**Abstract of the thesis**

This thesis aims at popularizing the works of the late British fantasy writer, Terry Pratchett, as well as at presenting how his works are interconnected with contemporary culture – both high and popular.

The thesis is divided into an introductory section, three parts and seven chapters. The introductory section provides theoretical explanation of the theory of characters, as well as the biography of Terry Pratchett and the current state of research on Terry Pratchett's works. Each part discusses different aspects of Terry Pratchett's Discworld series – the first part is devoted to intertextual approach to characters in his books, the second to interconnections between genres present in Terry Pratchett's works and the characters introducing these genres, and the third part is an attempt of discussing the notions of gender identity in female characters, male characters, dwarf characters and the witches.

The first chapter covers Pratchettian characters with historical hypotexts, and is divided into analysis of characters with meta-artistic function, parodic function and a discussion of the way Pratchett plays with intertextual names of his characters – human, dwarfish and those from the Dungeon Dimensions.

The second chapter deals with intertextual characters in the Discworld series that have clearly distinguishable literary hypotext, and includes those stemming from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* and William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The third chapter discusses fantasy as a genre and the way Pratchett introduces and re-creates typical fantasy characters known from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of The Rings* or Robert E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian* into his own fantasy world. In this chapter I analyse barbarian heroes, mages, dragons, elves, orcs, goblins and trolls and present how Pratchett changes the traditional image of these creatures, for example by parodying the characters of mages and the barbarian heroes or individualising orcs, goblins and trolls, which in Tolkien

were generally presented as a mindless horde. Pratchett gives them the role of if not protagonists, then of important secondary characters. Also, in case of goblins Pratchett asks a very important question about the notion of humanity and racial segregation – who is worth to be called a human being? Pratchett's elves also differ from the post-Tolkien tradition of presenting them as fair and benevolent – they are similar to the folkloristic elves, evil and malicious.

The fourth chapter considers possible mixtures of genres, especially fantasy as the dominant one in the Discworld series, with gothic novel, crime fiction and political fiction, by means of an analysis of the characters introducing them.

The fifth chapter reviews female characters in the Discworld series. It starts with a theoretical introduction to the feminist criticism and gender studies. Then, several job- and society- oriented gender stereotypes about women are discussed. The analysis prove that female characters subvert the gender stereotypes.

The sixth chapter is devoted to male characters in Pratchett's Discworld series. Starting with theoretical introduction to Men's Studies, the chapter describes social and typical job stereotypes concerning men. The analysis prove that some of the male characters subvert the stereotypes, whereas some act according to them. In these two chapters (5 and 6) I analyse characters from the angle of what I call a "re-genderization" of socio-sexual roles. I define re-genderization of socio-sexual roles as referring to situations when male or female characters act not according to the established stereotypes but (1) adjust the rules to their own needs or (2) simply break them and act as if they were the opposite sex. Both males and females (though with one or two exceptions) in Pratchett's Discworld novels undergo re-genderization. There is also the dwarfish re-genderization, which works differently to the two previously mentioned.

The seventh chapter is devoted to witches in Terry Pratchett's Discworld series. Having presented a brief history of the witches, I follow with divagations on how Pratchett plays with the stereotype of an evil witch known from the popular culture. Also, the aspects of witch's power and the notion of a witch as a liminal figure are discussed.