**Metaphorical Representation of «death» and «Death» in Terry Pratchett's Discworld series**

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The subject that has always fascinated people is the Great Beyond. Over the centuries, writers have been offering their answers to the question of what the afterlife is like. Yet one author stands out among them. His obituary in *The Telegraph* said that he “helped rewrite our attitudes to Death.” This was written of Sir Terry Pratchett, an outstanding representative of the genre of satirical fantasy, the creator of the Discworld series, set in an imaginary flat world supported by four elephants standing on the back of a giant turtle. Pratchett is also an author who masterfully used conceptual metaphors to conjure up both “death” as a universal theme and “Death” as a uniquely humane character.

In Pratchett’s Discworld series, there is a group of novels («Reaper Man», «Mort», «Hogfather», «Soul Music», «Thief of Time») united by the central character simply known as ‘Death’ (“anthropomorphic personification”, as Death introduces himself). Pratchett presents him not as a menacing figure, but rather as a curiously compassionate being. Death externally embodies the stereotypical Grim Reaper, he is a tall, skeletal, scythe-carrying figure wearing a simple black robe. The personification is also made manifest in the title “Reaper Man”. However, Death has yet to learn what it is like to be human (hence the metaphor DEATH IS AN APPRENTICE).

Death is traditionally portrayed as a reaper harvesting human souls. Yet the author subverts the image of Death as a Grim Reaper, because his Death is not grim at all. He develops a pronounced personality and even becomes mortal for a while. Death regards his duty as a job, may go on holiday or even retire (DEATH IS A JOB).

His task is to usher souls to the next world. Death acts as a guide to the Other Side, embodying the conventional conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A PSYCHOPOMP. That is why death signifies a new beginning, while at the same time being an end. Also, DEATH IS A DOOR to the Other Side. Incidentally, when Death comes to live among people, he chooses the name Bill Door.

Another conventional metaphor that features in the novel “Reaper Man” is DEATH IS SLEEP. Yet it is turned upside down, because DEATH IS AN AWAKENING («Being dead wasn't like falling asleep after all. It was like waking up.») [Pratchett 2008: 167]

Another alternative metaphor that reconceptualizes death and casts it in a positive light is DEATH AS AN ADVENTURE (as opposed to DEATH IS AN ENEMY). Death is also portrayed as a relief, since life may be harsh and unbearable. For some characters death seems like a reward, a well-deserved rest after a long life. Moreover, death is seen as expected and planned, with it being just another point on the to-do list. Death is spoken of matter-of-factly, with it being a decision that can be made, not a disaster or a sudden blow.

Interestingly, Death calls himself the ‘ultimate reality’, thus addressing the eternal question of whether there is something beyond death. The metaphor of DEATH AS A LEVELLER underscores the idea that death equalizes individuals regardless of their social status or achievements in life.

To sum up, the author uses metaphors such as DEATH being a REAPER, a JOB, a NEW BEGINNING, an AWAKENING, a DOOR, an END, a PSYCHOPOMP, an ADVENTURE, a REWARD, a PLAN, an ULTIMATE REALITY, a SLEEP, and a LEVELLER. As Pratchett himself once wrote: «…no one is actually dead until the ripples they cause in the world die away…» [Pratchett 2008: 218] With his masterful storytelling, Pratchett ensures that the ripples caused by his metaphoric representation of ‘death’ and the character ‘Death’ will continue to touch and inspire readers long after the last page is turned.

**References**

Pratchett T. Reaper Man. Harper, 2008.

Pratchett T. Hogfather. Harper, 2007.