"CHANGE THE STORY, CHANGE THE WORLD": GENDERED MAGIC AND EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGY IN TERRY PRATCHETT'S *DISCWORLD*

A Thesis
by
L. KAITLIN WILLIAMS

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Abstract

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EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGY IN TERRY PRATCHETT'S *DISCWORLD*

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This thesis explores educational ideology in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series with a continued focus on the ways gendered magic results in gendered knowledge and education. Pratchett's witches and wizards demonstrate and even consciously uphold distinct gender separation regarding magical practice, methodology, knowledge, and responsibility. By fracturing the magical community into two distinct factions, Pratchett's work positions the witches and wizards of *Discworld* as ideological oppositions. An in-depth analysis of the wizards and Unseen University traces their associations with the history of the British educational system, male privilege, academic elitism, and tradition, reading their order as indicative of the "norm" and a repressive dominant educational ideology. Contrastingly, the witches' status as Other and insistence on writing their own stories filters their perspectives of reality through the lens of the individual, resulting in an underlying prioritization on social equality and an ethics of selfless social responsibility. Examining Tiffany Aching's magical education and her interactions with the witches reveals an educational ideology contingent upon recognizing the constructedness of reality, challenging the repressive realities imposed

by a hegemonic society, and instead purveying a reality that liberates and empowers the individual. Ultimately, the witches' subversive educational ideology not only undermines the wizards' repressive educational ideology, but also through Tiffany and the Nac Mac Feegle takes on a threateningly rebellious quality capable of toppling the hegemonic and hierarchal structures of *Discworld*. In light of recent scholarship on the fantasy genre, this thesis concludes suggesting Pratchett's complex interplay between the "real" and "unreal" enables readers to recognize and question ideological superstructures, ultimately epitomizing Daniel Baker's notion of fantasy's "progressive potential."

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Terry Pratchett, a man I never had the opportunity to meet, yet who continues to have an immeasurable influence on my life, thoughts, and that little thing we call "reality." Producing scholarship on a writer I admire, who once described literary critics as "a herd of Critters…grazing on the contents of choicer books and leaving behind them piles of small slim volumes of literary criticism" proved daunting. Yet, despite my reliance on scholarly ingestion and academic defecation, I hope this work ultimately celebrates the genius of Pratchett and encourages readers to discover for themselves the magic of *Discworld*.

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Foreword

On the morning of Thursday, March 12, 2015, halfway through writing this thesis, I awoke to discover Terry Pratchett had passed away at the much-too-young age of 66. Millions mourned his passing, yet Pratchett left behind a presence that will not soon be forgotten. There is yet much to learn from Pratchett, and though the man may be gone, his extraordinary voice and unparalleled perspective live on through his works. Unsurprisingly, he said it best himself:

"In the Ramtops village where they dance the real Morris dance, for example, they believe that no-one is finally dead until the ripples they cause in the world die away—*until the clock he wound up winds down, until the wine she made has finished its ferment, until the crop they planted is harvested. The span of someone's life, they say, is only the core of their actual existence."*

—Reaper Man

Chapter One: A Tourist's Guide to *Discworld*:

An Introduction to the Disc, Gendered Magic, and Educational Ideology

"[Discworld] exists either because of some impossible blip on the curve of probability or because the gods enjoy a joke as much as anyone."
—*Sourcery*

"This is a story about magic and where it goes and perhaps more importantly where it comes from and why, although it doesn't pretend to answer all or any of these questions. It may, however, help to explain why Gandalf never got married and why Merlin was a man. Because this is also a story about sex, although probably not in the athletic, tumbling, count-the-legs-and-divide-by-two sense unless the characters get totally beyond the author's control. They might. However, it is primarily a story about a world. Here it comes now. Watch closely, the special effects are quite expensive."
—*Equal Rites*

"The Discworld is as unreal as it is possible to be while still being just real enough to exist."
—*Moving Pictures*

Swimming endlessly through space and time, a colossal turtle carries on its back four slightly less colossal elephants, upon which a flat disc—also quite large—miraculously balances…or so the story goes in Sir Terry Pratchett's fantastic Multiverse; however, the bizarre substructure of the flat planet known as Discworld pales in comparison to the absurdity it supports. Here Death embodies the typical anthropomorphic robe-wearing, scythe-carrying skeleton, yet he is also a failed banjo player with a particular fondness for cats and curry; the Disc's largest city, Ankh-Morpork, often resembles pre-industrial London, but is ruled by Lord Vetinari, a distinguished graduate of the Assassin's Guild with a curious aversion to mime artists; Discworld's inhabitants create calendars to measure the passing of time, but instead of names such as the Year of the Dragon, they have the Year of the

Intimidating Porpoise and Century of the Anchovy; elves are ruthless, egotistical creatures—although they do have style; Dragons have been known to explode out of boredom; gravity is kept in check by the Auditors of Reality; and Gods (plural, for there are billions) derive their power and existence from the belief of humans.

Just as the celestial architecture of the Disc mirrors the Hindu myth of Akupara—a tortoise with a world on its back—Pratchett draws heavily from an extensive variety of existing narratives, creating a world that is on one hand fantastic, otherworldly, and strange, yet on the other hand, utterly familiar. Presenting an impressive amalgamation of various narratives rooted in the minds of modern-day readers, the extensive intertextuality and cultural relevance of the *Discworld* series has generated interest in Pratchett's connection to various mythologies—Greek, Roman, Norse, Celtic, Christian, and Hindu mythology—both eastern and western folklore and fairytales, historical accounts, scientific knowledge, and popular culture references. Similarly, *Discworld* interacts with numerous archetypal characters and settings established or promoted by a wide range of authors; for example, Shakespeare's weird sisters, Dante's Hell, JRR Tolkien's elves, Bram Stoker's vampires, George MacDonald's Fairy Land, Johann Wolfgang von Geothe's Faust, and the list goes on (Pyykkonen and Washington 10-23). However, Pratchett's intertextuality often transcends a passing reference or allusion since, according to Gideon Haberkorn, "On Discworld, stories are real. When the human mind processes the world, gives it a pattern, that pattern is real. The law of cliché is the law of nature" (182). Within this fantasy world, worn-out narratives and archetypes take on new form through Pratchett's clever use of parody, wit, and humor, and beyond providing readers with a good laugh, *Discworld* exudes a subversive quality by constructing a space in which these all too familiar stories are questioned, challenged, and re-

written. Haberkorn suggests, "Discworld is not just about recognizing stories and conventions, using them, playing with them. It is about resisting them…Pratchett uses the Discworld to explore the role of the words in our heads, and how they control us. And how we can make up our own" (183-84). Here anything goes. Here there be dragons…though they are likely chained to a fence displaying a Beware of Dragon sign or wasting away in a shelter for abandoned pets.

      As a melting pot for the collective unconsciousness of contemporary readers, Pratchett's Multiverse eludes concise definitions or straightforward explanations, but gradually takes shape over the course of the prolific *Discworld* series, currently comprised of forty novels along with a number of short stories, maps, encyclopedias, specialized ancillary materials, tourist guides, picture books, quiz books, and one rather eccentric cookbook. Since the first *Discworld* novel was published in 1983, Pratchett has experienced remarkable popular success, with book sales averaging more than three million a year and currently stands as one of the United Kingdom's most read authors, second only to JK Rowling (Smythe, n.p.). Knighted in 2008 for his contribution to literature, Pratchett has been awarded with the Carnegie Medal, the Margaret A. Edwards award, and multiple LOCUS and British Book Awards. "[F]or some time there has been a joke that no British railway train is allowed to depart unless at least one passenger is reading a Pratchett novel" (Hunt 91), and Pratchett's ever-expanding fan base presently consists of a variety of ages and nationalities, indicated by a number of conventions on his works in such countries as England, the United States, Germany, and Australia.

      While Pratchett has long been recognized for popularizing the comic fantasy genre and admired for his remarkable ability to fuse humor and the fantastic with social and

political commentary, many scholars have noted a discrepancy between his popular success and the body of scholarship surrounding his works. In the preface to *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*—the first book dedicated entirely to critical approaches to Pratchett, which was published in 2000, seventeen years after *Discworld* began—three early contributors to Pratchett scholarship, Andrew M. Butler, Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn, believe, "Suffering under the triple damnation of writing popular, humorous fantasy, Pratchett has been ignored by academia and the serious press" (viii). Similarly, a number of scholars have commented on the stigmatization and marginalization of fantasy fiction within the academy, calling for more serious attention to the genre. As a result, writers like JK Rowling and JRR Tolkien have become increasingly the subject of critical inquiries, and though Pratchett has received less attention, the number of theoretical and analytical approaches to *Discworld* has grown considerably since 2000.

Despite a growing interesting in Pratchett, the sheer immensity and diversity of *Discworld* allows for a variety of critical approaches to the series and the scholarship has yet to catch up to this prolific writer. Also, though fantasy fiction has gradually become more accepted in academic circles, stigmatizations continue to surround the genre, deeming it more fitting for pre-teens and adolescents than the subject of serious literary study. However, in "Is There Hope for the Humanities in the 21st Century?" Susan Bassnett advises humanities instructors to shed their prejudices against non-canonical, popular texts and advocates for a more interdisciplinary approach to literary studies, believing JK Rowling and Terry Pratchett should grace the reading lists of every English program due to their ability to "cross boundaries that today's educational theorists find so daunting" (109). In the 2014 publication *Discworld and the Disciplines: Critical Approaches to the Terry Pratchett Works*, Anne

Hiebert Alton and William C. Spruiell remark more specifically on the interdisciplinary implications of Pratchett's works, observing that "in addition to such staples as literary (and non-literary) genre-play, socio-political satire, and commentary on such apparently diverse areas as economics, mythology, geology, and folklore, [Pratchett's] *oeuvre* now also includes treatments of sports, racism, picture books, and science" (4). Also, supported by a number of scholars, Gray Kochhar-Lindgren notes, "Pratchett's fantasy world is supersaturated in religion and philosophy" (81). Given the complexity of the *Discworld* series, there seems an endless repository of implications and relevancies. Yet, despite the plethora of possible literary approaches to *Discworld,* certain trends have emerged in Pratchett scholarship, and more specifically, the various scholars exploring issues of gender, education, and ideology[1] provide a basis from which this thesis will build.

In order to adequately address educational ideology within the magical community of *Discworld*, an understanding of Pratchett's unique representation of magic must be firmly established. Among the variety of *Discworld*'s colorful characters, witches and wizards play a central role within the series and offer two opposing conceptualizations and representations of magic. This dichotomy seems inherent in the fabric of *Discworld* since the third novel in the series, *Equal Rites*, reveals, "One of the unusual aspects of a magical universe is the existence of opposites" (191). Magic in *Discworld* is explicitly gendered, and Pratchett's witches and wizards demonstrate and even consciously uphold distinct gender separation regarding magical practice, methodology, knowledge, and responsibility. Discussing the possibility of a female wizard, Granny Weatherwax—the most respected witch on the Disc—

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[1] My exploration of ideology originally stemmed from a Marxist, and particularly an Althusserian, theoretical perspective; however, my use and conceptualization of ideology is intentionally free of direct association to any particular theory or theorist. In the most basic sense, I use the word ideology to refer to systems of meaning and meaning making.

remarks, "It's the wrong kind of magic for women, is wizard magic, it's all books and stars and jommetry…Witches is a different thing altogether…it's magic out of the ground, out of the sky, and men could never get the hang of it" (*ER* 9)[2].

Pratchett's witches pride themselves on avoiding the actual use of magic unless absolutely necessary, preferring to rely on the art of "Headology," their particular brand of psychology, which derives from the belief that by understanding how people's perceptions of the world constitute their reality, a witch can then alter an individual's reality. Therefore, witches need not use magic to transform a person into a frog; they merely use Headology to convince that person they are already a frog. Contrastingly, wizards never hesitate to exhibit their magical abilities, and their brand of magic "generally consists of illusion, a little weather-making, fire-balls and the occasional darning of the Fabric of Reality" (Pratchett and Briggs 244). Janet Brennan Croft has also observed that as wizards flock to the capital city of Ankh-Morpork to engage in the higher-arts and highly specialized areas of study, witches are inextricably tied to rural areas—particularly the mountains—seeing to more practical matters and "practic[ing] the traditional domestic mysteries" ("The Education of a Witch" 133). While witches typically prioritize worldly or experience-based knowledge over an education drawn from books, with the occasional witch disregarding books entirely, wizards often draw their power from magical texts and "without a library would just be fat men in pointy hats" (Pratchett and Briggs 246). Ultimately, *Discworld*'s witches are consistently associated with the female domestic space and wizards with male institutional authority, reinforcing the "the common male/female wizard/witch dichotomy where men practise intellectual magic using

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[2] While I use full titles when directly referencing *Discworld* novels, in-text citations for primary texts will consist of abbreviations. Please refer to the key provided on page 81 for a list of the abbreviations used and their corresponding full titles.

spells and written wisdom and women practise nature magic using herbs, oral wisdom and a large dose of common sense" (Hill 94).

Furthermore, gender not only distinguishes but divides the magical community of *Discworld* since "wizards consider witches incapable of high magic and look despairingly at the 'womanly' art of hedge witchery" (Pyykkonen and Washington 107), and witches disapprovingly regard wizardry as little more than an empty display of pyrotechnics. Disdain becomes the ruling attitude between witches and wizards, furthering the divide between these magical factions as each side stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the other. Take for example the supposed respect the wizard Treatle has for his female counterparts:

> I happen to believe that witchcraft is a fine career, for a woman. A very noble calling…Very useful in rural districts for, for people who are—having babies, and so forth. However, witches are not wizards. Witchcraft is Nature's way of allowing women access to the magical fluxes, but you must remember it is not *high*[3] magic…High magic requires great clarity of thought, you see, and women's talents do not lie in that direction. (*ER* 110)

Although many wizards like Treatle justify the inferiority of witches by suggesting an inherent deficit of their sex—obviously mirroring the deep-rooted justifications of patriarchy within our own society—Granny Weatherwax dismisses wizards on more justifiable grounds by criticizing their irresponsible use of magic and insufferable characteristics. When conversing through thought with the Theoretical Basis Tree Granny heatedly remarks, "*if women were meant to be wizards they'd be able to grow long white beards…wizardry is not the way to use magic, do you hear, it's nothing but lights and fire and meddling with power*"

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[3] Given the frequent use of italics throughout the *Discworld* novels to delineate emphasis, unspoken dialogue, memory, and internalized thought, all instances of italics reflect the original formatting unless "emphasis added" is indicated in the citation.

(*ER* 31). The seemingly immutable contempt and derision between *Discworld*'s witches and wizards simultaneously results from and results in a reinforcement of gender segregation, creating a domino effect in which gender stereotypes run rampant and women ultimately become subjected to the all-too-familiar system of patriarchal dominance.

The extent to which gender stereotypes are ingrained in the magical knowledge and practice of Pratchett's witches and wizards has led some to label his representation of women as essentialist and problematic for modern readers; however, though Pratchett's satire of traditional narratives often traverses the slippery line between convention and subversion, many scholars would agree with Karen Sayer's claim that "none of the witches easily adheres to the traditional/mythical roles assigned them as either women or witches" (135). Instead, they constantly question and challenge societal structures, perceptively aware of "the power of authorship" and determined to create their own stories instead of filling the roles in someone else's (Sayer 149). Pratchett's wizards fall prey to gender conventions just as their female counterparts, embodying British stereotypical privileged males, exemplified by Mustrum Ridcully who occupies himself with drinking, playing darts, and duck hunting, "likes beer with his breakfast of kidneys and black pudding," and decorates his study with "stuffed heads of a number of surprised animals" (Pratchett and Briggs 312). Yet, whether due to their advantages as the dominant norm or plain laziness, these wizards happily cling to their traditions and comfortably enjoy the benefits of male privilege from their armchairs as "gradually a picture builds up of old, overweight men whose main activities are sleeping, eating, and waiting for the next meal" (Hill 96).

