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WHO'S AFRAID OF THE WICKED WIT?:
A COMPARISON OF THE SATIRICAL TREATMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN
TERRY PRATCHETT'S DISCWORLD AND EVELYN WAUGH'S DECLINE AND FALL

by

MARY ALICE WOJCIECHOWSKI

Under the Direction of Edward Christie

ABSTRACT

Terry Pratchett, author of the best-selling Discworld series, and winner of multiple literary awards, writes satirical fantasy for adults and children. The academic community has been slow to accept Pratchett's work as worthy of notice. Factors that contribute to this reticence include writing fantasy, writing for children, high volume of work, and popularity in general society. This thesis will provide a comparison between Pratchett's work and that of Evelyn Waugh by focusing on their academic satire, shedding new light on Pratchett's work from a literary perspective, thus lending greater value to his Discworld series as a collection of novels with measurable literary value to the academic community.

INDEX WORDS: Terry Pratchett, Discworld, Evelyn Waugh, Satire, Fantasy, Academic Satire

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MARY ALICE WOJCIECHOWSKI

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2014

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Mary Alice Joy Wojciechowski
2014

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DEDICATION

To Terry Pratchett and his amazing mirror of our world that has helped so many to see themselves. Sorry, I couldn't get a real job!

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INTRODUCTION

In the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) has created the Carnegie Medal, a literary award analogous to America's Newbery Medal. It is presented for "[...] a book of outstanding literary quality. The whole work should provide pleasure, not merely from the surface enjoyment of a good read, but also the deeper subconscious satisfaction of having gone through a vicarious, but at the time of reading, a **real** experience that is retained afterwards" (CILIP Carnegie Medal Award Criteria). Part of the retained "**real** experience" of reading that CILIP looks for in its medal recipients is the feeling of enlightenment. Literature can be a guide to understanding our world and ourselves. Austin Porterfield offers one version of this enlightenment as the "literary mirror," where we see "personalities reflected [...] in myriad forms. They are of all types and ages; and they live in every conceivable kind of situation. Therefore, we cannot avoid seeing ourselves, our families, and our neighbors reflected there from many perspectives" (3-4). The light that good literature shines on the way we live helps us to examine the world more closely. John Storey postulates that "[t]he world certainly exists outside of representation, but it is only in representation that the world can be made meaningful" (5-6). Sir Terry Pratchett, best-selling author and recipient of the Carnegie medal, is the creator of the fantasy planet, Discworld, which he describes as "a world and mirror of worlds (*Guards! Guards!* 354).¹ His satirical fantasy encourages his readers to see

¹ Pratchett's Discworld series is an interconnected group of books that presently number approximately forty, depending on how they are being counted. In this thesis, I will be citing several works other than the core text, *Interesting Times*. These works include *The Color of Magic*, *Carpe Jugulum*, *Guards! Guards!*, *Jingo*, *The Last Continent*, *The Light*

the absurdity in themselves and their reality, humor cloaking the seriousness of his observations, until, at the last moment, he lifts the fabric of fantasy and leaves the reader staring at versions of reality he or she may not have considered (or wanted to consider). In effect, Pratchett is writing social commentary disguised as fantasy. His representations of real world problems are heightened by their juxtaposition to the fantasy world in which they are placed. His skills, in both defamiliarization (Viktor Shklovsky's term for creating a lens to make the familiar unfamiliar) and creating "suspension of disbelief" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge's term for making the unreal seem familiar and real) are what earned him the Carnegie Medal, and should eventually lead to a greater acceptance of Pratchett's work by critics and the academic community (Shklovsky 18, Coleridge *Literaria II* 6). These terms will be discussed in greater detail in chapter one.

