduction of the orc, Nutt, came from Pratchett's worrying about the orcs from Tolkien's writings. He was worried that they were unredeemable, with "no chance of getting a job somewhere involving fluffy animals or flowers." Satire aside, Pratchett is concerned that "we are all prisoners in the aspic of our time." However, he is optimistic that people have progressed beyond thinking that one race or culture is as unredeemable as the orcs from Tolkien.

One could view Pratchett as hopelessly optimistic in his views of humanity. However, one could also see Pratchett's words as a quiet but insistent call to action. His assertion that humans have "seen the world from space and it isn't flat" implies everyone's ability to learn to resist racism and oppression. His optimism might make readers look at themselves with a touch of shame. How often have people followed the crowd and jumped on the bandwagon of intolerance? It is almost as though Pratchett's belief that we can do better is cause enough for self-evaluation.

Pratchett views *Unseen Academicals* as one of the more approachable books in his Discworld series. He declares that it "contains so little of what is popularly thought of as fantasy that in some places it comes close to that strange creature known as magical realism." This allows new discoverers of the world of Terry Pratchett to dip their toes in comfortably before diving into the rest of the Discworld. Pratchett offers not strictly a review, perhaps, but a refreshing insight into what drove him to write about football in the first place, and the way he views the world.

NON-DISCWORLD BOOKS

Joshua Hill declares that Pratchett has "pulled out all the stops" in writing *Nation*. Deviating from his normal Discworld novels, *Nation* takes place in a world like ours, even mentioning Newton and Einstein. Hill does admit that he is a fervent fan of Pratchett, likening his affection for the author to saying the "ocean is marginally damp." Cliché similes aside, Hill enthusiastically describes the effect *Nation* had on him and why, he insists, others ought to read it.

Pratchett, Hill claims, never once leaves his well-known humour and wit, but in this book he brings it into focus in such a way that the reader can see it outside the walls of Discworld. Hill emphatically mentions the love of writing Pratchett displays in every sentence, bringing his characters to life. In fact, Hill finds Pratchett's work so palatable that he values every moment, dreading an unwelcome spoiling of the plot that the unwary readers might want to read for themselves.

Far from offering a mere children's novel, Pratchett in *Nation* (according to Hill) seems to touch upon the very beginning of civilisation itself. Hill amends his declaration by admitting that, well, it might be *one* civilisation out there, if not ours, at least. Either way, though, Hill finds this story incredibly intricate and heart-warming to read. While it is written from multiple perspectives, Hill never finds switching between them difficult or jarring, and finds that they are incredibly full of life.

Hill finds *Nation* heart-warming, tragic, and moreover incredibly humorous. Tongue-in-cheek, he declares that humanity is not totally doomed—"just probably doomed." Pratchett crafts a novel that is difficult to put down, and Hill emphasises this assertion in his review. His father, he claims, was wrapped in silence over the weekend,

broken only by the laughter caused by Pratchett's book. Even more, he claims, *Nation* will make readers "feel good for a week," but hopefully more—though it's up to readers to decide.

Frank Boyce seems to have an idea of Pratchett's idea of humour in *Nation*. Celebrating the 25th year since the invention of the Discworld, Boyce argues that Pratchett has published a novel that has nothing to do with his magnificent invention. While the South Sea has more than its fair share of novels dedicated to its mystery and relative isolation (thus allowing authors to get away with outrageous stories), Boyce considers Pratchett a bit above the rest of authors who have written about that area.

While Boyce notes that *Nation* may technically be a story for children, he found himself with "goosepimples of delight." He states that a young child will giggle at references adults will note with a chill of realisation. In fact, it is this emphasis on a deeper message behind the words that seems to drive Boyce's review. Far from an innocent book, devoid of content, *Nation* (Boyce believes) stamps an indelible stain on its readers and forces them to think. Boyce argues that a "conference of philosophy professors" would still learn something from it—impressive words, indeed.

Boyce values *Nation* partly because he thinks it offers profundity even when describing simple things. The intricacies of tradition, knowledge, fact, faith, and above all taking responsibility and growing up present themselves in a fashion that leaves, if not the reader, at least Boyce taken aback. While Boyce concedes that the book is undeniably funny, he defends his claim that the best comedy is very serious. He calls *Nation* more "interesting, more true and more forgiving than anything you'll see on the news or in a political memoir."