In addition to playing off of gender roles, Pratchett's two distinct magical factions often cause the wizards and especially the witches to slip into traditional fairytale, folklore,

literary, and popular culture archetypes. While Carrie Pyykkonen and Linda Washington consider Pratchett's witches indicative of "the wise woman tradition in folklore" (110), Jacquelyn Bent and Helen Gavin further consider the three recurring characters of Magrat Garlick, Nanny Ogg, and Granny Weatherwax as conjuring up the three Fates, Freud's concept of the Id, Ego, and Superego, and most obviously, Shakespeare's weird sisters in *Macbeth* (67). Undeniably playing off of Shakespeare's witches, the sixth *Discworld* novel, *Wyrd Sisters*, consistently takes one step towards tethering these women to the Shakespearian archetype before hurriedly and stubbornly retreating from such cliché associations. Throughout the novel, Pratchett teasingly plays with readers' expectations of the three witches even from the most basic allusions to Shakespeare, such as the following dialogue between Granny and Magrat:

"Something comes," [Granny] said.

"Can you tell by the pricking of your thumbs?" said Magrat earnestly. Magrat had learned a lot about witchcraft from books.

"The pricking of my ears," said Granny. She raised her eyebrows at Nanny Ogg. (*WS* 11)

The decidedly ditzy Magrat embodies the extent to which readers' familiarity with the Shakespearean archetype of witches dictates their identities, yet her superior Granny quickly dismisses such nonsense as a fanciful notion of a young and naïve girl. As a result, readers are directly made aware of the narratives that influence their own perceptions and assumptions, then forced to abandon them entirely. Furthermore, many scholars have remarked on how these three witches conform to the traditional maiden / mother / crone paradigm. After all, in *Witches Abroad* they are at one point explicitly labeled as such by a

rival witch (295). However, while Pratchett plays with the reader's familiarity with various archetypes, his witches in many ways defy such simple associations just as they challenge the gender roles imposed upon them. In *Discworld* cackling and building gingerbread houses constitutes madness, Granny Weatherwax owns a broomstick yet finds riding one highly unrespectable and slightly drafty, and despite popular belief, under no circumstances do witches take off their clothes and dance in the moonlight—except perhaps the saucy Nanny Ogg who likes to do all manner of things with her clothes off.

Similarly, wizards on the Disc may evoke the traditional image established by such figures as Merlin and Tolkien's Gandalf, since their order expects members "to stop shaving and grow a beard like a gorse bush" (*MP* 31), take great pride in their tall, pointy hats, and come equipped with a staff. Pratchett's wizards even abide by a mandate of celibacy similar to the apparent sexlessness of their fantasy brethren such as Gandalf, though within the context of *Discworld*, celibacy is practiced for different reasons and provides endless fodder for puns:

> Books of magic have a sort of life of their own. Some have altogether too much; for example, the first edition of the *Necrotelicomicon* has to be kept between iron plates, the *True Arte of Levitatione* has spent the last one hundred and fifty years up in the rafters, and *Ge Fordge's Compenydyum of Sex Majick* is kept in a vat of ice in a room all by itself and there's a strict rule that it can only be read by wizards who are over eighty and, if possible, dead. (*S* 10)

Such a passage indicates the tendency for *Discworld*'s wizards to fall short of their mythical, folkloric, and pop-culture predecessors, often resulting from Pratchett's satire of the fantasy genre's adherence to the cliché noble, wise man and reliable do-gooder. Instead, the wizards

of *Discworld* prove traditional to a fault, dangerously power-hungry, and comically proud

creatures, at least when they can tear themselves away from teatime. And then there is

Rincewind, a major recurring character throughout the series, who despite wearing a hat with

word "WIZZARD" embroidered on it, lacks any noteworthy skills beyond his mastery of

running away and shouting for help. Further undermining the authority and respectability of

Discworld's wizards through their humorous portrayal, the embarrassing failures of

Rincewind remain a running joke throughout the series: "There are eight levels of wizardry

on the Disc; after sixteen years Rincewind has failed to achieve even level one. In fact it is

the considered opinion of some of his tutors that he is incapable even of achieving level zero,

which most normal people are born at" (*S* 11). Though pulling basic elements from the

imposing, honorable, and stoic representations of wizards that dominate traditional narratives

and popular culture, Pratchett's constant satire of their faction presents an utterly substandard

depiction. Consequently, by subverting readers' expectations and challenging the clichés of

the fantasy genre, Pratchett begins to undermine the dominion of wizards on the Disc.

Incorporating strict gender separation into the magic of *Discworld*, Pratchett engages

in a complex maneuvering of traditional gender roles and archetypes of wizards and witches,

both of which will play an integral role when examining magical education within the series.

Through their association with the feminine domestic space, this thesis will support reading

Pratchett's witches as indicative of the Other and reflecting the marginalization of women.

However, their tendency to break free of societal constraints by resisting and rewriting the

traditional narrative of the evil, old hag imparts a subversive quality to the witches, providing

them with an agency capable of disrupting the dominant order. On the other hand, by

adhering to the powerful male stereotype, Pratchett's wizards represent the dominant norm

and male privilege within *Discworld*, yet their failure to live up to the heroic archetype expected within fantasy fiction ultimately threatens their power and position of magical authority. Resulting from this established yet complex male / female, wizard / witch dichotomy, magical education in *Discworld* correspondingly reflects strict gender separation and distinction.

The explicit gendering of magic within *Discworld* unsurprisingly results in gendered education, with witches and wizards passing on their magical knowledge through significantly different methods and means. In a 2006 study, Michael Robert Younger and Molly Warrington note, "In some countries, particularly England, the number of single-sex schools has decreased dramatically…. However, there has been an emerging interest in the potential of single-sex classes within coeducational schools, most markedly in the United Kingdom" (582). Croft connects Pratchett's representation of gendered education to this current debate, implying *Discworld* reflects the growing belief that same-sex education often provides a more advantageous learning environment since "recent studies show that single-sex schools and classrooms often produce better academic results" ("The Education of a Witch" 131). However, the debate between same-sex and coeducation may increasingly acknowledge the benefits of gendered education, yet the issue remains complex and multifaceted. Younger and Warrington's in-depth study in some ways aligns with Croft's conclusions, observing the potential for a same-sex classrooms to provide better academic outcomes; however, their study concludes that "a recuperative masculinist agenda" typically dominates the desire for segregated classrooms and can lead to disadvantages for female students if appropriate precautions are not made (614). Though *Discworld* may illuminate current trends in educational scholarship, Pratchett's use of gendered education arises

primarily from the separation between witches and wizards and is therefore more effectively

explored as a byproduct of these factions' association with gender stereotypes and traditional

archetypes.

Pratchett directly addresses the issue of gendered education early in the *Discworld*

series in the 1987 publication of *Equal Rites*, in which the eight-year-old Eskarina Smith—

more commonly known as Esk—exhibits magical powers more befitting a wizard than a

witch. Unable to control her powers through the guidance of witches, Esk is taken by a

reluctant Granny Weatherwax to the wizards of Unseen University (UU)—*Discworld*'s

premier institution of magical learning—where she presents an equally problematic

conundrum to the current Archchancellor, Cutangle, who vaguely remarks, "I don't think

there's ever been a lady wizard before…I rather think it might be against the lore" (*ER* 133).

Esk's presence at UU creates a tumultuous conflict in which the wizards stubbornly resist

accepting her into their order on the basis of her sex, yet the novel concludes with Esk finally

receiving admission to the university and becoming the first and last known female student of

UU. Readers begin to believe Esk's tale may revolutionize the entire magical educational

system of *Discworld* and disrupt the established separation of witches and wizards when

Cutangle suggests, "we might allow a few more girls into the University. On an experimental

basis. Once we get the plumbing sorted out" (211). However, the final words of *Equal Rites*

succinctly disposes of any expectations for change, suggesting that Esk merely signified an

unprecedented exception to *Discworld*'s strict gendered laws of magic, an exception that

would quickly be erased from the collective memory of UU: "They got it absolutely right and

it would probably have important implications for the university if it hadn't, next time the

University flooded, been completely washed away" (213). In fact, Penny Hill observes that in

following novels the entire episode of *Equal Rights* seems not to have even occurred since

Granny claims she has never been to UU and the possibility of a female wizard again

becomes impossible and absurd. Hill proposes reading *Equal Rights* as existing "in a parallel

universe to that of subsequent novels" (95), yet after twenty-three years and thirty-four

novels without any further mention of Esk, she finally emerges from the limbo of once-

occurring *Discworld* characters in *I Shall Wear Midnight*, providing assistance to the

adolescent witch Tiffany Aching.

  In 2003 Pratchett released his second young adult *Discworld* novel and thirtieth in the

series, *The Wee Free Men*, which introduced Tiffany Aching, a young girl with a penchant

for learning and an incessantly questioning mind who discovers she is in fact a witch. With

the addition of three more novels, *A Hat Full of Sky* (2004), *Wintersmith* (2006), and *I Shall

Wear Midnight* (2010), this *Discworld* sequence follows Tiffany as she rescues her brother

from the Queen of the Fairies, meets Death in her confrontation with a hiver, defeats the

Wintersmith, and vanquishes the Cunning Man. In "Magic, Adolescence, and Education on

Terry Pratchett's Discworld," Gideon Haberkorn and Verena Reinhardt analyze Esk

alongside Tiffany Aching, observing how even though Esk exhibits great magical skill, she

lacks the innate knowledge and critical thinking skills associated with witches like Tiffany,

thus reinforcing the gendering of magical knowledge and skill in *Discworld*. While *Equal

Rites* concludes with Esk's admission to UU and deals more with the issues of equal

educational opportunities than her actual education, through Tiffany's various adventures,

Pratchett presents a first-hand account of magical education within *Discworld*—albeit a

witch's education—opening the door for a more comprehensive study of educational

practices within this fantasy world and further illuminating the vast divide between witches

and wizards. Tiffany's magical education defies common expectations of contemporary readers, even readers of fantasy, lacking any institutional presence or standardized methodology, and instead relies on a number of eccentric witches, rowdy pictsies, a handful of memories, and a sink-or-swim attitude.

Unlike the insight provided by Tiffany's subseries, active students of UU have a comparably minor presence within the series, and often resemble little more than a necessary component of the university. In *Moving Pictures* the Archchancellor of UU apparently forgets the entire existence of the student body:

> "I wanted to see you about one of the students, Master," [the Bursar] said coldly.
>
> "Students?" barked the Archchancellor.
>
> "Yes, Master. You know? They're the thinner ones with the pale faces? Because we're a *university*? They come with the whole thing, like rats—." (25-26)

Comparing Tiffany's emergence as a major *Discworld* character to the tendency for students enrolled in UU to be completely forgotten supports reading the educational model of wizards as unconcerned with benefiting or even acknowledging their students. After all, wizards go to extreme measures to avoid ever actually having to lecture, and they often treat younger wizards with contempt, given their "Establishment suspicion that anything new might threaten their traditional methods and possibly even their livelihoods" (Hill 98). In many ways Pratchett's wizards embody an accumulation of the negative stereotypes surrounding academia, and UU seems to in part function as a means to satirize British institutions of higher-learning, supported by Croft's claim that the original purpose of UU was "to put young men with magical power where their elders could keep an eye on them," and even now, the "wizards don't seem to do much practical magic, and indeed the main function of

the University is really to keep them from messing about with things" ("The Education of a

Witch" 132-33).

Tiffany Aching's interaction with her fellow witches stands in direct contrast to the

student-teacher relationships, or lack thereof, and educational environment portrayed by the

wizards of UU. In discussing Tiffany, Croft emphasizes the absence of an institution or

official classroom throughout Tiffany's magical education, noting how instead of

confinements and regulations within an establishment like UU, Tiffany comes to realize "that

the world itself is her school" ("The Education of a Witch" 134). However, Carrie

Pyykkonen and Linda Washington specify, "life is the great teacher witches depend upon.

But mainly there's the community of witches from which to learn" (109). The witches never

supply Tiffany with formal training, textbook guides, or academic lectures, yet it is Granny

who tells her that learning witchcraft is "not like school at all. *First* you get the test, and then

afterwards you spend years findin' out how you passed it. It's a bit like life in that respect"

(*WFM* 361). Similarly, Elisabeth Rose Gruner suggests reading Tiffany as participating in an

"unschooling" or "autonomous education," which resembles more socialization than standard

modes of learning (229). Despite their relatively hands-off approach to education, the witches

provide Tiffany with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to develop as a witch.

They also maintain a close relationship with their students, unlike the wizards, since the

apprenticeships of young witches consist of them living with senior witches at their cottages

where they spend much of their time performing domestic tasks. While the wizards' status as

privileged males gives rise to an Ivory Tower mentality exacerbated by their fear of

upcoming wizards usurping their power, the witches' work closely with their students in

order to instill within them the understanding "that being a witch is all about doing for those

who can't and speaking for those who have no voices" (Croft, "The Education of a Witch" 134). From this perspective, witches emphasize the recognition and defense of the marginalized and submissive, further corroborating their previously mentioned association with the Other and providing valuable insight into the educational ideology of Pratchett's witches.

Stemming from a particular interest in Tiffany's magical education, this thesis will explore educational ideology within the *Discworld* series with a continued focus on the ways gendered magic results in gendered knowledge and education. By fracturing the magical community into two distinct factions with their own conceptualizations and methodologies of magic, I believe Pratchett positions the witches and wizards of *Discworld* as ideologically oppositional.

Drawing from the above introduction to gendered magic and education, the second chapter will present a more in-depth analysis of Pratchett's wizards and Unseen University, tracing their associations with the history of the British educational system and observing the various ways gendered magic affects their educational practices. Recognizing their adherence to gender stereotypes, ties to British history, obsession with tradition, and position of power within *Discworld*, the wizards' association with male privilege and academic elitism will be further explored in order to support reading their faction as indicative of a dominant ideology, more specifically, a repressive educational ideology rooted in elitist and patriarchal hierarchies and reflective of traditional British institutions of higher-learning.

After establishing the "norm" or dominant ideology within *Discworld*, I apply a similar methodology to Pratchett's witches and explore their influences on Tiffany Aching. While the witches also seem to conform to traditional and patriarchal archetypes, they exhibit

the ability and desire to subvert societal norms, a quality and attitude they promote throughout their education of younger witches. Positioning the witches as Other reveals the ways in which they exemplify an alternative educational ideology, and how their advocacy for the individual, for equality and justness, threatens the dominant ideology of the wizards, suggesting that Pratchett's works not only question dominant ideology, but champion the unconventional and dissentient alternative conveyed by the witches.

Further supporting a reading of *Discworld* as promoting an educational ideology influenced by marginalization are the Nac Mac Feegle (or the Wee Free Men), who greatly contribute to Tiffany's education as a witch. Also representative of the Other, the Feegles epitomize rebellion, and unlike the witches who present an alternative ideology without *directly* challenge the hierarchy of wizards, the Feegles' willingness to fight against anything and everything suggests they would not hesitate to take on *Discworld*'s equivalent of the privileged elite. As a result, their central role throughout the Tiffany Aching sequence instills within *Discworld* the potential and even the need for the marginalized and oppressed to actively rebel against the dominant order in support of an ideology that champions the Other, individual freedom, and equality.

Despite the fantasy genre's association with escapism, this thesis will conclude with commentary revolving around how Pratchett's works engage in relevant contemporary issues in order to join the call for more serious critical attention within the academy. In a fantasy world eerily similar to our own and reflective of the "real" *Discworld* provides a means through which readers can potentially recognize the entrapment of dominant ideology, and given the freedom of fantasy to explore the "unreal," presents an opportunity for readers to imagine alternative realities.