Fantastic, Moving Pictures, Night Watch, Reaper Man, Small Gods, Snuff, Soul Music, Sourcery, and Wee Free Men. Each of them contains information that is referenced but not fully explained in *Interesting Times*. Pratchett's stories build on one another, and while each book can be read as a stand-alone volume without feeling lost, there is much to be gained by reading the entire series, the cumulative nature of which allows for greater character development without creating excessively long books. The knowledge carried forward within the series allows for a shorthand to be used for non-essential characters or situations. Additionally, Pratchett's *Strata, The Carpet People, and The Dark Side of the Sun* are cited, though they are not part of the Discworld series.

The fantasy element, as well as the inclusion of children's books in Pratchett's body of work seemed to delay his acceptance by critics and by the academic world. Theories of reading change with the times, fortunately. Novel reading was once held as an unsavory activity, an enterprise undertaken by those whose judgment was somehow lacking, because novels were neither educational nor representative of reality. In the early nineteenth century, Samuel Taylor Coleridge berates those who indulge the habit of reading novels, saying such behavior "occasions in time the entire destruction of the powers of the mind; it is such an utter loss to the reader, that it is not so much to be called pass-time as kill time." He continues, deriding this activity as lacking in "trustworthy information," failing to improve the intellect, and filling the mind "with a mawkish and morbid sensibility, which is directly hostile to the cultivation, invigoration and enlargement of the nobler faculties of the understanding" (*Lectures* 463). Clearly, Coleridge felt that if a book was not informational or educational, it is not only a waste of time but a *dangerous* waste of time.

This philosophy continued in the early part of the twentieth century, where reading popular fiction was considered by some, such as F.R. Leavis, as a vice akin to drug addiction for escapism that "does not strengthen and refresh the addict for living but [increases] his unfitness for living, habituating him to weak evasions, to the refusal to face reality at all." Reading was portrayed as "Substitute-Living," "compensation" and "distraction" from unfulfilled lives (100). Fantasy, in particular, has suffered from being looked upon as the "escapist drug," a stigma that has persisted long after the stigma faded from novels in general.

Fortunately, these attitudes are changing. By 1989, Derek Longhurst opined that reading popular fiction was no longer "akin to a secret vice to which one should admit shamefacedly.

Nor can popular narrative be adequately understood as merely narcotic and its readers as unenlightened junkies” (Longhurst *xi*). And while some in the publishing world, like Gwenda Bond, would agree that “[f]or decades, an imaginary but effective chain-link fence has divided the science fiction and fantasy genre from literary fiction, scaled every now and then by a few intrepid writers” (29), Kevin Brockmeier, author of a recent fantasy bestseller, is quoted in Bond’s essay: “[i]t’s more of an aberration that those elements were stripped out of literary fiction in the first place. No one is rejecting realism, but there is a greater openness to accepting fantastic fiction as a form of literature” (29). This change is apparent in the increasing critical acceptance of Pratchett’s work. As late as 2004, over thirty years from his first book and twenty from his first bestseller, Terry Pratchett was still receiving little attention from academics or the press, reviews paying more attention to the setting of the book than the content, noting only that it was a humorous fantasy book and little else (Langford “Preface” *viii*). In his preface to *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*, Langford notes that “[...]one literary critic wrote a whole column in which he noted how everyone he respected told him he would enjoy Pratchett, but even so, he could not bring himself to read any of his novels” (*viii*). It was much harder for Pratchett to get any kind of real acceptance in his own country than in the USA. In his acceptance speech for the Carnegie Medal, Pratchett notes,

It was interesting to see how Maurice was reviewed here and in the US. Over there, where I’ve only recently made much of an impression, the reviews tended to be quite serious and detailed with, as Maurice himself would have put it, ‘long words, like “corrugated iron”’. Over here, while being very nice, they tended towards the ‘another wacky, zany book by comic author Terry Pratchett’. In fact

Maurice has no wack and very little zane. It's quite a serious book. Only the scenery is funny.