For her part, Julia Eccleshare finds that *Nation* shows how people come to build a present despite (or perhaps because of) the baggage of their past. She finds Pratchett's wittiness, ability to create likeable characters, and provide a well-rounded world for them to live in fascinating. Despite the shortness of her review, her admiration for the work is evident, as is the breadth of detail Pratchett is able to create in his works. Eccleshare finds that the protagonist of *Nation* must build a new land based on what he knows, despite his insecurities and fears. Learning from the past, and his elders, allows him to do so, with some bumps along the way as Daphne looks on. Eccelshare is quite taken with this work, and she seems to admire the coherency with which a philosophy is ascribed to the various characters.

Fergus McCartan speaks glowingly of Terry Pratchett's *Dodger*. He finds that this work is loveable, charming, and stands well on its own. His only complaint is that the characters could have had a little back story, though he somewhat hopefully admits that there is room for that in a sequel. Should Pratchett succumb to his illness, McCartan goes so far as to say, *Dodger* could continue on in its own fashion, without the need for Discworld.

Wistful inventiveness aside, McCartan finds *Dodger* brilliantly written. The voice, he claims, is so persuasive that the reader can "feel the cobblestones under your feet." In fact, he finds the quality of the writing so pristine that it takes him back to when he first discovered Pratchett. While Dodger is not a Discworld novel, McCartan seems to feel as though several of the characters in *Dodger* have a decidedly Discworld-esque feeling to them.

McCartan writes a simple, quick review that captures the cynicism and satire prevalent in *Dodger*. While perhaps not the most polished review, his enthusiastic regard for Pratchett is evident, and it speaks to how well Pratchett is able to reach decidedly different individuals. If anything, McCartan would very much like another book featuring Dodger.

Jasper de Joode faces *Dodger* from quite a different standpoint: he has tried to get into the Discworld series, but never really enjoyed them. However, he agreed to give *Dodger* a fair shot, and found himself so caught up in the book that he felt a sense of urgency to complete reading it. De Joode seems to find the setting in historic London settled more firmly with the emergence of historical figures—Charles Dickens, Robert Peel, and others.

Dodger himself is, for de Joode, the character who seems to really bring the story to life. His evolution and transformation from a scoundrel to a young man who must take care of those he loves wins de Joode's heart. Even the stalwart de Joode seems to crack a smile at Dodger's disdain for plain-clothed policemen: a feeling many readers can share and identify with when that harmless sedan turns out to have flashing lights in the windows.

The complexity of *Dodger* seems to have caught de Joode by surprise. He says that Dodger's transitions, while painful at times, gave the character a "real" enough feel that de Joode found himself caught up in Dodger's actions. Instead of feeling let down by a "happy" ending, de Joode actually praises the ending, and also the "they lived happily ever after feeling" it cultivated. Furthermore, de Joode extols *Dodger* as an "amazing"

book featuring one of the "most loveable characters that I have read about." High praise from a non-Discworld convert, indeed.

Josh Roseman wholeheartedly agrees with de Joode, though he himself is an avid Pratchett fan. However, he finds that *Dodger* is perhaps one of the best works Pratchett has written since his "embuggerance"—an opinion that is all the more weighted by his delight with Pratchett books in general. The humour, Roseman declares, is all there, as is the satirical wit that most Pratchett readers have come to know and love.

Roseman is impressed by Pratchett weaving in real-world events and historical figures. The humour, he thinks, is never capricious, and is often showcased by Dodger's introduction to things that the average reader might take for granted. Indoor plumbing, and the wonders thereof, gives Dodger chance for pause, and his encounter is real enough to have Roseman take note.

While not a Discworld book, *Dodger* is, according to Roseman similar enough to be charming. He likens reading the novel to meeting a friend of a friend and liking that person right away because of the mutual association. While perhaps offering a tribute to Pratchett himself, Roseman finds the need to add footnotes to his review, laughingly noting that he learned the word "ablutionologist" from *Dodger*. He notes the violence, adult language, and (sometimes literal) potty humour, but recommends this book for young adult readers as well as adults themselves.

Marcus Sedgwick finds *Dodger* a relaxing read—though not necessarily because of the content. Pratchett, he claims, is such an excellent writer that readers need not fret about the quality of the book, knowing that they are in good hands from the start. Sedgwick speaks with utmost confidence of Pratchett's ability to meld historical (and

literarily important!) figures such as Charles Dickens with his signature satire. In fact, he says, a reader just "know[s] it's going to work." Pratchett's daring sense of humour appears to excite Sedgwick to no end, as he chuckles about the appearance of Sweeney Todd—a character who hadn't been invented yet. Furthermore, he finds himself laughing hysterically at the presence of the dog in the novel, Onan, and invites his readers to Google what that name means. A quick Google search does, in fact, illuminate Sedgwick's chortling, though this author will keep his secret.