Chapter Two: An Octarine Tower Guarded by Tradition:

The Wizards and Unseen University

Terry Pratchett begins the *Discworld* series not with the typical noble, wise, and revered wizards like Gandalf or Albus Dumbledore, but with Rincewind, a failed wizard with questionable spelling and an unrivaled knack for fleeing[4]. Though Rincewind stands at odds with the average wizard on the Disc, his very shortcomings introduce readers to the exclusivity and haughtiness of *Discworld*'s privileged elite: a group of elderly men deeply rooted in the traditional narratives of patriarchy, elitism, and other dominant ideologies. Rincewind not only defies contemporary readers' expectations of a wizard, but also defies his peers' expectations: "Rincewind had been generally reckoned by his tutors to be a natural wizard in the same way that fish are natural mountaineers" (*LF* 14). Lovable yet laughable, Rincewind does his very best to live up to his fellow wizards, but even his attempt to look the part falls embarrassingly short. Unlike his rotund peers who usually spend their days lounging in arm chairs and eying the tea trolley, Rincewind remains scrawny, likely due to his constant running away. His robes are frayed, his beard is scraggly, he does not smoke, and "it has been contended that when Rincewind dies the average occult ability of the human race will actually go up a fraction" (Pratchett and Briggs 315). Though one of Pratchett's most prolific characters proves the most unwizardly of wizards, Rincewind's interactions with UU and its faculty gradually allow readers to formulate a relatively stable interpretation

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[4] The first two *Discworld* novels, *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic*, both follow Rincewind as the protagonist, establishing him as one of the first recurring and recognizable *Discworld* character.

of *Discworld*'s wizards, UU, and their ideological associations. Ultimately, the wizards of UU propagate an educational ideology rooted in the traditional narratives of patriarchy and elitism, representing the "norm" in *Discworld* and providing a status quo to later compare the alternative educational ideology of Pratchett's witches.

The faction of wizards at UU resembles an old boys club where powerful elderly men are free to partake in manly pursuits, whether it be drinking, eating, sleeping, or the occasional wizarding. Beyond the cooks and trolley girls, women remain purposely absent from UU, "which was as masculine as the smell of old socks and pipe smoke and, given the faculty's general laxness when it came to knocking out their pipes, the smell of smoking socks as well" (*UA* 21). Though safely surrounded by and contained within their manly cohort, these wizards curiously reinforce their masculinity through every avenue they can conjure, placing high importance on various phallocentric accessories as reminders of their masculinity. For example, in addition to the required beard, wizards come equipped with a staff "usually about six feet long with the proverbial knob on the end" (Pratchett and Briggs 244). Similarly, Pratchett transforms the tall, pointy hat ingrained within readers' images of wizards into a not-so-subtle phallic symbol. While Rincewind's hat is embroidered with "WIZZARD" in painfully obvious silver lettering, his hat is decidedly floppy, or flaccid, indicating his less than masculine wizardly qualities; after all, on the Disc "wizard" signifies "man." Occasionally these accessories become a text on which a wizard can literally exhibit his masculinity for others to see, and perhaps to remind him too. Mustrum Ridcully, the notorious duck hunter, personalized his hat to mirror his burgeoning masculinity just in case anyone was wondering: "It has fishing flies stuck in it. A very small pistol crossbow is

shoved in the hatband and a small bottle of Bentick's Very Peculiar Old Brandy is stored in the pointy bit" (Pratchett and Briggs 312).

Pratchett's intertwining of the fantastic and unfamiliar with a blend of contemporary and historical societies, cultures, and politics—especially pertaining to British education— undeniably causes the wizards to interact with various ideologies familiar to contemporary readers, thereby furthering a connection between the wizards' humorously excessive masculine characterizations and issues of gender. As revealed in the previous analysis of Esk's interaction with the wizards of UU, patriarchy plays a vital role in an ideological conceptualization of Pratchett's wizards. Though an in-depth explanation of the long-standing patriarchal structure of English education seems unnecessary, it is notable to mention *Discworld*'s reliance on gender norms and general disregard for gender equality clearly predate contemporary readers' increasingly post-feminist perspectives. The wizards' view of witches and their feminine arts as inferior, their refusal to open UU to women, their frequent misogynistic remarks, and even the extent to which constant gender distinctions result in an obvious gender binary draw clear connections between the practice and implications of patriarchy in *Discworld*, England, and other such repressive ideological systems. Though present throughout the Disc, UU seems particularly and intentionally tied to the patriarchal submission of women, especially when you consider the only women UU's wizards regularly interact with are servants:

> Ridcully turned again to look at Glenda…Until this moment, he had never thought of the maids in the singular. They were all…servants. He was polite to them, and smiled when appropriate. He assumed they sometimes did other things than fetch and carry, and sometimes went off to get married and sometimes just…went off. Up until now,

though, he'd never really thought that they might think, let alone what they thought

about. (*UA* 131-32)

Within this one brief passage Pratchett provides multiple standard components of patriarchy:

female subjugation, enforcement of gender roles, and the more dated view of women as

inherently intellectually inferior, clearly aligning the wizards with a repressive ideology that

celebrates and empowers their sex at the expense of women. Regarding the time wizards

spend cultivating an undeniably male persona, their desperate attempts to exude masculinity

could stem from a desire to maintain patriarchal constructs of gender, thereby strengthening

the gender binary and fortifying their position as the dominant order.

Furthermore, an overwhelming need to physically exhibit their masculinity could also

be considered an attempt to make up for the wizards' less-than-manly qualities, specifically,

their adherence to celibacy as dictated by the mandates of the order. While representing

wizards as celibate or sexless is a common trope of the fantasy genre, various fan fiction

works and fan forums for Pratchett have postulated the possible homosexual nature of UU's

of a large group of men spending all their time together and forbidden to pursue relationships

with women, UU certainly reflects a homosocial environment, and therefore the wizards'

attempts to create unquestionably masculine personas could be said to result from a fear of

association with homosexuality or otherness, which would threaten their power and dominant

position on the Disc. Pratchett seems aware of the homosocial undercurrents at UU when he

mentions the potential for an apprentice enchanter to "run away from his master out of

defiance, boredom, and a lingering taste for heterosexuality" (*CM* 20). While a homosocial

reading of UU's wizards has interesting potential, labeling these men as homosexuals proves

problematic since, throughout the *Discworld* series, appear multiple references to the

wizards' sexual desires for heterosexual relationships, and though such desires must be suppressed in their current situation, this does not mean the wizards have never experienced such relationships. When the beautiful young girl Juliet joins the serving staff of UU in *Unseen Academicals*, her presence clearly causes the wizards' commitment to abstinence to waver:

> The room, its ceiling hazy with blue smoke, was suddenly awash with a sort of heavy, curiously preoccupied silence mostly due to dreamy speculation, but in a few rare cases owing to distant memory. The new girl…. At the mere thought, elderly hearts beat dangerously. (21)

Celibacy certainly contributes to a homosocial environment at UU, yet its cause does not appear to derive from latent homosexuality. Instead, in the context of *Discworld*'s wizards', celibacy more directly carries historical and ideological connotations reflecting the British educational system, and particularly indicative of a monastic order or priesthood.

Constant intertexualization throughout *Discworld* promotes reading the series as indicative of or comparable to readers' own experiences, and Pratchett's frequent satire of established narratives provides an illuminating reading of the celibacy of wizards. Intertexual analysis of *Discworld* most certainly reflects Pratchett's playful manipulation of the hackneyed custom in fantasy fiction that wizards abstain from sexual release in order to preserve magical power, yet it also reveals the extent to which Pratchett intertwines the history of English education with the wizards of UU. In *A Social History of Education in England*, John Lawson and Harold Silver suggest education first began transitioning from a mere familial responsibility towards the institutionalized endeavor it is today "when St. Augustine and his missionary band of monks arrived from Rome in 597 to convert King

Ethelbert and the men of Kent to Christianity," thereby establishing Canterbury as an

educational institution through which to train priests and quickly expanding as "Kent

preachers and teachers moved into neighbouring English kingdoms, setting up schools

alongside churches to form other centres of evangelism" (2). As such, the wizards' celibacy

more likely signifies the monastic tradition from which British institutions of higher learning

derive. Though UU's wizards would likely scoff at Christian theology given its reliance on

the submission of man to a God, linking these men to the monastic practice of celibacy

effectively connects them with a dominant order that not only controlled much of England's

manifestations of higher education, but also carried significant social and political import as

well.

　　　　While only the beginning of Pratchett's historical intertexualization, connecting the

celibacy of *Discworld*'s wizards to the early monastic influences of English education

supports reading UU as indicative of traditional and dominant educational ideology,

explaining the wizards' position of authority on the Disc and illuminating their preoccupation

with further seizing and securing power. After all, the only thing a wizard loves more than

comfort is power. Even an ahistorical reading of the *Discworld* series reveals a direct

correlation between the celibacy of wizards and their attempts to maintain power. Pratchett

contextualizes the practice as resulting from wizards' fear of a sourcerer, the eighth son of an

eighth son with a wizard father and "unlike wizardry which, shorn of the coloured lights and

fireballs, consists largely of persuading the universe to do it your way—[a sourcerer] can

stop the sun, make the sea boil…He is a channel through which magic flows into the

universe, and the human equivalent of a white hole" (Pratchett and Briggs 245). The

unmatchable power of a sourcerer threatens wizards' position as the dominant order, and by

enforcing celibacy as a means of avoiding such a threat; the wizards only have to compete with themselves for power.

Deriving from their obsession with power, *Discworld*'s faction of wizards relies on a strict hierarchal structure and extreme competitive natures. "[T]hey *needed* organization. What was the good of being a wizard of the Seventh Level if you didn't have six other levels to look down on and the Eighth Level to aspire to? You needed other wizards to hate and despise" (*MP* 15). Ironically, a wizard's power in *Discworld* is more often associated with his political standing within the university and fancy titles than with actual magical ability. As a result, their positions of power become vulnerable without the magical supremacy of gifted wizards such as Gandalf or Dumbledore, leading to a remarkable frequency of assassination attempts on the higher-ranked wizards:

> Far below, in the Great Hall, the eight most powerful wizards on the Discworld gathered at the angles of a ceremonial octogram. Actually they probably weren't the most powerful, if the truth were known, but they certainly had great powers of survival which, in the highly competitive world of magic, was pretty much the same thing. Beyond every wizard of the eighth rank were half a dozen seventh rank wizards trying to bump him off, and senior wizards had to develop an inquiring attitude to, for example, scorpions in their bed. An ancient proverb summed it up: When a wizard is tired of looking for broken glass in his dinner, it ran, he is tired of life. (*LF* 22)

Ultimately, Pratchett's wizards are motivated primarily by power, particularly the power of the privileged and idle aristocracy, as "gradually a picture builds up of old, overweight men whose main activities are sleeping, eating, and waiting for the next meal…any effort a wizard

may make, is to strive to outwit other wizards through magical assassination attempts" (Hill 96).

The wizards' celibacy and their unsubstantiated claims to power seem influenced by the monastic tradition of early English educational institutions, yet Pratchett's wizards defy direct association with any particular moment in England's history of education, instead reflecting an amalgamation of different practices and ideologies throughout time, and thereby bringing to light the various influences that have shaped the current norms of English education. The hierarchal nature of UU and general laziness and incompetence of the wizards also mirrors England's educational history, particularly drawing from the class stratification and power of the aristocracy prevalent during the eighteenth century. In their discussion of education in pre-industrial England, Lawson and Silver explain the correlation between social rank and access to education as exemplified by John Locke's belief that "mental culture was not for men of low condition, only for those with means and leisure" (169). Throughout the eighteenth century higher education became dominated by the gentry, altering the very function and practices of universities to the point that "if professors started by giving lectures they soon stopped because nobody went to hear them…In time professorships became prizes for place hunters; no special knowledge or competence was required and few academic responsibilities were incurred, unless one happened to be exceptionally conscientious" (Lawson and Silver 206). This passage directly mirrors a *Discworld* wizard's perception of his position as educator as more of a position of power and rights of a privileged class than actual purveyor of knowledge. Furthermore, "increasing stipends and standards of comfort made fellowships more attractive and fellows less willing to resign, and since there was no compulsion to study or write or teach, those without

scholarly interests or college office might grow old in well-fed idleness, boredom and eccentricity" (Lawson and Silver 207). Pratchett depicts wizards as old men languishing in "well-fed idleness, boredom and eccentricity," thereby equating their order with aristocratic and elitist entitlement. Awarding themselves with grand titles such as "Supreme Grand Conjuror of the Order of the Silver Star, Lord Imperial of the Sacred Staff, Eighth Level Ipsissimus and 304th Chancellor of Unseen University," the wizards constantly reinforce their importance and power, and as readers come to learn more about their order, the parallels between *Discworld*'s wizards and England's privileged aristocracy become undeniable (*LF* 8).

While *Discworld*'s wizards possess the social power and luxury of eighteenth century British aristocracy, the contextualization of their political power seems to perpetually exist in the liminal space between pre- and post-Reformation England and the movement's subsequent restructuring of power. Though the Reformation caused universities to become subject to royal authority, the wizards have long resisted bowing to any outside authority, maintaining complete dominion within the walls of UU, and *Guards! Guards!* relates the wizards' claims of immunity from the laws of Ankh-Morpork since "traditionally the University is exempt from all city levies and taxes" (221)[5]. Pratchett further links the order of wizards with the divine authority of England's pre-reformation churches and schools since "the University had always held that it fell under thaumaturgical law" (*GG* 119), with the term "thaumaturge" carrying religious connotations affiliated with the work of saints along with the later magical associations of the derivative "thaumatury." UU may not explicitly fall under the command of Ankh-Morpork's Patrician, Lord Vetinari, but their political power

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[5] This resistance against state authority and exemption from the law also relates back to the wizards' connections to the Church.

outside of the university simultaneously reflects *post*-Reformation religious and educational institutions. In later novels it becomes evident that, while Vetinari refrains from direct enforcement of his political power when dealing with UU, his authority ultimately trumps that of the wizards. In regards to their exemption from paying taxes, the wizards must eventually concede to Vetinari's law while at the same time attempting to maintain the aura of supreme power:

> In the end it was agreed that while the wizards of course paid no taxes, they would nevertheless make an entirely voluntary donation of, oh, let's say two hundred dollars per head, without prejudice, mutatis mutandis, no strings attached, to be used strictly for non-militaristic and environmentally-acceptable purposes. It was this dynamic interplay of power blocs that made Ankh-Morpork such an interesting, stimulating and above all bloody dangerous place in which to live. (*RM* 71)

Despite the wizards having to recognize the authority of Ankh-Morpork's political ruler—even if they would never openly admit it—UU strongly maintains the town-and-gown mentality associated with British universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, thereby reinforcing their power throughout the city. Their magical knowledge may no longer subdue the demands of Ankh-Morpork's supreme ruler, but the city's proletariat class remains in awe of the lofty wizards at UU, though more likely out of habit than any recent imposing feats performed by the wizards given their reclusive tendencies within the walls of the university. Although a rousing game of football in *Unseen Academicals* represents one of the noteworthy exceptions to the distinct separation between town and gown, the wizards "are used to automatic respect to the extent that they do not engage in many of the normal human interactions" (Hill 102). Ultimately, these wizards represent within *Discworld* the epitome of

dominant ideologies of patriarchal and privileged British males who relish that position and reinforce their power in whatever way they can concoct.

Demonstrating the complexity behind Pratchett's too-often trivialized writing, the wizards' correspondence to various moments throughout centuries of English education and their coinciding dominant ideologies becomes a never-ending game of hidden references and direct allusions, resulting in a setting eerily familiar, especially to British readers, yet at the same time indefinable in the context of any particular time. With an abundance of material to chose from and the freedom of writing fantasy, Pratchett's particular historical amalgamation of educational practices, principles, traditions, and philosophies reveal the implications written into his representation of UU and the order of wizards. Similar to the class stratification of eighteenth-century England and the influences of a deep-rooted monastic tradition, most of UU's connections to English educational history further represent the magical institution as constantly at play within various power dynamics. Typically wizards take on characteristics of those traditionally perceived as most powerful throughout British history, and as a result, such use of intertexualization reinforces a connection between their order and dominant educational ideologies.