Despite this treatment, evidence suggests, that those in academic circles in both countries are revising their opinions of Pratchett's work. An example of this change can be seen in the recent attention that reviewers, academics, and those in charge of handing out awards are showing to Pratchett. Pratchett progressed from being unacceptable to the British Council as recently as 1997 to his receiving nine honorary doctorates between 1999 and 2013 (Langford "Wrecks" 6-7). During that time he received the 1998 "Officer of the Order of the British Empire," given for "services to literature," though Pratchett jokingly passed off the honor of the OBE as his service having "consisted of refraining from trying to write any" (*Ansible* n. pag.). His joking was not false humility; as noted previously, he was quite vocal in his disgust with the critical coverage of his work. His 2001 Carnegie medal might be more difficult for Pratchett to dismiss so lightly, coming from as prestigious a source as the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. It is this acknowledgement of Pratchett's real literary value that shows the changing attitudes of those in charge of deciding what is or is not acceptable in the literary world. Even so, there is, according to science fiction author Brandon Sanderson, "a distinct lack of top level awards in [Pratchett's] pocket. One British SF award, one Locus award, but no Hugos, Nebulas, or World fantasy awards (often considered the top three prizes in science fiction and fantasy) let alone any mainstream awards" (n. pag.) Perhaps these are yet on the horizon.

While the settings in Pratchett's Discworld novels are clearly fantasy, his books are usually a mixture of genres. *Interesting Times*, for instance, combines high fantasy, a direct

parody of a number of fantasy tropes, and academic satire. The latter provides a backdrop particularly suited to Pratchett's humorous satirical style. The academic satire or "campus novel" was a growing genre in the twentieth century because of the rapid expansion of the university system (due to the baby boom, and in the USA, the GI Bill) and the damage caused to many lives within that system. Thus Pratchett, like twentieth century satirical writer Evelyn Waugh, reflects a cultural moment given to self-examination and a rejection of the praetorian duplicity that they find in the university systems in particular and the education system in general. The two novels that will be explored in this paper contain multiple examples of this kind of rejection of academics and their worlds. The juxtaposition of Pratchett and Waugh is intended to highlight Pratchett's strength as a writer by showing that what is often perceived as low-brow entertainment is, at least in Pratchett's case, a misconception.

Waugh, like Pratchett, was a satirist who was rather ignored in his own time but has gained literary acceptance over time. There are multiple parallels that can be drawn between Waugh and Pratchett, in both their personal and literary lives. Both have written humorous satires, including some autobiographical content. Both handled the combination of social commentary and humor with aplomb. Both provided novels that were not merely entertaining, but examples of particularly skillful writing as well. Both have written versions of the "campus novel." Finally, both were prolific writers whose work was slow to be taken seriously by the academic world. These parallels make *Decline and Fall* a suitable choice for comparison to Pratchett's work.

It is possible to look on Pratchett's Discworld as allegorical, according to Ellen Douglass Leyburn's definition. She postulates that "[w]e can call allegory the particular method of saying

one thing in terms of another in which the two levels of meaning are sustained and in which the two levels correspond in pattern of relationship among details” (6). The criteria she uses to judge a work as such include the “surface level should be clear and interesting on its own plane, but since its reason for being is its illuminating something, it must have enough resemblance to let us know what is significant, as well as enough difference to engage us imaginatively” (6). I believe that it is this quality that has earned Pratchett’s works the descriptor of “a world and mirror of worlds.” By creating a fantasy land, Pratchett produces the “surface level” that is “clear and interesting” and with enough difference from our own world to “engage us imaginatively.” At the same time, Pratchett’s Discworld novels have a deeper story to tell, one that looks at the condition of mankind and highlights its foibles. *Interesting Times* begins (after a clearly supernatural prologue with the gods playing games with human fates) with what appears to be a series of meetings designed to find a person called the Wizzard, who is then to be magicked to another country to fix a problem there. The deeper story, of the helplessness of man, and his general lack of character (not that most are really *bad*, just self-serving) is under the surface, easily discerned by those who have the fortitude to descry it. Beyond that is a fantasy about a wizard who cannot, apparently, practice magic and is forever getting into (and somehow, gets out of) trouble, in what appears to be the start of a civil war. It takes little effort to see the human condition in this, as well, especially the ability of some, who do not seem in any way special, to manage to skate through life essentially unscathed, despite all the evil and misfortune that surround them. Waugh’s representation of life, in and out of school, is less readily seen as a satirical allegory, but it, too, has a surface story that is the story of a man, and an underlying repudiation of mankind. Both Pratchett and Waugh use indirect satire, “cast in the form of a plot” (Abrams 44) to lampoon education, depicting it as a farce, and highlighting a set of mostly