Sedgwick continues to find the mark of a great writer on every page. He argues that Pratchett conveys, merely through word-play, his literary prowess. While the plot seems simple enough, the figure of Dodger is present on every page and his next move is awaited (Sedgwick claims) with bated breath. His successes bring cheer to the reader. Sedgwick states that he cheered not only for Dodger, but for the success of *Dodger,* revelling in the hilariousness and boundless wit present in typical Pratchett prose.

A Blink of the Screen is perhaps one of Pratchett's harder novels to review, since it is a collection of his works. However, Joshua Hill manages to review it quite effectively. Hill does start his review by asserting how much he dislikes treating anthologies as a whole. That being said, he admits that the anthology being written by one author—and that particular author being Terry Pratchett—makes it okay. Throughout the review Hill's respectful and often awestruck tone as he views the works of an author he greatly admires shines, inviting readers to take a look for themselves.

Hill begins to see the gleam of Pratchett's brilliance from Pratchett's earliest story, "The Hades Business." Certainly Pratchett was merely thirteen at the time, but Hill claims that the tonality of the work hints at the Pratchett whom readers will later come to

know and love in his later works. Hill declares that there are some "absolute gems" in this collection, with germinating seeds that flowered in later ideas. These gems, according to Hill, include *The Long Earth*, *Hogfather*, and others. "#ifdefDEBUG + 'world/enough' + 'time'" seems to strike Hill with particular impact, as he argues that it is a "scarily prescient look at what our lives might look in a few years, written two decades ago."

Amongst this collection were stories that left Hill speechless. "Final Reward," he asserts, left him "literally stunned and silent" as he realised that he will likely never be as good an author as Pratchett. Hill seems to admire the stories that trace back to Discworld, underpinning and fleshing out a world that already seems to have taken on a life of its own. While it stands alone as a book of short stories, Hill claims that *A Blink of the Screen* is a must-have book for any Pratchett fan and for any fan of short stories. It is worth owning, he thinks, not just to make a reading of Pratchett complete but simply for the excellent writing.

Harry Ritchie declares that early-onset Alzheimer's is going to have to work much harder than usual to keep Terry Pratchett down. Ritchie, too, is taken by *A Blink of the Screen*. He finds "The Hades Business" to be an interesting look at where Pratchett would eventually go with his life, secure in the knowledge that hindsight is 20/20. Ritchie remarks that Pratchett's English teacher was "lucky," and he notes with a smile that the short story is marked with full points. It is even more interesting to note that the publication of this short story seemed to have started Pratchett's ascent into writing, as a fantasy magazine paid him £14. This modest beginner's reward for writing funded Pratchett's first typewriter, a fact that Ritchie does not want the reader to miss.

Ritchie seems enthralled with Pratchett's early stories and the machinations that they would initiate. Early seeds of Discworld reveal themselves, as do stories that emerge over a quarter of a century later. Pratchett's feisty sense of humour presents itself in "Hollywood Chickens," which Ritchie declares compresses "the history of civilisation and possibly the meaning of life into a couple of thousand words." Yet *A Blink of the Screen* features, according to Ritchie, more "shorter writings" than short stories. Pratchett himself admits that this is because of the effort it takes to write his other novels, leaving *A Blink of the Screen* filled with bits and pieces of writings that either make up later novels or add to the series. Ritchie doesn't seem terribly bothered by this, however: he seems quite content to enjoy Pratchett in his much longer works. In fact, Ritchie notes that AS Byatt has written a glowing forward for this work. This leaves Ritchie to wonder if perhaps, after all this time, literature is "finally learning to get over the cartoony covers and the infradig fantasy and appreciate that Pratchett is one of the great comic writers and storytellers of our time." Emphatic words, to be sure, but Ritchie stands solidly behind them.

The Long Earth is a much more recent writing from Terry Pratchett, written in collaboration with Stephen Baxter. Mark Bright finds that *The Long Earth* is reminiscent of works written by Greg Bear and SM Sterling, and Bright encourages the reader to venture into their respective books. He found himself trying to ascertain when Pratchett's voice was present, and when Baxter took over. Bright claims that their writing styles differ and in fact are quite distinctive.