From their laughable attempts to exude masculinity to their ridiculous plots to gain greater status, Pratchett's satire of the wizards is unmistakable. Even the name Unseen University is a playful reconceptualization of the "Invisible College," a society of seventeenth-century physicians and natural philosophers commonly believed to have been the precursor to The Royal Society, whose "concern was for social improvement through education, scientific experiment and technology" (Lawson and Silver 154), clearly ironic given the nature of UU. Many of the more obvious historical and cultural references to

British education employ Cambridge and Oxford as endless fodder for amusement and quick laughs[6]. UU's coat of arms resembles Oxford's, although the crowns are replaced with a pointy wizard's hat, and its motto cleverly trivializes the two universities: Oxford's motto translates to "the lord is my light" ("The Arms of the University") and carries direct ties to its religious roots, and Cambridge's motto translates, "From here, light and sacred draughts" with the slightly more secular, non-literal translation, "From this place, we gain enlightenment and precious knowledge" ("The Coat of Arms"); the official motto of UU mocks the implied sense of light and sight as indicative of the acquirement of knowledge, translated as "Now you see it, now you don't" (the unofficial motto, "η β π," completely trivializes the entire tradition given its two translations, "Eat a bit of Pie" or "Eat a better pie" depending on the source). Ridcully, often referred to as Ridcully the Brown, was a Rowing Brown as a student of UU, directly punning the Oxford and Cambridge Blue. While Oxford's Bodleian library chains books for their protection against students, UU's library chains books in order to protect students *from* books. Pratchett includes the "Senior Wrangler" in UU's faculty, a now obsolete honorific Cambridge University awarded to the highest scoring students of the Mathematics Tripos and considered "the greatest intellectual achievement attainable in Britain" (Forfar 1). Yet within *Discworld* the title becomes devoid of intellectual significance and is instead a vehicle for the typical Pratchett pun as he playfully mocks the traditions and practices of institutions such as Cambridge: "The post of Senior Wrangler was an unusual one, as was the name itself. In some centres of learning, the Senior Wrangler is a leading philosopher; in others, he's merely someone who looks after horses. The Senior

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[6] Though Pratchett has since received honorary degrees and positions at Universities, his own educational experience never involved attending a University or institution of higher education. Countless interviews and biographies comment more expansively on Pratchett's education and often reveal doubts and disagreements with institutionalized and standard methods of education that immerged from his own experiences as a student, one example being Craig Cabell's *Terry Pratchett: The Spirit of Fantasy* (2011).

Wrangler at Unseen University was a philosopher who looked *like* a horse, thus neatly

encapsulating all definitions" (*RM* 37). Pratchett's humor often shrouds a serious and

potentially subversive critique of traditional narratives, yet these weighty moments with

larger implications are too often overlooked in the abundance of direct puns and seemingly

surface-level satire. However, even if every silly satirical reference to Oxford and Cambridge

does not directly correlate to society's unnoticed conformity to ideology or the

metanarratives perpetuated throughout history, a subversive humor permeates the *Discworld*

series, provoking readers to question various aspects of "reality" and "truth" no matter how

insignificant they may seem.

Stemming from Pratchett's satire of British universities like Oxford and Cambridge,

the wizards are often seen as the Disc's great purveyors of tradition and amplified by

Pratchett's revisionist historical approach to narratives; this reverent treatment of tradition

further illuminates the educational ideology perpetuated by UU. Pratchett's wizards

stubbornly cling to tradition as a means of justification for maintaining the norm, ultimately

resulting in a continuous preservation of historical narratives that often act as conveyors for

dominant ideologies. At times their traditions may seem inconsequential and absurd; for

example, *Unseen Academicals* begins with the senior wizards riding piggyback through the

halls of the university in search of a Megapode (Rincewind with a large duck strapped to his

head). However, these traditions often carry great ideological weight. As mentioned

previously, it is tradition that causes the wizards to initially exclude Esk from the university

based solely on her sex, a tradition inextricably tied to patriarchy. One of the oldest

traditional ceremonies of the university derives from and blatantly promotes elitism,

exemplifying the hierarchal implications of a town-and-gown mentality. Referred to as

"Scrawn Money," it is described as an occasion for which "all tenants of University proper are required to attend, whereupon they are given two pennies, a pair of long socks and a loaf of bread baked the previous morning. They then file into the University where they are allowed to watch the wizards having lunch" (Pratchett and Briggs 378). In typical Pratchett fashion, there are always exceptions, and in *Unseen Academicals* a long forgotten and previously ignored tradition actually undermines the elitist attitude of the wizards, leading them to venture out into the streets and rub shoulders with the common man in a game of football. However, the novel begins with the clear understanding that the wizards deem to involve themselves in such a plebian affair only to avoid losing the substantial bequest that supplies 87.4 percent of the funds allocated for the university's food, hence the tradition's title "Archchancellor Preserved Bigger's Bequest." The alternate title, "Poore Boys Funne," also relates back to town and gown, reinforcing the wizards' connection to an egotistical sense of superiority. Furthermore, though not explicitly stated, *Unseen Academicals* concludes with the sense that now tradition has been fulfilled and the precious food fund secured, the newfound kinship between the wizards and the townspeople of Ankh-Morpork will soon be forgotten as the older, more familiar traditions of class distinction and elitism resume; after all, Ridcully "*regrettably*" laments the next scheduled football match will have to be postponed and professes a need for the public to understand the wizards are not to be expected to perform acts of community service since they "aren't the kind of fellows who run around chasing strange birds"…that is unless The Hunting of the Megapode tradition demands it instead of ridiculous notions of social responsibility (399). With so many traditions tied to UU, the correlation between the wizards' attempts to solidify their position at the top of *Discworld*'s hierarchy and their unquestioning adherence to tradition proves

complicated to say the least. Yet regardless of context, unquestioningly following outdated

mandates promotes traditional narratives, and is therefore consistent with a desire to maintain

their faction's long-standing status as the dominant order. Despite the fantasy setting,

Discworld frequently reflects contemporary social issues and anxieties, and the wizards allow

readers to witness firsthand the ways in which blindly following tradition can potentially

promote repressive ideologies and fortify outdated narratives such as patriarchy and elitism.

 Acknowledging the ways *Discworld*'s wizards resemble the dominant order

illuminates their approach to education at UU, further contextualizing educational ideology.

In addition to exerting their male dominance to maintain power and authority, "there remains

a strong sense that all male magical knowledge is continued and concentrated within Unseen

University…. The wizards control the study and use of magic and also the definition of

wizardry" (Hill 93). In other words, the wizards' status as privileged males and the elite class

gives rise to academic imperialism, further increasing their control and power on the Disc. As

mentioned earlier, this association with academic imperialism connects the wizards to a

monastic tradition that dominated early forms of formal English education. Literacy at the

time essentially entailed knowledge of Latin, the language of the church and rarely taught

outside of the formal educational institutions of the church, resulting in a religious academic

imperialism spanning centuries and yielding greater power to the already immense authority

of the church. Similarly, much of *Discworld*'s inhabitants remain detached from the

knowledge contained within UU, and the wizards treat their knowledge as a valued

commodity to be hoarded in order to reinforce their positions of power on the Disc.

Early English universities gradually replaced the church as the main conveyor of

higher learning, and "by 1300 [had] a practical monopoly of higher education. Their function

was both ideological and professional: they set themselves to interpret and defend Catholic doctrine, and also to train men for the service of church and state" (Lawson and Silver 24). Under closer consideration, this seemingly simple statement reveals the ideological weight of deeply ingrained dominant narratives like Christianity, and sheds light on the ability of educational ideologies to linger long after seemingly eradicated through a reliance on tradition and through social environment. Lawson and Silver note early universities' aims became centered solely on professional training as opposed to the general pursuit of knowledge, with these institutions preparing students for a variety of careers, such as "teachers, preachers, civil and canon lawyers, officials and administrators" (25). Yet, with the exception of preachers, these careers apparently continued to revolve around a teaching philosophy, which according to the previous passage, hinged on the interpretation and defense of Catholic doctrine. Though educational ideology as understood throughout this thesis proves a far more illusive entity, the historical mapping of education in England reveals how despite universities' seemingly different aims and goals from their monastic predecessors, their unquestioning reliance on tradition and conventional approaches to education ultimately perpetuated a Christian ideology. Similarly, with the continued authority of the Catholic Church during this time and the largely Christian populace of England, early universities continued to function within and be affected by a social and political atmosphere still deeply entrenched within this ideology. Furthermore, and perhaps most significant, the Church's continued influence and dominant position within the hierarchy of early medieval England suggests these early universities capitalized on the previous successes of the church, appropriating power by parroting or replicating the Christian narrative.

It is important to note that *Discworld*'s wizards exist within a society, not unlike our own, where dominant ideologies and traditional narratives continue to circulate beneath the surface of everyday life and often immerge through Ideological State Apparatuses[7] such as educational institutions and religious centers. In particular, *Discworld* often exhibits a distinct patriarchal foundation both within and without the magical community, along with a habitual adherence to class stratification and elitism. As such, the wizards seen throughout the series have innately entered into a fortunate position of power as males with magical abilities that associate them with the upper classes of intellectual gentry. Similar to most institutions of authority and individuals with the luxury of constituting the norm or dominant order of a society, the wizards of UU wish to maintain a lifestyle to which they have grown accustomed and, as seen with the universities of early-medieval England, the maintenance of power and privilege most naturally derives from reinforcing and promoting the existing ideologies that shaped the condition of privilege. To promote the ideologies that bestow advantages of power, the educational ideology of UU's wizards logically reflects a marked reliance on hierarchal structuring in which prominent elderly males of social class dominate.

The complex presence and perpetuation of ideology may remain obscured and buried as it permeates perceptions of our reality, yet through the use of the fantastic mirrored on the realistic, Pratchett's *Discworld* series provides an opportunity to unearth tendrils of ideology within the fantasy setting and observe the trends and methods of conveyance through which it manifests. It remains unclear whether the wizards perceive the workings of ideology. Typically the significance of their more sentient observations or statements seems quickly

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[7] For further reading on Ideological States Apparatuses, please refer to Louis Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in which Althusser's explores the ways dominant social systems and institutions create obedient citizens through ideology, thereby perpetuating a cycle of ruling class domination and control over a working class.

forgotten if not completely overlooked by even them, and such moments rather resemble insight from Pratchett communicated through a playful yet suggestive nudge. However, in the greater significance of Pratchett's work, the wizards' perception of ideology on the Disc becomes secondary to the invaluable opportunity presented to *Discworld* readers.

The wizards' attempts to perpetuate their social and political power most clearly begins with an imperialistic control over magical knowledge, as explored above, but when framed specifically in the educational environment of UU, this grasping of power becomes exacerbated by their fear of up-and- coming wizards usurping or threatening their power. If knowledge is power and their ultimate agenda is to obtain as much power as possible, it logically follows that the wizards must limit others' access to that knowledge. Such fear and suspicion lead to an extreme Ivory Tower mentality—or in this case an Octarine Tower mentality since Octarine, the eighth color on *Discworld*'s spectrum, can be seen only by wizards and cats—as the wizards seem to spend more time withholding knowledge as a means of preserving power instead of sharing their knowledge as means of empowering others.

Despite being the foremost institution of male magical education on the Disc, UU appears to revolve more around providing comfort to tenured faculty than providing students with a proper education. The mere presence of students is not only a nuisance for senior wizards, but also considered a hindrance as emulated in *Hogfather* when Ridcully remarks, "I could certainly run a marvelous university here if only we didn't have to have these damn students underfoot all the time" (352). As a result, wizards pay very little attention to their students beyond making sure they remain subordinate subjects with inferior knowledge. The senior wizards spend their days lounging in the Uncommon Room, the students in the High

Energy Magic Building, and while "the senior wizards have never bothered much about what the younger, skinnier and more bespectacled wizards get up to in there…. They are, though, nervous of the fact that the students there seem to be engrossed in their work and, in fact, apparently enjoy it. This is always a dangerous thing in a student" (Pratchett and Briggs 383).

Interaction between student and teacher at UU remains limited to say the least, perhaps explaining the wizards' tendencies to forget the existence of students at UU altogether. All in all, actual education seems secondary to wizards and mostly consists of providing students with access to a library. In *Interesting Times* Pratchett mentions Room 3b where a majority of the lectures at UU take place; only Room 3b does not exist, a fact both senior wizards and students contentedly accept without question. Later in the series, *The Last Continent* introduces Room 5b, which does at least physically exists, yet is altered by a distortion in the space-time continuum; any wizard entering Room 5b to give his lecture will find that he actually arrived twenty minutes ago and is currently giving said lecture already. Therefore, wizards contend that if they are already in Room 5b lecturing, they might as well stay in their lounge chairs and enjoy their sherry. Similarly, students assume earlier versions of themselves have been sitting in Room 5b diligently taking notes for twenty minutes, so going back to bed seems the best course of action. It remains unclear whether any student or senior wizard ever actually bothers showing up to lectures in Room 5b.

The one thing UU's wizards most certainly pass onto students is their general laziness, aristocratic entitlement mirroring professors of eighteenth-century English universities, and how to best enjoy the comforts of the privileged class. While younger wizards have a limited presence, if any, in most of the *Discworld* novels, *Moving Pictures* provides valuable insight into the life of one UU student. Following Victor Tugelbend as he

transitions from UU student to famous Holy Wood actor, this novel reveals the extent to which ideology becomes perpetuated through educational institutions even when very little teaching takes place. Victor's deceased uncle left him with the necessary funds to cover UU's tuition with the stipulation that Victor score at least an 80 on every exam; however, Victor discovers he has no interest in progressing to a senior wizard due to the high risk of assassination, and since 88 is the passing grade at UU, he purposely scores an 84 every exam in order to perpetually remain a student.

Victor's attitude again exemplifies the correlation between Pratchett's construction of UU and historical accounts of English institutions of higher education. Discussing typical eighteenth-century university students, usually sons of gentlemen, Lawson and Silver report, "Their fortunes already assured, most of these gilded youths idled away their time with no intention of taking a degree. As at school, there were no organized games and those who were not given to reading amused themselves with their guns and dogs, riding, hunting, gambling, or with the women of the town" (209). Excluding the pursuit of women as a countermeasure to boredom, this historical description not only reflects Victor's matriculation at UU, but perfectly encapsulates the senior wizards as well. These similarities between teachers and students, in both *Discworld* and the historical accounts of Lawson and Silver, stand as testament to the various ways ideologies are seamlessly and unknowingly transmitted through the influential environment of educational institutions. Despite his obvious intelligence and knowledge, Victor exhibits the inherent laziness typical of the wizarding faction, remaining a student merely for the perks: "What were the advantages and disadvantages of being a *student* wizard? You got quite a lot of free time, a certain amount of license in matters like drinking a lot of ale and singing bawdy songs…you also got a modest

but comfortable style of living. Of course, you didn't get much in the way of prestige but at least you were alive to know this" (*MP* 28). Mirroring the tendencies of senior wizards, Victor becomes acquainted with the advantages of *Discworld*'s intellectual aristocracy during his time at UU. He may chose a long life of comfort as a student over a short life of prestige as a senior wizard, yet Victor's decision to pursue acting suggests his time at UU instilled within him a desire for power. By becoming a famous actor, Victor maintains the comforts of a privileged class and receives a certain amount of power without anyone trying to assassinate him. Directly claiming UU "taught" Victor to prioritize power and comfort above all else proves problematic since *Moving Pictures* begins with Victor already a student and such motivations could have existed before his enrollment in the university. However, given Victor's extreme similarities to the senior wizards, the most logical explanation remains that UU imprinted within him a view of the Disc as inherently hierarchal in which the dominant order, particularly the male intellectual elite, reaps all the rewards.

Chapter Three: Rewriting Stories from the Margins:

The Witches, Tiffany Aching, and the Nac Mac Feegle

On the Disc, witches and wizards are considered diametrical opposites, a point of pride for both factions. Beyond their shared interests in tall pointy hats, they represent two heterogeneous sides of the same magical coin. Unlike the laziness, intellectual haughtiness, and selfishness of the wizards at UU, Pratchett's witches scurry across the countryside relying on whatever is handy to cure and correct human misfortunes. The witches stand apart from the general public just as the wizards do, yet while wizards seek to dominate and control the people of *Discworld*, witches serve and protect those unable or just too unaware to solve their own problems. "[Witches] stand on the edge, where the decisions have to be made. They make them, so others [don't] have to, so that others can even pretend to themselves that there *were* no decisions to be made. They enroll in no schools and have no formal system of regulation" (Pratchett and Briggs 245). Pratchett's witches take pride in the responsibility the wizards shirk, and though they constitute a number of eccentric anti-institutional midwives and folk healers, these women play an integral role in daily life on the Disc.

