Bringing Death to Life: The Personifications of Death in Zusak’s The Book Thief, Moore’s A Dirty Job and Pendle’s Death: A Life

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Abstract
This essay examines the personifications of Death in Markus Zusak’s The Book Thief (2005), Christopher Moore’s A Dirty Job (2006) and George Pendle’s Death: A Life (2008). The personifications are analysed in terms of gender, anthropomorphism, (im)mortality, agency in conceptual death and attitude towards their occupation as Death. The personifications are also compared to previous portrayals in relation to fear, denial and acceptance of death. The essay is based on a close reading of the three literary works, and it is argued that the authors give Death human characteristics, force Death to reflect on mortality, and disconnect personified Death from the responsibility of conceptual death in order to portray Death as a humane, likeable and... (More)
Zusak personifies death, giving him humanlike emotions and humanlike physical features. These personifications can be seen through Death’s first person and metafictional narrative. Zusak’s portrayal of death is different from many other personifications, such as the Grim Reaper. Death has a conscience, can be empathetic and is friendly compared to other personifications. His relation to Liesel, the main character, is very special.

Introduction
The Book Thief written by Markus Zusak is a unique novel, taking place during the World War II in Germany. It is unique because, unlike other stories around the Holocaust, The Book Thief is narrated by Death. The way Markus Zusak uses Death to tell the story in a personal way, gives a different perspective for the reader. As opposed to Death in “The Book Thief” who offers profoundness through poetic lines, Death in “A Dirty Job” was also speaking about profound things like how Beta-Males get through life but in a light and very entertaining manner. The main and decisive difference was that Death in “A Dirty Job” can make us laugh over the things that Death in “The Book Thief” contemplates so much.

Work Cited

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