Mark Bright seems a trifle annoyed that the book jacket focuses on the potato used to power the device that allows travel between worlds, given that it appears only

briefly in the novel. His review is a bit short, but it seems to be leaning towards wariness. The book is a "good opener," Bright claims, but he seems to be waiting to see what the authors come up with next. However, he does note that readers who enjoy this work will enjoy works like it. Overall, Bright's review is a bit confusing: does Bright recommend *The Long Earth* or not? The score of 8/10 would seem to indicate that he does, but his review seems hesitant.

Joshua Hill, on the other hand, can't get words on the page fast enough to describe how he feels about *The Long Earth.* "Pure genius," he declares, exulting in the collaboration of the two famous writers. Amusingly enough, Hill had not heard of Baxter before this work, but he seems to have figured that anyone good enough to work with Pratchett was good enough for him, much like Neil Gaiman in *Good Omens*.

Hill also seems to enjoy finding the two different voices in the text. He asserts that there are many scenes and jokes that are quite clearly Pratchett, blending into some sci-fi scenes that he finds quite beautiful. Far from being a simple sci-fi mashup, *The Long Earth* is, according to Hill, really thought-provoking and mesmerising. He argues that it will make the reader question the "nature of our existence."

Hill laments the inclusion of the authors' individual views on how humanity has treated the planet. While the views themselves are not bad, he feels as though they are "preachy" and could have been toned down a bit. Additionally, the two voices of the authors seemed, to Hill, to clash at times, and the swap threatened to pull him out of the story. However, he found these instances rare, and he refused to allow them to dim his enthusiasm for the novel. Hill found Pratchett's usual constant satire restrained by the

new atmosphere, and by a significant lack of the silliness one might normally find in a Pratchett book. However, he found himself hooked almost immediately.

Michelle Herbert dives into *The Long Earth* enthusiastically, admitting that she has been a long-time fan of Pratchett and has been waiting for this book for quite some time. She finds that this collaboration has made it so that she wants to read more of the collaborative books by Pratchett and other authors. While the review itself is short, Herbert seems fascinated by the underlying questions the book presents. Do people always want a get rich quick scheme? Why are humans so fascinated by conquering? If people could just walk away, would they? What of the people left behind—or those who could not leave?

The various kinds of interplay between the protagonist—who wants nothing more than to be left alone but is denied this request—and the people (and machines) he is forced to work with seem to intrigue Herbert. Herbert insists that it is this mismatched pairing that creates humorous situations that have a faint echo of Pratchett's usual satire. Though the book has a concrete ending, she hopes to read more about these characters and see them develop further.

Josh Roseman finds that Pratchett's voice in *The Long Earth* is not as present as he would have hoped. Seeing the name "Pratchett" on the cover might seem to lend the book more weight, but Roseman notes that the signature satire and cleverness is conspicuously absent. That being said, he still enjoyed the book, because the premise was interesting. This interest continued to hold as the book progressed, leaving him anxious to find out what was going to happen next.

The protagonist, Joshua, and his forced pairing with Lobsang (a supercomputer who convinced a court of his sentience and can amble about as a person) provide most of the humorous fodder for Roseman. It was, for him, the interplay between the two of them that created the most compelling aspect of the story. However, Roseman was not happy with the way the story ended. He feels as though it just stopped, rather than resolving anything. Additionally, he wants a more satisfying explanation as to why the worlds to the east of the Datum are unexplored.

This review is interesting for Discworld fans to note. Yes, Terry Pratchett wrote *The Long Earth*. However, Roseman warns readers that Pratchett fans are really looking for more of Discworld, which *The Long Earth* decidedly is not. Perhaps (he thinks) this is the significant failing of this book in particular—not so much that it is poorly written (Roseman says it's certainly not), but that the weight of Pratchett's name forces the book to contend with a legacy that it cannot sustain. Wait to read it, Roseman recommends, until it's a bit cheaper.

Adam Roberts asserts that the collaboration of Baxter and Pratchett is one made "in fan heaven," but he seems to feel as though the book fell short. Though his review seems to treat *The Long Earth* well, Roberts points out quickly that Baxter's voice is much louder than Pratchett's. The typical Pratchett humour is absent, he notes, and the lack of satire makes for a "surprisingly gentle piece of work." However, Roberts found the emptiness of the worlds outside of Datum refreshing: instead of *The Long Earth* being full of noise, violence, and chaotic upheaval, it's empty, quiet, and ready for pioneers to do what they will.