Granny Weatherwax, the most powerful and respected witch on the Disc, would constitute the leader of the witch faction if witches believed in such formalities, but "witches are equal. [They] don't have things like head witches. That's *quite* against the spirit of witchcraft...Besides, Mistress Weatherwax would never allow that sort of thing" (*HFS* 125).

Regardless, throughout the *Discworld* series the Archchancellors of UU come and go while

Granny remains a formidable constant, and "[w]hen all hope was gone, you called for

Granny Weatherwax, because she was the best. And she always came. Always. But popular?

No. Need is not the same as like. Granny Weatherwax was for when things were *serious*"

(*WS* 26). Granny Weatherwax in no way epitomizes the "typical" *Discworld* witch, after all,

though the wizards apparently all strive to embody the same masculine wizardly personae,

the witches embrace their individualities resulting in a faction comprised of diverse

personalities. However, exploring Granny's character provides an introduction to the general

philosophy of a proper *Discworld* witch.

Rejecting the institutionalized and masculine modes of knowledge associated with

UU, Granny's particular brand of magic revolves largely around the "womanly" arts, and

according to Croft, she and her fellow witches "practice the traditional domestic mysteries:

brewing and distilling, butter and cheese-making, animal husbandry, herb gardening, fortune-

telling, medicine and potions, birth control and midwifery, sitting with the dying and laying

out the dead, and settling local disputes" ("The Education of a Witch" 133). Knowledge at

UU may rely solely on a state-of-the-art magical library, yet Granny embraces a feminine—

more earthly or naturalistic—approach to knowledge to the extent that she has a

"philosophical objection to reading" and believes nothing useful can be learned from books,

except perhaps an almanac (ER 18). More importantly, Granny Weatherwax's sense of social

responsibility stands in direct contrast to the wizards'. Though she may disdain their lack of

common sense and inability to perform the simplest of tasks, Granny feels she has a duty to

the people of *Discworld*, a duty that must always come before selfish ambitions or desires.

As Croft explains in "Nice, Good, or Right: Faces of the Wise Woman in Terry Pratchett's

'Witches' Novels," Granny does not concern herself with being Nice (making people happy) or with what is Good (upholding an idealistic moral code), but rather she strives to do what is Right, which "means making decisions that are just but not necessarily merciful, morally correct but not necessarily pleasant" (155). Ultimately, Granny's privileging of Right over Nice and Good illuminates the underlying implication of being a proper witch in *Discworld*: the ability and willingness to accept the burdens of others and make the difficult decisions regardless of the consequences.

Karen Sayer's chapter in *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*, "The Witches," offers an insightful exploration of the witch characters and sheds light on the conversation in scholarship surrounding their connection to or disconnect from the wizards. Observing the role domesticity plays in Pratchett's characterization of witches, Sayer reveals how these women construct a matriarchal system in which their identities directly correlate to their domestic spaces and skills. While scholars often consider Pratchett's witches indicative of "the wise woman tradition in folklore" (Pyykkonen and Washington 110), Sayer further contends that along with their domesticity, the three witches Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg, and Magrat Garlick often conform to the maiden / mother / crone paradigm, leading some scholars to view Pratchett's representation of women—even powerful women—as essentialist, a stance Sayer recognizes yet ultimately finds problematic. Though these characters have strong ties to domestic feminine space, "none of the witches easily adheres to the traditional/mythical roles assigned them as either women or witches. The witches seek to determine their own lives and therefore rarely live within bounds" (Sayer 135).

Despite the noticeable influence of patriarchal gender roles on witchery in *Discworld*, Granny's character also illuminates the ways in which these women reject and defy being

defined by societal structures and expectations. They may like to tinker in the garden and

kitchen, they may be dutiful and to some degree sympathetic towards others, yet they exude a

feminine agency not often seen within the confines of patriarchy. When first encountering the

wizards of UU in ER, Granny outright defies any notions of male authority and feminine

submissiveness. After refusing to speak to or even acknowledge the presence of lesser

wizards, Granny is introduced to Curtangle...and Curtangle is introduced to Granny's

infamous stare:

> "Is he important?" said Granny to Esk.
>
> "*I*, madam, am the Archchancellor! And I happen to run this University! And
>
> you, madam, are trespassing in very dangerous territory indeed! I warn you that—
>
> *Stop looking at me like that*!"
>
> Curtangle staggered backward, his hands raised to ward off Granny's gaze.
>
> The wizards behind him scattered, turning over tables in their haste to avoid the stare.
>
> (*ER* 167).

Despite being constantly reminded of her status as a woman or "madam" and despite finding

herself in an unfamiliar place full of powerful men, Granny subverts the entire patriarchal

hierarchy with one look. She literally sends men running and hiding without ever speaking

one word, making one move, or performing one bit of magic, and though Pratchett's witches

often happily adhere to gender roles, they frequently and actively subvert patriarchal power

dynamics. According to Sayer, this ability to "undermine and circumvent the norms of so-

called civilised society...allows the witches a degree of fluidity, a freedom of thought, a

plurality and diversity forgone by their wizardly brothers" (149). Whether interacting with

wizards, barons, or kings, these witches consistently cause powerful men to cower and

stumble, and at times it would seem they more accurately embody the true rulers of the Disc. Their ability to see, think, and act beyond the confines of convention and their refusal to submit to a patriarchal male dominance is further illustrated when contextualized through the witches' engagement with traditional narratives.

The first three *Discworld* novels that follow the witches, *Equal Rites* (1987), *Wyrd Sisters* (1988), and *Witches Abroad* (1991), explore the power of language, of stories, traditions, and histories, and highlight the way written words take on a life of their own as they transform into the basic building blocks that construct reality. In her analysis of the witch novels, Sayer also recognizes this motif: "The power of texts, language, stories and authorship therefore cut across the sequence. Each is shown to be a construct, but these constructs seem to determine experience just as surely as daggers and swords" (135). *Equal Rites* engages in the discourse of women's rights and challenges *Discworld*'s patriarchal structure and the long-standing belief that the feminine and masculine sphere should never intersect. *Wyrd Sisters* more directly challenges traditional narratives and historical truths by examining how words, and in this case written words, constitute reality. In this novel Pratchett introduces a satirical recontextualization of not only *Macbeth*, but the entire Shakespearean oeuvre and its recurring tropes, forcing readers to acknowledge and ultimately question the ways in which the works of long-dead white men like Shakespeare influence reality. In typical Shakespearean fashion, the Fool plays a vital role in the novel's subversive suggestions, at one point remarking, "[T]he past is what people remember, and memories are words. Who knows how a king behaved a thousand years ago? There is only recollection, and stories. And plays, of course" (187). While the plot revolves around the playwright Hwel (or "Will") writing a play, which obscures the truth and portrays the King in a positive light,

during the premier performance, Granny Weatherwax and her "coven" cast a spell causing the true historical events to be portrayed instead. The witches' spell may merely replace one narrative for another, one perspective for another, yet while the king sought to deceive his subjects, their act of revision derives from a more noble desire to provide the public with a "truthful" and accurate reality.

Similar to this rewriting of history and literary narratives, *Witches Abroad* depicts the same three witches as they take on popular fairytales and defeat the fairy godmother Lily, who arrests people for committing crimes against stories and who "had become so good at thinking of the world in terms of reflections that she had lost sight of the real one" (Pratchett and Briggs 403). Throughout the novel Granny Weatherwax literally confronts and contends with traditional narratives and their physical embodiment in Lily. As the novel concludes, Granny warns Lily, "You shouldn't turn the world into stories. You shouldn't treat people like they was *characters*, like they was *things*" (323). While in the previous witches novel Granny rewrites a narrative in order to provide the public a truth less tinged with concocted lies and manipulations, in *Witches Abroad* she outright rejects any narrative that forces people to play a prescribed role and robs individuals of their right to choose their own paths, to write their own stories. Caroline Webb similarly notes how Pratchett's works suggest to readers "that stories, and the social conventions they represent, may themselves be resisted in the course of establishing individual identity" (156), and in the end, Granny prioritizes a person's agency and freedom above all else. Even though she believes wands "cause nothing but trouble" for witches (38), the novel concludes with Granny teaching the youngest member of her coven, Magrat, whose "open," or rather empty, mind often becomes trapped in the confines of stories, hence her interest in such stereotypical magical devices, how to use

a wand, thereby allowing Magrat the ability to make her own choice and write her own story. Of course, Magrat immediately throws the wand, a symbol of fairytale lore, into the river where "[i]t sank down over the months and passed, as most things do, out of history. Which was all anyone could ask for" (338).

It is no mere coincidence that Pratchett's first three witch novels explore the detrimental effects that arise from a reliance on or adherence to traditional and popular narratives. From the very beginning of the series, *Discworld*'s witches maintain a constant association with subversive questioning and a determined desire to overthrow and rewrite the narratives that govern and dictate a society's collective reality, yet they ultimately challenge far more than the stories of history, fairytales, and literature. Throughout these novels the notion of a story becomes inextricably tied to ideology. Not only do stories influence and structure ideologies and vice versa, but also ideologies are themselves merely stories. Though not explicitly stated, Granny makes this connection in the following passage:

> A kingdom is made up of all sorts of things. Ideas. Loyalties. Memories. It all sort of exists together. And then all these things create some kind of life. Not a body kind of life, more like a living idea. Made up of everything that's alive and what they're thinking. And what the people *before* them thought. (*WS* 127)

On the one hand, this passage reveals the difficulty in naming or even describing ideology, and on the other, Pratchett's emphasis on "before" and the image of a "living idea" illuminates the ability for ideologies to survive the passage of time and continuously influence societal thought. This notion is further supported by Pratchett's description of a story in *Witches Abroad*, in which narrative seems practically interchangeable with ideology:

Because stories are important. People think that stories are shaped by people. In fact,

it's the other way around. Stories exist independently of their players. If you know

that, the knowledge is power. Stories, great flapping ribbons of shaped space-time,

have been blowing and uncoiling around the universe since the beginning of time.

And they have evolved. The weakest have died and the strongest have survived and

they have grown fat on the retelling…stories, twisting and blowing through the

darkness. And their very existence overlays a faint but insistent pattern on the chaos

that is history. Stories etch grooves deep enough for people to follow in the same way

that water follows certain paths down a mountainside. And every time fresh actors

tread the path of the story, the groove runs deeper. This is called the theory of

narrative causality and it means that a story, once started, *takes a shape*. It picks up

all the vibrations of all the other workings of that story that have ever been. (3)

Connecting story and ideology results in a reading of the witches as constantly struggling

against the illusive and complex threads of ideology, not only challenging beliefs and so-

called truths passed through narratives, but questioning the very structures of reality. There

are many important qualities necessary for a proper witch on the Disc, such as a selfless

desire to help others, an innate sense of right and wrong, and a familiarity with hard work,

yet a witch's primary principle ultimately revolves around the ability to recognize the

constructedness of reality and the fortitude to steer herself and others out of the grooves of

"narrative causality." After all, a witch's magic, particularly Granny's favored method of

Headology, is just another story since such "magic is as much perception as it is fact. Or

magic is a fact by virtue of people accepting it as fact" (McGillis 21). By rewriting the play

in *Wyrd Sisters* and rejecting fairytales in *Witches Abroad*, Granny essentially replaces one

story for another, one ideology for another. When push comes to shove, ideology remains an inescapable force, yet within *Discworld* the alternative proposed by Granny and the witches celebrates the individual and is ultimately positioned as preferable to the existing conventional and hegemonic ideologies embodied by the wizards.

Labeling the witches as Other or marginalized characters seems unproblematic and self-explanatory. Even forgetting their status as women in a patriarchal society, as magical beings in a mainly humanoid population, as symbols of intelligence in a largely uneducated society, the very act of challenging traditional narratives and ideologies places the witches in opposition to the norm and dominant society, automatically designating them as Other. Roderick McGillis and Caroline Webb have also considered Pratchett's witches as indicative of the Other, McGillis for their separation from the community due to magical abilities and Webb for the negative stereotypes surrounding witches. But the important questions here are: What does this otherness signify? What effect does it have on the witches? What effect does it have on our understanding of the witches? And, how does this effect the educational ideology promoted by the witches?

Considering how the witches' status as Other affects their community first relies on identifying any results or byproducts of such a position. This line of questioning presents numerous avenues of analysis, yet McGillis's association between otherness and an identifiable ethics provides a particularly provoking and illuminating angle from which to approach this question: "The ethics of the other in Discworld are tolerance and assistance without prejudice. Pratchett's world may have its hierarchies, but ultimately what matters is the human instinct for cooperation and care. Ministering to others is the lot of the witch in Discworld" (21). Webb's exploration of the witches delineates a similar ethics, suggesting it

is not mere cleverness or skepticism that makes a witch a heroine, but her "courage based on a powerful sense of responsibility. For Pratchett, it is this ethic that defines the witch: rather than being simply a social reject or a cursing crone, the witch takes on responsibility for the well-being of the community" (157). This perspective correlates the witches' otherness with their emphasis on duty and their doctrine to selflessly serve their communities. While McGillis and Webb's overall focuses force them to move on before further exploring this claim, it seems logical to attribute this ethics directly to the witches' status as Other.

Marginalized within society and the constant outsider of their communities, these witches become attuned through first-hand experience to the wrongs and offenses committed against individuals by a hegemonic society; they understand the propensity for individuals to be lost, forgotten, or disregarded in brutal hierarchal power struggles. After all, the wizards' status as the dominant order positions them at the height of this struggle and contributes to the typical indifference and occasional intentional neglect with which they approach their responsibilities to their students and their community. From this frame of reference, the witches' status as outsiders cultivates empathy and compassion for the individual from which grows an ethics reliant upon a social duty to provide relief to others.

While Webb's narrow focus on the negative stereotypes of witches leads her to suggest reading the *Discworld* order as emblematic of "resistance to a too-paranoid society" (159), McGillis's brief yet more comprehensive reading of the witches provides another valuable and insightful observation that can perhaps illuminate how the their otherness effects our overall understanding of these women: "That othered characters like Granny...sacrifice themselves for the good of those who other them is testament to their goodness" (21). Not only do the witches stand in defense of those similarly othered, but they

provide equal and impartial assistance even to those who perpetuate a system that will always result in marginalization. Recognizing this selflessly noble and virtuous devotion to their cause unveils a complexity behind the witches: they are no mere underdogs hoping to overthrow the forces repressing them for their own gain or advantage, but rather they are women who have dedicated their lives to upholding rightness, whatever the cost. Unlike the reactionary connotations of Webb's reading, Pratchett's witches do not stand in direct opposition to norms of dominant society, but rather offer an alternative. As a result, their ethics boils down to an emphasis on equality and social balance, and their primary concern when questioning and subverting dominant ideologies lies not in an dichromatic reversal or inversion, but instead a leveling out.

Adopting McGillis and Webb's ethics of the Other promotes an image of the *Discworld* witch as a practically inhuman purveyor of justice and virtue, yet since these women still exhibit humanly imperfections such as ego, disdain, annoyance, and frustration, I believe this ethics more accurately constitutes an ideology[8]. In this sense, whether through conscious reaction or unconscious socialization, the witches' status as Other triggers a filtering of their perspectives of reality through the lens of the individual, resulting in an underlying prioritization of social equality which influences every aspect of Pratchett's order of witches. Furthermore, the agency and power afforded to witches by their magical abilities assists in establishing and promoting this ideology, allowing readers a more noticeable "roadmap" through which to explore and trace the infinite tendrils of ideology, one such tendril being, educational ideology.