useless traditions that not only do nothing to educate the next generation but may actually damage those attempting to become educated. Though they chose different models upon which to base their work—Pratchett’s writing being more Horatian (satire that emphasizes a gentle snickering at the absurdities it discovers) and Waugh’s more Juvenalian (bitter and angry satire, more intent to harm than to correct its target, as it evinces a belief that it is beyond saving), both of them find numerous opportunities to shine a damning light at the academic bureaucracy, the faculty (from their titles to their appearances to their behavior), and the students’ foibles. Their satire is similar in that it hones in on the absurdities of academia, but different insofar as Pratchett’s satire portrays the absurdities humorously, whereas Waugh just portrays them as disgusting. Additionally, these authors write a slightly off-brand of academic satire, with the action beginning at the university, but moving away from it in the rest of the novel instead of continuing to have the university as the focus. Academic satire evinces a widely-held perspective on higher education, namely that academia does not do what it purports to do, and that everyone in it is involved in maintaining the charade that education is somehow noble.

Written in a genre (fantasy) that is often dismissed as unworthy of serious academic interest, Pratchett’s novels rise well above the lackluster offerings that are too often foisted on the unsuspecting or indiscriminate reading public. His first Discworld novel was a lampoon of the fantasy genre, and required the reader to be familiar with the books he lampoons in order to “get” the jokes. His successive novels become richer and include more subtlety as he came into his own as a writer. Though the Discworld series is fantasy, these novels include the type of writing one would expect in a work of literature as opposed to some low-brow entertainment. Though his books often cause their readers to laugh audibly, they likewise can cause the reader

to squirm a little as they find some unquestioned attitude or belief brought into a new focus. For instance, in *Wee Free Men*, Pratchett uses a child's thoughts to question how children are taught. Tiffany Aching, the nine-year-old protagonist considers the information presented to her in *The Goode Childe's Booke of Faerie Tales*. In every story there was a "wicked old witch" (24). Tiffany questions this, asking for evidence, which is never given. "The stories never said *why* she was wicked. It was enough to be an old woman, enough to be all alone, enough to look strange because you had no teeth. It was enough to be *called* a witch" (*Wee* 24). Later in the book, Pratchett returns to this thought. "She had never really liked the book. It seemed to her that it tried to tell her what to do and what to think. Don't stray from the path, don't open that door, but hate the wicked witch because she was *wicked*" (46). Pratchett then makes the shift from fairy tales to reality, carrying the reader back to the real world.

A lot of the stories were highly suspicious, in her opinion. There was the one that ended when the two good children pushed the wicked witch into her own oven. Tiffany had worried about that after all the trouble with Mrs. Snapperly. Stories like this stopped people thinking properly, she was sure. She'd read that one and thought, Excuse me? *No one* has an oven big enough to get a whole person in, and what made the children think they could just walk around eating people's houses in any case? (46). [There is discussion about the foolishness that fairy tales suggest and people seem to accept.] The stories *weren't* real. But Mrs. Snapperly had died because of stories (46-7).

Mrs. Snapperly was an old, toothless woman who lived by herself with her cat. A boy vanished, and she became a suspect, causing the townsfolk to throw her out into the fatal cold, stone her cat

to death, and burn down her house. Pratchett forces the reader to examine consequences, reality, and unchallenged beliefs all with this short tale.