Roberts alerts the reader that *The Long Earth* is a quick read. He also warns that the dialogue seems a bit "Hollywood 101," with even one of the characters noticing this fact. Despite all these warnings and drawbacks, Roberts seems to find the otherwise lukewarm novel an absorbing and good read. He hints at more novels to come and seems to look forward to them.

The Long War seems to have universally devastated and disappointed reviewers looking forward to the sequel to *The Long Earth*. Mark Bright claims that Baxter and Pratchett have bitten off more than they can chew, and he thinks it shows. His annoyance with the potato fuelling the "stepper" used in *The Long Earth* seems somewhat ameliorated by its relative disappearance in the second novel, but this fact alone does not (for him) redeem *The Long War*'s faltering steps.

Mark Bright finds that the creation of infinite worlds creates far too broad a canvas for even two brilliant authors to fill. He asserts that "this sequel flounders into nothingness," with even the characters failing to live up to expectations. Bright thinks that the novel's supposed protagonist—Joshua, from the first book—doesn't seem to want to be in the book at all, and another character the reader is supposed to like remains, for Bright, difficult to stomach. Bright finds that there are too many plots going on at once. With all characters and plots fighting for air time, he thinks that no one gets any and the book falls short. Bright finds the characters who *are* given pages to be a drag, and laments the lack of time devoted to truly interesting and likeable ones. He sums up his assessment of this novel by saying "I was disappointed." Far from a triumphant extension of the first novel, *The Long War*, for Bright, faltered right out of the gate.

Joshua Hill takes his review one step further. While he cannot say he wields tremendous influence on the authors of *The Long War*, Hill obviously considers the way he treats and reviews books to be of utmost importance. For this reason, he thinks reviewing must be tackled carefully. Hill is clearly disappointed in this book, and he even seems to feel betrayed. He regretfully points out that *The Long War* certainly does not live up to either author's abilities.

Hill feels as though Pratchett had little input in this work, noting that his "ability to pour his own creative genius into the formation of this book was restricted somehow." Hill does admit that both authors set up a world that was potentially too vast for either of them to fill, creating an incoherent mess of stories that never quite fit together.

While Hill certainly finds the idea of the Long Earth intriguing, and the concepts interesting, he also feels that the pieces of the book, once assembled, did not capture his imagination as they should. Hill despairs that the pieces are "rushed at best, mediocre at worst." The storytelling becomes fearfully anticlimactic, with bits and pieces almost clicking together but not quite. Hill was certainly unfulfilled, and he warns that readers who loved the first novel may well find their beloved characters disjointed, stagnant, and undeveloped. However, he does recommend that readers who want to see the story progress buy the book (preferably on sale, he admits), but keep in mind that "this isn't the Pratchett or Baxter you wanted."

The Long Mars is the third installation of the Long Earth trilogy. Mark Bright argues that this third book is riding on the tail of a rather mediocre second book and has a lot to make up for. Bright feels that it is a significant improvement over *The Long War,* which he gave a miserly 5.5 stars. *The Long Mars* has rocketed up to an 8.5/10, which is

an impressive feat considering its handicap. He notes, however, that the style becomes increasingly like Baxter's, not Pratchett's, which may be because of Pratchett's weakened condition.

Bright enjoys the beauty of the worlds described in this book, which are full of nature and oceans. While he doesn't necessarily state that he likes Captain Maggie best, he seems to enjoy her trip the most. He still finds Sally incredibly unlikeable, and he seems to enjoy the fact that her arrogance backfires on her at one point. As the book winds down, Bright points out that this book contains more hard science fiction than it does fantasy. Curiously, while he agrees that this book is much better written than its predecessor, "Baxter took the lead on this one and the rhythm of the story is much better handled, despite the genius of Pratchett." Loyalties to Pratchett aside, Bright seems relieved that the trilogy has been saved from its likely doom, but he demands more inventiveness in this incredibly spacious world the two authors have created.

CONCLUSION

Sir Terry Pratchett wrote books that rocketed through the various realms of literature. While Pratchett was only regarded as a fantasy author--and not by scholars, much to the chagrin of many--his works were filled with philosophy, science, spiritual musings, and a plethora of other topics. This thesis was a start to an annotated bibliography, and I hope that my work will be added to in the years to come. The lack of academic focus on such a prolific author is saddening, and a shocking oversight.