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[8] Though my conceptualization and use of ethics and ideology are by no means oppositional or unrelated, I understand ethics here as a more intentional and conscious set of moral standards or system of values, whereas ideology is more indicative of the underlying and less recognizable systems of meaning and meaning making that structure an individual's sense of reality and identity.

Labeled as children's literature, the Tiffany Aching sequence of *Discworld* resembles a seemingly harmless magical *bildungsroman*, yet its intended audience in no way undermines Pratchett's piercing and sly subversive satire. Instead these novels provide Pratchett with an opportunity to bring readers face to face with a manifestation of ideology, illuminating the inseparable intertwining of ideology with educational practices and pedagogies, and shedding light on the effective method of perpetuation through impressionable young students. Although the presence and effects of ideology within an educational system can be gleaned from the various novels dealing with UU and the wizards, Tiffany's subseries provides a more comprehensive view and marks a significant contribution to the *Discworld* series. Avid readers of Pratchett would undoubtedly piece together the wizards' association with the dominant order due to their overwhelming presence within the series, yet it is the Tiffany Aching sequence that finally allows a solidified understanding of the witches' alternative and subversive ideology. Following a young girl's initial discovery and gradual familiarity with witchcraft clearly delineates the various aspects of this ideology by revealing underlying patterns within Tiffany's education in and developing conceptualization of what it means to be a witch. Clearly sketching her introduction to the basic tenants of witchcraft, its philosophy, sense of purpose, motivation, and goals, over the course of four novels, Pratchett brings to light certain patterns that can then be traced back to the systems of meaning and meaning-making that constitute the witches' ideology.

Understanding educational ideology requires first considering readers' initial introduction to Tiffany in *The Wee Free Men*. While the opening narration depicts her

internal dialogue, revealing thoughts still tinged with a childlike quality and youthful

curiosity, Tiffany's extraordinary intellect makes a significant first impression on readers:

> Tiffany Aching was lying on her stomach by the river, tickling trout. She liked to hear
>
> them laugh. It came up in bubbles…. There was a small part of Tiffany's brain that
>
> wasn't too certain about the name Tiffany. She was nine years old and felt that
>
> Tiffany was going to be a hard name to live up to…. Another and larger part of
>
> Tiffany's brain was thinking of the word *susurrus*. It was a word that not many
>
> people have thought about, ever. As her fingers rubbed the trout under its chin, she
>
> rolled the word round and round in her head. Susurrus…according to her
>
> grandmother's dictionary, it meant "a low soft sound, as of whispering or muttering."
>
> Tiffany liked the *taste* of the word. It made her think of mysterious people in long
>
> cloaks whispering important secrets behind a door: *susurruss-susurrusss*…. She'd
>
> read the dictionary all the way through. No one told her you weren't supposed to.
>
> (*WFM* 3-4)

Emphasizing Tiffany's youth, the first image of her lying by a river playing with fish appears

an unsurprising introduction to the young protagonist of a children's novel. However, though

her attribution of the bubbles to the fish laughing resembles a child's imagination, her sense

of *hearing* that laughter, her sense of hearing something based solely on sight, reveals an

uncommon and impressive mental bending and distorting. Similarly, the word "susurrus"

does not evoke a sound but rather a *taste*, and Tiffany's knowledge and memorization of the

dictionary definition prevents attributing this eccentricity to childish ignorance or confusion.

Disassociating bubbles from sight and a word from sound in order to explore their meanings

through other senses reveals Tiffany's individualistic thought process, and indicates a

seemingly innate acceptance of the artificial relation between the signifier and the signified. Tiffany "roll[s] the word round and round in her head," suggesting an ability to consider an object from various perspectives simultaneously and an awareness of how such perspectives alter meaning. Of course, for any readers who fail to notice or are unconvinced by Tiffany's exceptional and unique mental prowess, discovering this nine-year-old has already read through an entire dictionary on her own leaves no doubt that she is an atypical child. Already Tiffany exudes a subversive intellect fitting of a witch, and her inquisitive, seeking nature promises a protagonist unsatisfied by following the status quo.

Directly following this scene, Tiffany senses a disturbance in the water near where her younger brother plays on the bank, and she snatches him away mere seconds before an unearthly figure emerges from the river in an attempt to take him. Tiffany doesn't respond with fear; she's too angry. She doesn't run to tell an adult or ask for help; she knows they won't believe her. Instead, she immediately takes action. With no explanation from the narration, Tiffany returns home and after quickly referencing *The Goode Childe's Booke of Faerie Tales* finds a soup plate, measures it, takes the largest frying pan, grabs a bag of candies and her brother, and heads back to the river. Quickly assembling a makeshift diversion for her brother, the bag of candies tied to a piece of wood she hammered into the ground, Tiffany hides behind a nearby brush with frying pan in hand. Essentially using her brother as bait, Tiffany waits till the creature returns, whacks it in the head with her frying pan, watches its defeated form sink back into the water, gives her brother the candies, then goes on her way as though nothing were amiss (*WFM* 7-15). Tiffany's witching potential becomes blatantly obvious. True to the nature of Pratchett's witches, she takes on the role of protector and accepts responsibility without hesitation, understanding that if she does not

defeat this creature, who will? She exudes bravery and determination when facing this challenge and, arming herself with the most readily available tools, she relies upon a crafty, can-do attitude indicative of witches. Furthermore, Tiffany's choice of frying pan as weapon mirrors the association between witches and the domestic space. Even using her brother as bait resembles a witch-like attitude in light of Croft's distinction between nice, good, and right mentioned previously: teasing her brother with candies disregards niceness since it in no way brings him happiness; using an innocent young boy as bait violates goodness since it undoubtedly disobeys any idealistic moral codes, yet taking a calculated risk in order to prevent the creature from moving on to less capable victims epitomizes rightness, which is not always merciful yet unflinchingly just. The only disparity between Tiffany and a proper witch is her reliance on books (although not all witches share Granny's complete distrust of the written word). However, books constitute Tiffany's only reliable source of knowledge at this time in her life, and more importantly, her familiarity with a book of fairytales for children and her complete lack of questioning whether a creature from such a book could actually exist provides the framework for her conceptualization of how stories construct reality.

Accepting that Tiffany already possesses some fundamental skills and traits of a witch before her education begins could prove problematic when exploring education ideology, yet as this sequence progresses, readers come to realize Tiffany's witching education actually began long before the onset of *The Wee Free Men*. Throughout her official introduction to witchcraft, Tiffany frequently contextualize her new discoveries through bits and pieces of knowledge passed onto her as a child by her now deceased grandmother, Granny Aching. The most respected woman in the community, Granny Aching was

renowned for her unparalleled knowledge and expertise in sheep-herding, her frugality of words, her fondness for Jolly Sailor tobacco and turpentine, her hard work and dedication when protecting her flock, and her almost mystical understanding of and connection to the land. Though never identified as a witch in her lifetime, Tiffany's memories of Granny Aching eventually leave little room for alternative explanations and account for Tiffany's already existent witch-like qualities. The girl's very identity appears reliant upon experiences during the few years she had with her grandmother, and while her parents and siblings have very little presence throughout the sequence, Granny Aching plays a major role in all four novels despite being long settled in the grave. Tiffany's memories of Granny Aching constitute a sort of lore and—by revising and recontextualizing these memories through perspectives altered by time and increasing knowledge—further enable Tiffany to understand the connections between story, perspective, and reality.

Granny Aching may have planted the seeds of witchery in Tiffany as a child, yet her official magical education finally begins after visiting a traveling band of teachers who stop by her village annually in order to desperately sell their "wares" for an egg, head of lettuce, or scrap of used clothing. Browsing the stalls, looking for a worthy subject and teacher, Tiffany clearly exhibits greater intellect, knowledge, and wit than any of the so-called educators. For instance, after telling one man she has a question about zoology and receiving his response, "Zoology, eh? That's a big word isn't it," Tiffany replies, "No, actually it isn't...*Patronizing* is a big word. Zoology is really quite short" (*WFM* 25). A stall finally piques Tiffany's interest with its sign, "I can teach you a lesson you won't forget in a hurry" (26), and upon entering she meets the witch Miss Tick who knows all about Tiffany's adventures by the river. While Miss Tick suggests "witches learn in a special school,"

Tiffany receives frustratingly ambiguous directions on how to find it: "go to a high place near here, climb to the top, open your eyes...and then open your eyes again" (49). However, though misleading, Miss Tick provides an unaware Tiffany with her first official lesson in witchcraft—there is no "school."

It is not until the end of *The Wee Free Men* and not until her first encounter with Granny Weatherwax that Tiffany finally comes to realize that this "special school" is merely the world itself, hence its ambiguous location. Granny confirms her suspicions, remarking, "The thing about witchcraft…is that it's not like school at all. *First* you get the test, and then afterward you spend years findin' out how you passed it. It's a bit like life in that respect" (361). The witches' unstructured and anti-institutional approach to education carries various ideological implications, and imparts onto Tiffany an initial understanding of witchcraft. Following her discussion with Miss Tick, Tiffany's magical education began as a completely individual experience. Although other witches like Granny know of her presence and power, Tiffany is left to fend for herself in her first major conflict as a witch. Despite resembling a *lack* of education, Tiffany's journey is better understood as a journey of self-education. While Gideon Haberkorn and Verena Reinhardt believe Pratchett presents a solid case for a "humanist education" (43), Elisabeth Rose Gruner suggests reading Tiffany as participating in an "unschooling" or "autonomous education," which resembles more a socialization than standard modes of learning (229). The witches' intentional decision to remain absent from Tiffany's first experiences of witchery reflects their ideology centered on the individual and forces Tiffany to begin formulating her own understanding of what it means to be a witch instead of a lifeless definition dictated to her through formal teaching. Furthermore, without a

senior witch around to take the reins, Tiffany is forced to take action to protect what she loves and discovers firsthand the full weight of magical responsibility.

Ultimately, *The Wee Free Men* reveals the ways in which Tiffany's official induction into witchcraft resembles a journey of self-education. There are no standardized tests with minimum score requirements, no lectures or formal examinations. Rather, Tiffany's education consists of her individually discovering what it means to be a witch: accepting the responsibility that comes with power, doing selflessly what is right even when others benefit more, understanding the constructedness of reality and ideology's role in the weaving of reality, and fighting against repressive ideologies that weave an alternative reality revolving around an ethics of the Other, individuality, and equality. Tiffany transforms from a peculiar young girl into an imposing heroine and powerful witch as she journeys through Fairyland in an attempt to rescue her brother from the Queen of Fairies, a malicious ruler with the formidable power of controlling dreams. The Queen sends creatures called dromes into *Discworld* to spin dreams designed to trap children in Fairyland. She gives her captive children everything they could ever want yet denies them everything they need, particularly, the ability to grow up. The Queen reigns as a selfish and vicious dictator with hegemonic power: "She's got a world of her own. She could do *anything* with it. And all she does is steal things, mess up people's lives…" (236). Upon entering Fairyland, Tiffany discovers that it exists in another world, another dimension perhaps, and is in essence a parasitic world which feeds off of the "realities" of other worlds to create a "reality" constructed by the Queen herself. Therefore, the Queen is not only a supreme ruler, but also a ruler with an ability to directly control the reality of her world. In this sense, she embodies the dominant order, weaving ideologies, or dreams, to create a reality tailored fit to her preferences and

that perpetuate her domination. One of the Nac Mac Feegle, William the gonnagle[9] explains the complex nature of Fairyland to Tiffany:

> Nothing here really belongs here, remember? Everything is a kind of reflection from outside, or something kidnaped from another worrrld, or mebbe something the Quin has made outa magic…. The world you come from is nearly real. This place is nearly unreal, so it's almost a dream anywa'. And the drome makes a dream for ye, wi' a trap in it. If ye eats anything in the dream, ye'll never want tae' leave it. (222)

During her time in Fairyland Tiffany must learn to see through the dreams imposed upon her by the Queen and her dromes; she must learn to differentiate between the Queen's twisted yet familiar realities and her individual sense of reality. Breaking through various dreamscapes and defeating the Queen relies first and foremost on Tiffany's observation that "this is a made-up world…. Almost like a story" (228). Equating a reality with a story, Tiffany learns to understand how even reality is written by an individual's perspective, and how others impose their own stories and realities as a means of control. In a sense, Tiffany accomplishes the seemingly impossible feat of seeing through the simulacrum and rejecting the hyperreality of Fairyland[10]. Furthermore, she does not waste her time on fanciful notions of the concrete or ideal "real," but by developing the determination to write her own story indicative of the witches, Tiffany sets out to create an individualistic set of signifiers to construct her reality instead of relying upon the empty, misleading, and manipulative signifiers of the Queen's hyperreality.

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[9] A pun on the Scottish poet William McGonagall, often considered the worst poet in British history. Similarly, William the gonnagle acts as his clan's war-poet and is expected to create horrible poetry capable of demoralizing enemies when recited on the battlefield.

[10] For clarification on my use of terminology or for more on the simulacrum and hyperreality, refer to *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) by Jean Baudrillard. Furthermore, Kevin Smith's chapter "Battling the Nightmare of Myth, Terry Pratchett's Fairytale Inversions" in *The Postmodern Fairytales* (2007) provides a compelling Baudrillardian reading of *Witches Abroad*, drawing connections between hyperreality and fairytales that act as "vectors of ideology."

Ultimately, Tiffany defeats the Queen by gradually embracing her own individual sense of reality and sense of self, by "always remember[ing] what's real," or at least what is real to her (268). Her final test consists of resisting the identity imposed on her by the Queen who writes Tiffany as a selfish and cold girl seeking glory: "You're just a brain, no heart at all" (326). The Queen's distinction between logic and emotions reflects an attempt to enforce gender roles, implying Tiffany is lacking, inappropriate, or unethical merely because she exudes the logical collectedness attributed to males. Eileen Donaldson has similarly noted, "[Pratchett] foregrounds the difficulties girls face when they are limited by the gender-roles available to women…. The first fairy tale 'monsters' that Pratchett examines in these books are, therefore, 'monstrous gender expectations'" (148). Furthermore, the Queen continues to mock Tiffany: "You had this dream about Brave Girl Rescuing Little Brother. You thought you were the heroine of a *story*" (324). When faced with this image of her, Tiffany slips into an existential crisis and threatens to be consumed by darkness as she wonders, "Is there any me at all? Or do my thoughts just dream of me?" (328). A correlation between identity and existence emerges as Tiffany doubts her self-defined identity in light of an identity the Queen imposes on her, thereby causing her to question her very existence. Yet when all hope seems lost, Tiffany's memories of Granny Aching and of the Chalk provide the foothold necessary to rebuild and reinforce her individual conceptualization of identity. Pratchett later illuminates the significance Tiffany places on memories when she says, "I'm made up of the memories of my parents and grandparents, all my ancestors. They're in the way I look, in the color of my hair. And I'm made up of everyone I've ever met who's changed the way I think" (*HFS* 351). For Tiffany, her identity stems from an atavistic concept of origins, not only in terms of ancestry but also geography. She learns her most valuable lessons from

Granny Aching, yet it is from the Chalk that she pulls her power. Since *Discworld*'s witches typically come from the mountains and rely upon the hard, craggy surfaces on which they live, many assumed a witch could not be found on the soft downs of the Chalk; yet Tiffany discovers that buried beneath the chalk ages ago lay pockets of flint, the toughest and sharpest stone of all. Latching onto her memories and seeking strength from the flint buried under her feet, Tiffany transcends her physical body to become one with the Chalk, in essence, becoming one with her roots, and draws within herself not only the power of the land, sea, and sky, but even time. This moment of transcendence allows her to finally escape the Queen's power of dream: "She opened her eyes and then, somewhere inside, opened her eyes again…. 'The secret is not to dream,' she whispered. 'The secret is to wake up. Waking up is harder. I have woken up and I am real. I know where I come from and I know where I'm going'" (342-43). Accessing the reality of the Disc itself, Tiffany wields the power of Time and Nature and banishes the Queen back to Fairyland.

