Teaching Literature in the Tenth Grade. Terry Pratchett’s Discworld Novels as an Introduction to Classic English Literature

This thesis suggests that the Discworld novels by Terry Pratchett may be used to introduce tenth graders in Icelandic compulsory schools to classic English literature, in addition to providing a definition of fantasy and how the Discworld novels fit into that definition. I suggest that this can be accomplished by introducing the students to the fantasy genre, to which the Discworld novels belong. The Discworld novels are parodic fantasy novels and through them the students will be exposed to the classic themes, plots and characters of more traditional English literature. The thesis focuses on the use of three Discworld novels: Eric, Wyrd Sisters and Lords and Ladies. These three novels are, respectively, parodies of Christopher Marlowe’s The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus and Shakespeare’s The Tragedy of Macbeth and A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and therefore provide an excellent springboard to these three classic plays.

Motivational reading activities, such as classroom dialogue; peer and self-assessments, and task based learning along with video and audio stimulations are used to create instruction guides for teaching each of the three Discworld novels. These activities are applied to the pre-, during and post reading assignments. Students are encouraged to become more responsible for their studies as they become more involved in assessing their schoolwork and abilities. To help those students with reading disabilities and further motivate less skilled readers, the instruction guides include video adaptations of the plays that the novels are parodying as well as other related material. Additionally there are recommendations for secondary reading of works with plots, themes or subject matter that are similar to the three Discworld novels discussed in the thesis.

Samþykkt: 1.2.2009
URI: http://hdl.handle.net/1946/3292
imaginary world, which is perched on the back of a turtle. Edited by philosophy professors and Pratchett fans James South and Jacob Held, the collection of essays examines questions including “Plato, the Witch, and the Cave: Granny Weatherwax and the Moral Problem of Paternalism”, “Equality and Difference: Just because the Disc Is Flat, Doesn't Make It a Level Playing Field for All”, “Hogfather and the Existentialism of Søren Kierkegaard”, and “the Importance... “If Pratchett is sometimes accused of literature, I hope this book makes the case that he can be accused of philosophy as well,” said the academic. Pratchett on philosophy.

The aim of this thesis is to discover reasons for funniness of humour found in Terry Pratchett’s Discworld novels. My research questions are: Section 2.2 gives an introduction to the history of humour research and its different aspects, and lists some of the most important currents and publications in the field of study. 2.1 Defining humour and problematic issues Humour and laughter have intrigued philosophers and researchers of different fields of study since antiquity, but the attempts to analyse the essence of humour have encountered numerous problems, which have resulted in a relatively chaotic collection of often incompatible theories.