When this thesis began, Sir Terry Pratchett was sitting at home, continuing his writing through an assistant and a computer program. On 12 March 2015, Pratchett passed away in his home with his cat on the bed and surrounded by loved ones. His Twitter account revealed his last words he had written long before:

"AT LAST, SIR TERRY, WE MUST WALK TOGETHER."

"Terry took Death's arm and followed him through the doors and on to the black desert under the endless night."

"The End."

The various websites that have provided obituaries about Pratchett offer sympathy and touching stories of Pratchett's life are filled with people expressing sadness, anger, and a smattering of newcomers to the world of Pratchett. His works touched many hearts and left readers laughing, even when their lives may not have been the best. Commenters from tor.com talk about their favourite quotes and say they hope Pratchett is having with Death right now. npr.com had commenters discussing their favourite works and talking about introducing new readers to various points in the Discworld series. There was even a

commenter who hoped, in vain, that Pratchett had merely forgotten to put out his weather-stained notice stating "I ATENT DEAD," an homage to Granny Weatherwax.

While it is a sad thing to note that someone's death might finally attract the attention of those who otherwise would pass by without noticing, perhaps Pratchett's death may mean that his works can receive some scrutiny from academia. An author lives on through his works, after all, and Pratchett had written more than enough to keep a professor busy for ages to come. His works are popular enough to deserve some academic discussion, and I am confident that discussion will open a doorway to the rest of his works. He replied personally to the idea of his works being ignored by the scholarly world: "Stories of imagination...tend to upset those without one" (bbc.com).

Pratchett attacked life with the same vigour as his writing. He fought tirelessly for funding research into Alzheimer's and campaigned for assisted suicide to be decriminalised. Shrugging off his fatal diagnosis as an "embuggerance," Pratchett asked his fans to remain cheerful.

> I intend, before the endgame looms, to die sitting in a chair in my own garden with a glass of brandy in my hand and Thomas Tallis on the iPod, the latter because Thomas's music could lift even an atheist a little bit closer to Heaven. Oh, and since this is England, I had better add, "If wet, in the library." (bbc.com)

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

I was deeply saddened by Sir Terry Pratchett's death, as I had come to view him as a friend. Writing this thesis allowed me to read all of his works, and it is rather difficult to read everything an author has written--and listen to numerous lectures and discussions--without coming to feel as though you know the person quite well. Pratchett was no exception. His works made me laugh when I was in dark times, and the thoughtfulness of his many characters made me question my own world view time and time again. It is a significant author who can leave a reader breathless. I must have funded the Amazon company Christmas party, back when I started reading the Discworld series: I found them on the kindle, and couldn't stop reading. As each book came to an end I felt terribly upset, and it was with some relief (though not to my bank account) that I found his complete works offered yet another book to follow the one that had just finished.

I am personally connected to Pratchett in his fight against Alzheimer's. My grandmother passed away from her battle with the disease, and I can understand why Pratchett would want to fight against it so hard. As a writer and avid reader, I cannot even imagine the pain it would cause to have my ability to read and write be taken from me. Pratchett suffered all this, and more, but even in his suffering he continued to write and fight. Pratchett fought for Alzheimer's funding, and he fought for a person's right to die with dignity: to choose the time to die instead of having their very identity taken from them at the hands of a vicious, incurable disease.

I want to thank Sir Terry Pratchett for giving me some of the most incredible afternoons with a book I have ever had. I wish I could have thanked him in person--his

books helped me through many difficult times and made me laugh when I didn't think it was possible. I want to thank my family for encouraging me while writing this thesis, and for being there for me when I felt like I had no one else in the world. Books have always united my family, and they continue to do so. I also want to thank the family cat, Flint, for being the fluffy therapist I needed when the world got just a little bit too hard. I also want to thank him for being so incredibly patient with me when I got the news of Pratchett's death: it takes a longsuffering cat to allow tears to soak his fur and endure my squeezing.

I also want to thank my professors for being so compassionate and understanding, and for believing in me when I didn't believe in myself. I am glad that I was able to introduce a new author to them, and I hope that they find the same solace in Pratchett's humour that I did. I hope that this work inspires others to read Pratchett's works, and for academia to take notice of a man whose unsurpassed brilliance granted the world a brief sixty-six years of incredible writing. He will be terribly missed, but his works live on.

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