Becoming one with the Chalk, Tiffany claims the land and its people as her own and is fueled by her memories of Granny Aching; she accepts responsibility. She finally understands her place in the world. She finally solidifies her identity as a witch, both as protector and fighter. Without the constraints and detriments of institutionalized education, Tiffany learns the ethics of a witch, and it is only through her own experiences that she finally comes to understand Granny Aching's insistence that, "*Them as can do has to do for them as can't. And someone has to speak up for them as has no voices*" (227). It is her sense of possession and communal responsibility that gives Tiffany the strength to defeat the Queen and to take that last step into the shoes of Granny Aching as the witch of the Chalk. Tiffany tells herself,

All witches are selfish, the Queen had said…. Then turn selfishness into a weapon!
Make all things yours! Make others' lives and dreams and hopes yours! Protect them!
Save them! Bring them into the sheepfold! Walk the gale for them! Keep away the
wolf! My dreams! My brother! My family! My land! My world! How dare you try to
take these things, because *they are mine*!

    I have a duty! (331)

Tiffany's journey begins with a child's quest to recue her brother, yet ends with a young
witch's quest to protect and serve all without the power to defend themselves. She learns to
understand the constructedness of reality, fights a repressive reality imposed on others by a
despotic ruler, and dedicates purveying a reality that liberates and empowers individuals. In
other words, Tiffany embodies the ideology of the witches, not because it was drilled and
forced into her mind through lectures and tests in an institutionalized education, but because
her individualist perspective and experiences of the world allowed her to conceptualize the
teachings of Granny Aching and formulate her own understanding of what it means to be a
witch.

The following novel in the Tiffany Aching sequence, *A Hat Full of Sky*, portrays a
witch's education in a more traditional sense, beginning with Tiffany's leaving the Chalk to
apprentice with a senior witch, yet she sets out with the understanding that, "They didn't
teach you how to do [magic]. They taught you how to know what you were doing" (12).
After beginning her apprenticeship with the witch Miss Level, Tiffany comes to realize that
most of her education consisted of daily chores, "endless chores. You could look in vain for
much broomstick tuition, spelling lessons, or pointy-hat management" (94). After her
exciting initiation into witchcraft, Tiffany must now become familiar with the daily life of a

witch, an often boring and mundane life for a young girl. However, while her exciting

adventures in Fairyland introduced Tiffany to the underlying essence of being a witch,

sharing Miss Level's dull and tedious workload provides Tiffany with a number of important

lessons in witchcraft: 1) she gradually understands and accepts the hard work of the witching

profession; 2) she learns that witches must never expect or ask for payment from those they

help; 3) she observes the complex relationships of the witching faction; and 4) she, though

reluctantly, begins to come to terms with the fact that "the whole *point* of witchcraft lay in

not using any [magic]" (133). Beyond chores, much of Tiffany's daily responsibilities consist

of what Miss Level calls "filling what's empty and emptying what's full" (114), in other

words, travelling through the surrounding villages and farms to administer medicine, perform

bits of midwifery, see to the dead, and occasionally enjoy a cup of tea and the latest gossip.

While not exactly what Tiffany was hoping for or expecting, this moment in Tiffany's

education allows her to slightly modify her sense of responsibility as a witch. Tiffany's

experience with the Queen provided her with a sense of possession and duty to protect, while

time with Miss Level reveals the equally significant need to serve selflessly. Miss Level does

not attempt to change Tiffany's conceptualization of a witch's responsibility, yet provides

her pupil with the opportunity to discover that a witch must not only protect the community

to which she belongs but also serve her community.

Experiencing the more mundane aspects of witchcraft, Tiffany finally accepts that

being a witch does not always mean having exciting adventures of glory, but more often

relies on a selfless compassion for others. This emphasis on empathy thus explains scholars'

associating Tiffany with a "humanist education" (Haberkorn and Reinhardt 43). At the

conclusion of *The Wee Free Men*, Tiffany first conceptualizes her responsibility as a witch as

a duty to protect passed on to her: "There's always been someone watching the boarders. They didn't decide to. It was decided for them. Someone has to care. Sometimes they have to fight. Someone has to speak for that which has no voice" (331). By the conclusion of *A Hat Full of Sky* Tiffany has amended this statement: "*this* is what we do. We live on the edges. We help those who can't find the way" (350). Not only has "someone" become "we," reflecting Tiffany's sense of community within the faction of witches, but also the duty to speak for others has become a duty to help others. Instead of just fighting for the defenseless, Tiffany understands she must help the defenseless fight. Though Tiffany is haunted throughout *A Hat Full of Sky* by a hiver, a dangerous entity that invades human minds, in the end she does not defeat the creature, but rather sets it free. Her growing sense of compassion allows Tiffany to see past the hiver as enemy, instead recognizing it as another being needing her help. She welcomes the hiver into her mind, selflessly accepting its intrusive presence that she had before rejected and fought against, finally realizing it is oblivious to the harm it causes and merely seeks the peacefulness of death. Unlike the excitement of fighting the Queen in Fairyland, Tiffany's conflict with the hiver concludes within the confines of her mind as she guides the creature through the passage of death. Unfortunately, just after the hiver has passed on, Pratchett's signature capitalized, unquoted dialogue indicative of the voice of Death appears, "GOOD AFTERNOON" (356), and Tiffany realizes she has entered the realm of Death without an escape route. Yet the time of Tiffany's education in individuality and self-reliance has passed, and Granny Weatherwax appears with a few chiding remarks and pulls Tiffany back into the land of the living.

While the first novel in the Tiffany Aching sequence concludes with a girl intoxicated by her newly discovered power and ready to take on the world, the second ends with a

selfless, empathic, and significantly more humble young woman. Returning from her journey

with the hiver back to the competitive Witch Trials on the Disc, Tiffany refuses to enter the

competition despite being told she would certainly win and defeat the long-standing

champion, Granny. Her youthful quest for excitement and glory has been replaced with the

realization that her quality as a witch cannot be measured in awards or medals, but that the

respect of Granny signifies far more. At the same time, though Tiffany looks up to Granny

and welcomes her guidance, her sense of individuality still reigns supreme. Granny presents

Tiffany with one of her own pointy hats, yet Tiffany returns it with the explanation, "I think

everyone has to find their own hat. The right hat for them, I mean" (389). Granny approves

of Tiffany's choice with her simple response, "Good" (390), again illuminating the

underlying emphasis on individuality that structures the ideology of Pratchett's witches.

While Tiffany's educational ideology is largely conveyed through the first two

Tiffany Aching novels, the next two, *Wintersmith* and *I Shall Wear Midnight*, reiterate these

basic lessons in witchcraft yet shift the focus to the possible ramifications of a witch's power.

In *Wintersmith* Tiffany's momentary lapse in judgment and childish spontaneity causes fatal

consequences, forcing Tiffany to accept responsibility for her own actions and restore

balance on the Disc. Following Tiffany back home on the Chalk as she carries out her duties

as the region's sole witch, *I Shall Wear Midnight* introduces the Cunning Man, a spirit who

breeds hate and prejudice towards witches, forcing Tiffany to become all too familiar with

the image of the evil witch and old hag that dominates fairytales, folklore, and history.

Tiffany not only defeats the Cunning man and through him an embodiment of evil, hatred,

and prejudice, but she simultaneously defeats the negative portrayals of witches that continue

to circulate the minds of today's readers. Tiffany gives one last formidable warning to this spirit:

> And if you come back, Cunning Man, there will be another witch like me. There will *always* be another witch like me, because there are always going to be things like you, because we make space for them. But right now, on this bleeding piece of earth, *I* am the witch and *you* are nothing. *By the blinking of my eyes, something wicked this way dies*. (328)

In this moment, Tiffany is no longer a young girl or mere student of witchcraft but a confident woman and powerful witch. This passage playfully revises Shakespeare's dialogue from *Macbeth* and exemplifies Tiffany's complete dedication to bettering her world. Even when they spurn her, even when they capture and imprison her, Tiffany will always fight for her people; she will always seek to eradicate forces that spread hate and inequality, which seek to control others in order to bend them to their will, which endanger individuals' rights to write their stories.

The witches may constitute Tiffany's teachers and mentors, yet her companions, the Wee Free Men or Nac Mac Feegle, play a significant and perhaps surprising role in her magical education and coming of age. Often drunk, usually stealing, and always ready for a fight, the clan of rowdy blue "pictsies" with red hair, kilts, and a Scottish burr remain a constant presence throughout the Tiffany Aching sequence. A fusion between folkloric pixies and the Picts of Scottish history[11], these creatures represent a subversive force in *Discworld*, joining forces with Tiffany in their desire to defeat the Queen of the Fairies with whom they

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[11] Various other interesting intertextualities surround the Nac Mac Feegle, such as their swords that glow blue when a lawyer is near (Tolkien's elfish swords that glow blue in the presence of Orcs), their playing of mousepipes (bagpipes), and the kelda's magical powers (Frank Herbert's Reverend Mothers from *Dune*), and so on.

have an ambiguous history. "They say they were thrown out of Fairyland by the Queen of the Fairies because they objected to her spiteful and tyrannical rule. Others say they were just thrown out for being drunk" (Pratchett and Briggs 261). Regardless, the Feegles lend a distinctly rebellious quality to the Tiffany Aching sequence not often seen in children's literature. Since the Feegles answer to no one but their Kelda (the "queen" and only female of the clan), "they follow directions in an independent, and usually wild and wooly way. They live by their own rules, which is to say they live without the benefit of rules" (McGillis 23). Also identified as Other by McGillis, these pictsies uphold an ethics of "tolerance and assistance without prejudice" similar to that of the witches (21), yet furthermore, the Feegles expose Tiffany to an actively rebellious and anti-authoritative attitude. Despite the prominent trend of scholarship exploring Tiffany's education, few have explored the influence of the Wee Free Men. These pictsies are often taken at face-value as indicated in a review by Diana Keto: "Comic relief comes in way of the Nac Mac Feegles—mischievous little blue men who tend to follow Tiffany around and cause a ruckus…. Originally intended to watch over her and make sure she's safe, the Nac Mac Feegles have a way of getting into trouble by drinking and fighting" (n.p.). However, McGillis's reading of the Nac Mac Feegle through the context of a silence/noise binary reveals these little blue men may carry greater signification than a clan of silly troublemakers.

An embodiment of subversion, the Feegles offer an alternative to *Discworld*'s dominant patriarchal norms, along with those of *Discworld* readers. A matriarchal culture in a patriarchal society, the clan's Kelda rules with absolute authority, yet she resembles more of a nurturing mother or wife than a domineering queen since she always rules with the clan's best interest at heart. Even the Feegle religion subverts the dominant theories familiar

to readers and other inhabitants of the Disc, believing they are already dead and must have made it to some sort of heaven since "an amazing world like this couldn't be open to just *anybody*" (Pratchett and Briggs 262). As a result, upon death in this world, Feegles believe they just go back to the land of the living. While the witches offer an alternative to the dominant ideology of wizards, I propose the Nac Mac Feegle signify a subversive force heightened by rebelliousness with the potential to completely undermine and directly challenge dominant ideology on the Disc.

The rebellious quality of these pictsies becomes abundantly clear upon first introducing themselves to Tiffany as the Feegles draw their swords in unison and chant, "Nac Mac Feegle! The Wee Free Men! Nae king! Nae quin! Nae laird! Nae Master! *We willna be fooled again!*" (*WFM* 100). Their very creed and ruling ideology reveal a primary emphasis on freedom; while witches focus on individuality, both factions fight for a system of equality and liberty. However, though the witches reflect a progressive, or at least modernized ideology according to the standards of today's readers, they are far more settled in tradition compared to the Feegles. Though a seemingly drunk and disorderly group of miniaturized warriors, the Feegles reflect openness to progress and change throughout their pursuit and defense of freedom. For example, in the first Tiffany Aching novel they gradually overcome their fear of magic and witches, although they continue referring to Tiffany as the Big Wee Hag. Also, despite the Feegles' deep-rooted hatred and suspicion of writing mainly due to its association with legal documents and wanted posters, in the second novel a new kelda takes over their clan "and a new kelda brings new ideas. That's how it's supposed to *work*. It stopped a clan getting too set in its ways. Kelda Jeannie was from the Long Lake clan, up in the mountains—and they *did* write things down" (*HFS* 35). Combining the Feegles'

rebellious and progressive natures with a stubbornness and willingness to fight, Pratchett

transforms the small and mostly harmless pixies of folklore into a clan of six-inch-tall

freedom fighters with the gumption and determination capable of butting heads, both

figuratively and literally, with the dominant order. In *Discworld* even the little man can take

down the biggest of foes:

> The Nac Mac Feegle couldn't be trodden on or squeezed. They worked in groups,
>
> running up one another's backs to get high enough to punch an elf or, preferably,
>
> bash it with their heads…. There was some method in the way the Nac Mac Feegle
>
> fought. For example, they always chose the biggest opponent because, as Rob
>
> Anybody said later, "It makes them easier to hit, ye ken." And they simply didn't
>
> *stop*. It was that which wore people down. It was like being attacked by wasps with
>
> fists. (*WFM* 288)

Underneath the endless humor surrounding the Nac Mac Feegle lays a formidable threat. The

witches teach Tiffany to act, which may involve a bit of fighting after all of the chores and

thinking are done, but the Feegles teach her to fight first and foremost: fight because you can;

drink because you can; steal because you can. Ignore the rules and regulations imposed upon

you, actively and forcefully resist subjugation, and work together to seize your freedom in

defiance of the tyrannical forces that seek to oppress and control you. Don't just write your

own story, fight for it.

Tiffany views her pictsie protectors as companions as opposed to educators, yet their

presence contributes to the educational ideology passed to her from the witches, adding

subversive and potentially disruptive political and social implications. Though the witches

undoubtedly consider themselves superior to *Discworld*'s wizards, they never actively

engage the wizards in physical combat, but leave the men to their tea, armchairs, and occasional whizzing. Furthermore, they essentially only challenge the individuals and not the ideological structures that promote the social hierarchy of wizards over witches. Despite their obvious power and agency, the witches appear generally content in their status as the feminine Other in a patriarchal society, going about their domestic crafts, relatively unconcerned with their occasional compliance to traditional gender roles. They seem to respect the balance of wizard / witch; while a witch will never pass up the chance to take a wizard down a peg, the faction does not yet show signs of directly challenging the dominant ideology of the wizards. Pratchett may saturate his depictions of wizards with satire and his depictions of witches with nobility and righteousness, but within *Discworld* itself, the alternative ideology of the witches stands opposed but neither superior nor inferior to the ideology of the wizards. It is only through Tiffany in which the ideology of the witches fuses with the rebelliousness of the Nac Mac Feegle that Pratchett embeds within *Discworld* the necessity of an inversion of the typical wizard / witch dichotomy. Pratchett's satire, especially of the wizards, proves highly subversive in its own right, yet through Tiffany and her relationships with the witches and the Nac Mac Feegle I believe Pratchett transcends "just" satire and fantasy fiction genre in order to implant within the very reality of *Discworld* a politically-charged need for a reprioritization of ideologies and a modification of traditional power structures.

Chapter Four: The Unrealities of Reality and the Realities of Unreality:

***Discworld*'s Sweeping Significations and Pratchett's Progressive Potential**

A surprising number of early critical responses to Pratchett outright dismissed his literary importance despite or perhaps due to his popularity. A 1992 review by Tom Shone claims, "Were it not for the references to chaos theory, you'd imagine that Pratchett's readers were still at school. The reference remaining, the success of his books is instead evidence of a huge number of people whose intellectual development was arrested at some point soon after leaving" (n.p.). Furthermore, since Pratchett is considered not only a fantasist but also a humorist, scholars who have occasionally trivialized the *Discworld* series believe "it asks only that we enjoy, it does not seek to change us" (Manlove 137). When considering negative criticism of *Discworld*, a trend emerges revealing a tendency for his work to be dismissed and denigrated for a supposed lack of substance, thoughtfulness, even intelligence. And Pratchett is not alone. For decades these accusations have run rampant in criticism and scholarship surrounding the fantasy genre, and the equating of fantasy with mere escapism remains a stubborn notion within literary studies. Fortunately, various scholars have revisited the disparaging assumptions surrounding the genre, likely as a response to the increasing popularity and success of fantasy series such as JK Rowling's *Harry Potter*, George RR Martin's *A Song of Fire and Ice* (more commonly known as *Game of Thrones*), Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, and Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time*. Finally, the compulsory labeling of fantasy fiction as fodder and fluff for the layman or "casual" reader has come under

scrutiny within academic circles, and though stubborn notions of high literature continue to linger, scholars are increasingly considering the merits and accomplishments of fantasy fiction.

Scholarly inquiries into the significance and relevance of fantasy fiction have gained particular traction through recontextualizations of the real / unreal binary. In *Fantasy and Mimesis*, Kathryn Hume contends that realism "no longer imparts an adequate sense of meaning to our experience with reality," instead arguing that fantasy fiction has a greater ability to open readers' eyes to the constructedness of reality (39). Similarly, Ursula K. Le Guin claims, "Seen thus, as art, not spontaneous play, [fantasy's] affinity is not with daydream, but with dream. It is a different approach to reality, an alternative technique for apprehending and coping with existence. It is not antirational, but pararational; not realistic, but surrealistic, superrealistic, a heightening of reality" (84). While Hume essentially flips the real / unreal hierarchal binary, Le Guin challenges the polarization of the two, suggesting the unreal more accurately reflects another form of the real instead of its opposite. Furthermore, the unreal—the fantastic and the surreal—does not defy or reject reality but rather magnify, twist, and/or expand reality. According to Pratchett, "The Discworld is as unreal as it is possible to be while still being just real enough to exist" (*MP* 1), and the *Discworld* series thrives on this refiguring of the unreal and reconceptualization of reality as Pratchett consistently chips away at readers' distinctions between what is real and what is unreal.

Ideological readings in Pratchett scholarship remain relatively scarce, yet the approach has proved highly useful when applied to other fantasy works and the genre as a whole. Though focused on science fiction, Mark Bould suggests, "Marxist theories of fantasy

and the fantastic offer an opportunity not only to engage with extremely popular areas of

cultural production but also to better model the subject for political praxis" (53), and in "Why

We Need Dragons: The Progressive Potential of Fantasy," Daniel Baker applies Marxist

theory to the fantasy genre from which he builds an argument for the importance and

relevance of fantasy. He similarly contends that the labeling of fantasy fiction as mere

escapism reductively implies impracticality and irrelevancy, and comes to its defense by

arguing that by creating imaginary worlds and by juxtaposing the unreal with the real,

fantasy fiction has the ability to reveal the constructedness of reality, thereby allowing

readers to recognize and question ideological superstructures. This insight derives from

fantasy's ability to offer readers "alternative subjectivities" (444), and Baker claims,

> Rupturing dominant ideology's organic totality is not enough. While it is an
>
> important *step*, if we consider Althusser's position that ideology mediates between
>
> reality and the individual subject, then demystification or deconstruction is somewhat
>
> sterile: a new subjectivity requires a degree of replacement, a form of re-imagining.
>
> (442)

Within *Discworld* Pratchett presents two educational ideologies, directly challenging and in a

sense "rupturing dominant ideology" through his satire of the wizards, thereby offering

readers a "new subjectivity" through the witches. Gray Kochhar-Lindgren similarly proposes

reading Pratchett's satirical fantasy as transcending the impracticality and irrelevancy of

"escapist" literature, claiming, "His Discworld novels act to snip off the ideological roots of

old gods, patriarchies, and worn-out narratives and then to regraft them so that they take on a

new form, an occurrence that liberates the reader from her static set-up and opens, in a

dialectic of the fantastic, a different positionality" (81). Ultimately, Pratchett offers readers

valuable insight into the invisible forces that govern society and dictate individuals' realities, not only illuminating the presence and functionality of repressive ideologies, but also proffering a "different positionality," a "new subjectivity."

Portraying the real, realism and similar literary modes become bound by forces of ideology, and though they can interact with and challenge ideological superstructures, they remain chained to "reality" and are unable to explore alternatives. Furthermore, Hume believes realism "no longer imparts an adequate sense of meaning to our experience with reality" (39), thereby delineating a need for fantasy fiction. However, though they may offer alternative realities, not all fantasy works live up to the potential and relevancy identified by scholars like Baker. One of the major defining factors of fantasy is the creation of a secondary world, yet when this world is presented as distinct and separate from our world such as in the works of Tolkien and Robert Jordan, many of the ideological implications are more likely to lose their translatability and relevancy for readers. On the other hand, fantasy works like *Harry Potter,* which situate the fantastic within the context of the real, face similar constraints and limitations when the fantastic and the real fail to integrate beyond surface level interactions. In "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollowness: A Narratological and Ideological Critique of J.K. Rowling's Magical System," Daragh Downes reveals the implications arising from tensions between "primary-world realism and secondary-world invention" (173). Just as the magical realm of *Harry Potter* fails to influence or integrate with the Muggle or non-magical realm, Downes believes the fantasy series fails to impart any significant political or social relevancies to its readers. "Magic in these books is a mere superaddition to a basically mundane world. It is not a creative or transformative force," but instead results in "a certain imaginative and ideological hollowness" (173). Fantasy fiction

may be imbued with a subversive potential, yet the complexities arising from the real / unreal

binary ultimately cause many fantasist to struggle to live up to that potential.

On the other hand, the sheer power of *Discworld* derives primarily from Pratchett's

unique and brilliant ability to blur lines between the real and the unreal, thereby saturating

the work with a real-world relevancy indicative of fantasy's progressive potential. Pratchett's

fellow co-writer of *Good Omens*, close colleague and friend Neil Gaiman provides a

provoking lens through which to consider the subversive power of Pratchett's logic and the

reverberations it incites:

> It was the way [Pratchett's] mind worked: the urge to take it all apart, and put it back
>
> together in different ways, to see how it all fit together. It was the engine that drove
>
> Discworld — it's not a "what if..." or an "if only..." or even an "if this goes on...;" it
>
> was the far more subtle and dangerous "If there was really a..., what would that
>
> mean? How would it work?" ("An Appreciation" n.p.)

Furthermore, an interview with Pratchett has revealed an increasing conscious intention over

the course of his career to charge his writing with greater relevancy: "I think I've done quite

well in making Discworld – not more serious – if I say relevant that sounds weird. Once upon

a time it was Rincewind running all over the place, and now you have Tiffany Aching"

(Bookwitch n.p.). The Disc warrants a distinctly separate secondary-world, yet unlike

creations such as Tolkien's Middle Earth, it maintains a constant interplay between the

fantastic and the familiar. In addition to Pratchett's frequent intertextuality, removing the

magical, mythical, and folkloric from *Discworld* leaves behind a setting indicative of a quasi-

preindustrial England with the occasional more modern features and characteristics. Though

undoubtedly reflective of the "real world," further complexities arise from an inability to

situate *Discworld* securely within any distinct time or era. The Disc becomes a liminal space in which readers experience an undeniable familiarity while at the same time remain irrevocably detached and disengaged from any concrete real-world associations. Considering the common notion that perspective requires distance and objectivity demands detachment, *Discworld* forces open a window through which readers can view their world—its societies and individuals, its conventions and beliefs—and by framing this window within the fantastic and unreal, readers maintain the necessary distance in order to comfortably critique and question what often goes overlooked, ignored, and avoided, perhaps most importantly, the unseen workings of dominant ideology along with its repressive and injurious implications.

Pratchett not only presents readers with the opportunity to view their world through a critical lens, but also embeds within *Discworld* alternatives that directly challenge dominant ideology. Whether problematizing conventional commonalities or promoting radical uncommonalities, Pratchett plants seeds throughout his narratives that then flourish and further take root in light of his pervasive humor. Exploring Pratchett's "rhetorics of humor," Gideon Haberkorn delineates three common explanations humor theorists use to interpret the cognitive processes behind perceiving and responding to a joke: "humor is a context in which we can feel superior to the butt of the joke, can release suppressed feelings and thoughts, or can stumble across cracks in our mental landscape" (162). Pratchett's humor evokes all three responses, yet Haberkorn's subsequent reading of the "poetics of fantasy" emphasizes Pratchett's constant questioning of the rules that govern our realities and his insistence on individuals writing their own stories, suggesting his humor primarily acts as a catalyst that forces readers to "stumble across cracks in [their] mental landscape[s]." While some may take Pratchett at surface level, enjoying his riotous humor as merely an entertaining

diversion, others recognize the subversive ideological implications that accompany his seemingly blithe humor. In an interview, Pratchett observes, "The truth is that to a lot of people, I will always be the fellow who writes funny books. I'm quite happy with this for a number of people have found out that it isn't quite like that" (Bookwitch n.p.). The very reason we laugh at Pratchett's puns and witticisms is because they hit so close to home, and on the darker side, we often laugh in order to shield ourselves from the stinging truth of his words.

In the hands of Pratchett, satire wields a double-edged sword capable of evoking lighthearted laughs while simultaneously cutting to unpleasant truths. Occasionally Pratchett's jokes are just that, jokes, yet humor remains the primary method through which he conveys his underlying message and presents an alternative subjectivity. Drawing from Pratchett's reliance on and method of employing humor along with Haberkorn's explanations for the resulting implications of his humor, satire in *Discworld* often carries greater significances in a combination of ways: 1) they play off of the absurd and illogical notions we accept as fact and then rely upon to construct our realities, structure our societies, and dictate our perspectives; 2) they illuminate the extent to which dominant ideology has infiltrated every aspect of our thoughts and actions, creating a "norm" that we blindly accept even when it oppresses, restrains, and intimidates us; and 3) they suggest an alternative reality and proffer alternative ideologies that appear so blatantly logical, beneficial, and preferable that our minds, conditioned by repressive ideology, viscerally react with laughter, creating a defensive wall against Pratchett's subversive suggestions that threaten to undermine and transform our safe and stable realities. In response to Pratchett's decreasing

health, Gaiman recently published an article revealing an illuminating conceptualization of Pratchett's humor:

> Terry's authorial voice is always Terry's: genial, informed, sensible, drily amused. I suppose that, if you look quickly and are not paying attention, you might, perhaps, mistake it for jolly. But beneath any jollity there is a foundation of fury…. He will rage, as he leaves, against so many things: stupidity, injustice, human foolishness and shortsightedness, not just the dying of the light. And, hand in hand with the anger…there is love: for human beings, in all our fallibility; for treasured objects; for stories; and ultimately and in all things, love for human dignity. ("Foreward" n.p.)

Correlating with his unique employment of fantasy, Pratchett's humor similarly magnifies his relevancy for readers. The complex interplay of anger and love lurking behind moments of humor illuminates Pratchett's authorial perspective, suggesting his writing seeks to evoke more from his readers than simply laughter, but also to convey a rage at the absurdities and injustices too often ignored and unchallenged, and to implement his love for humanity by providing readers the necessary tools to recognize and impede the injustices laid against them.

Fusing the progressive potential of fantasy and the subversive rhetorics of humor, Pratchett fashions a refreshingly unfamiliar and idiosyncratic literary amalgamation capable of transcending the limitations and crippling expectations of both genres, while also providing a narrative freedom from which to further implement his transformative perspective and relevancy. According to Gaiman, "Terry knew a lot. He had the kind of head that people get when they're interested in things, and go and ask questions and listen and read. He knew genre, enough to know the territory, and he knew enough outside genre to be

interesting" ("An Appreciation" n.p.). Critical and discontented with the derivatively formulaic Tolkien, folkloric, and mythic conventions running rampant amongst the fantasy genre, Pratchett actively sought to reinvigorate fantasy by creating a personal fluid literary space in the margins outside of any particular tradition, constantly interacting with the stories and narratives of various genres, yet unbound and unencumbered. Though popular fantasists like Rowling, George RR Martin, and Robert Jordan have all imparted significant contribution to the fantasy genre, when placed beside Pratchett they exhibit a more rigid adherence to traditional narratives and their works lack the intertextual awareness prominent throughout *Discworld.* These writers undoubtedly understand their literary traditions, yet this awareness remains absent from their works that seem to complacently follow various narrative ruts with the occasional creative detour. *Discworld* often interacts with similar narratives, yet through conscious questioning and an acute awareness of how they function, Pratchett seems to travel a parallel, untrodden path from which he can then follow and map fantasy's narrative ruts from a fresh perspective and without the danger of becoming stuck. When asked about his advice to aspiring writers, especially fantasy writers, Pratchett often emphasizes the importance in avoiding oversaturation in similar narratives:

> If you are going to write, say, fantasy - stop reading fantasy. You've already read too much. Read other things; read westerns, read history, read anything that seems interesting, because if you only read fantasy and then you start to write fantasy, all you're going to do is recycle the same old stuff and move it around a bit. The next thing you know you've got a dark lord and there is no help for you. (RollerCoaster n.p.)

Pratchett appears to live and write by the very same creed he attributes to *Discworld*'s witches: recognize and accept the functionality of stories and the ways they construct reality; challenge and resist the stories others seek to impose on you and help individuals learn to do the same; discover your own story and take control over your own reality; "change the story, change the world" (*HFS* 391).

Pratchett's *Discworld* novels may entertain, they may seem like an escape into humor and the fantastic where Death spends his evenings playing cards with the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, wizards uphold the tradition of riding piggyback through the halls of the university in search of a Megapode, and witches obstinately refuse to take off their clothes and dance in the moonlight, yet underneath lies a continuous thread of subversive commentary on the nature of the real, the power of stories and their impact on reality, and the inescapable and all-pervading force of ideology. Regardless of past critics claiming Pratchett's works elicited a few good laughs yet failed to achieve intellectual complexity or social relevance, Pratchett is gradually becoming known for more than his impressive book sales (and for being "that guy" who made a sword out of meteorites after being knighted by the Queen). Fellow fantasy writer Brandon Sanderson recently published an article calling Pratchett's Discworld "transcendent," "unparalleled," and "the highest form of literature," warning readers to not be so blinded by the riotous humor or labeling of fantasy that they overlook Pratchett's moments of weighty commentary, extensive intertextuality, and remarkable mastery of language (n.p.). After all, Pratchett's works offer readers a stingingly subversive alternative subjectivity and maintain a consequential and progressive potential rarely achieved in more "serious" literature. Balancing humor and play with the seriousness and gravity implicit in his socio-politically relevant and perhaps even revolutionary

explorations of *Discworld*, Pratchett seamlessly illuminates, questions, and challenges the intangible complexities and entanglements of reality and ideology. Pratchett's works transgress the limitations of realism by exploring the realm of fantasy in which the impossible becomes possible, thereby providing readers with an alternative window through which to view the world, a window that simultaneously distorts static conceptualizations of reality and magnifies the infinite, interwoven threads of ideology. Furthermore, Pratchett reveals an exceptional ability to infuse the fantastic with a subversive rebelliousness capable of confronting repressive dominant ideology and the progressive relevancy necessary to offer a liberating alternative ideology, ultimately imparting upon his work a heightened socio-political significance rarely attained even within the fantasy genre. Pratchett's singular brand of logical incorporates an unique amalgamation of fantasy and humor, the real and the unreal, and tradition and invention, playfully poking holes in readers' constructions of reality, offering a solution to the hegemonic maze that many writers merely traverse, and finally breaking through the chains of dominant educational ideology. Now we merely have to distance ourselves from the dismissive assumptions projected onto fantasy fiction and writers like Pratchett, and instead explore the innovative and ungrooved path of *Discworld* and follow Pratchett down into the depths of the rabbit hole, off into the margins, and over the edge of the Disc.

List of Abbreviations

The following table reflects the corresponding novel titles for all abbreviations used throughout this thesis:

CM	*The Colour of Magic*
ER	*Equal Rites*
GG	*Guards! Guards!*
HFS	*A Hat Full of Sky*
LF	*The Light Fantastic*
MP	*Moving Pictures*
RM	*Reaper Man*
S	*Sourcery*
UA	*Unseen Academicals*
WA	*Witches Abroad*
WFM	*The Wee Free Men*
WS	*Wyrd Sisters*

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