The deftness with which Pratchett changes the lens to force a closer look is part of his charm. There are few areas of the human condition that are not addressed in one or more of Pratchett's books, and too many instances of rich details and clever techniques in the series to fully discuss here, and so I will focus on just his academic satire. I have chosen *Interesting Times* because it is typical of Pratchett's novels but chiefly because it most closely parallels Waugh's *Decline and Fall*, simplifying the discussion. Reading Pratchett's *Interesting Times* as such a satire reveals that, despite its fantasy setting, it is still capable of successfully mirroring the "real world" as such a satire should. I will argue in this thesis that a comparison of Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall* and Pratchett's satirical treatment of formalized education in his work *Interesting Times* adds literary value to our common perception of Pratchett as merely a popular fantasy writer.

1 THE PLOTS

Both Waugh, with an early twentieth century perspective, and Pratchett, in the late twentieth century, write in the same vein as Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* (published in 1954), poking fun at traditions and dying institutions whose decay is obvious in the uselessness of the work that is done there. *Decline and Fall* is the story of a student who runs afoul of the system, set first at Oxford, in the fictional Scone College, where Paul Pennyworth, the antihero, is studying divinity. Later, the setting shifts to Llanabba (pronounced "hlahnahbah"), a boy's school in northern Wales where Pennyworth finds employment after being "sent down" for indecent behavior (15-6). Pennyworth's misadventures at Llanabba school do not stem, as one would suppose, from his lack of qualifications (13, 15, 24), but from the way the school is run (14-148). While the beginning of the novel is classically academic satire, the purely academic part of the satire falls away in the middle of the book when the action is moved from Llannaba Castle to King's Thursday, the home of Margot Beste-Chetwynde. Pennyworth falls in love with Margot and they are about to marry (181-200) when he is sent on an errand that gets him arrested (201-12.) He manfully takes the blame for his guilty fiancé (215; 252-4), who then marries someone else (262). Pennyworth's death is faked to get him out of prison (271-277, then, posing as his own distant cousin, he returns to (and is accepted by) Scone College, takes placement exams and is right back where he started, accepting unquestioningly the warped theology taught there (284-93).

In contrast, Pratchett's *Interesting Times* begins at the Unseen University (a school for wizards) where the Patrician of the city of Ankh-Morpork has received a communiqué requesting the aid of "the great Wizzard" [sic] (11-13). Rincewind the "Wizzard" is the man they want (19-

24), and his cooperation is secured by threats of dire punishment for impersonating a wizard, as he had not been able to pass a single exam toward graduation (36-38). He is transported to the “Counterweight Continent” via some dodgy technology (created by the most ambitious wizard at the Unseen University) in order to help stop a rebellion (59-60). There he meets Cohen the Barbarian, and his “Silver Horde” of aging warriors (86), who are terribly experienced in not dying (63-69), except, unfortunately, for “Teach” (88), who ends up being carried off by the Discworld version of the Valkyries (358-360). Rincewind is offered the Archchancellorship of his own university (349-50), just before he is involved in a three-way magical swap with a cannon and a kangaroo, leaving the kangaroo in Ankh Morpork, the cannon finishing off the evil Hung, and Rincewind on XXXX, the continent no one is really sure exists (355-67). As in *Decline and Fall*, only the initial setting would be appropriate for strictly academic satire, though there are reminders of how ludicrously the academics involved behave throughout the novel.

Within the main Discworld city, Ankh-Morpork, we find, among other curiosities, the Unseen University. This school for wizards leaks magic, must have its books chained to the shelves to prevent their escape, and employs an orangutan as a librarian. He was once human until he was involved in a magical accident, and then declined to be returned to his former shape, as the new one is very convenient on many levels (*Light* 249). The physical settings of these two novels are about as different as they can be while still sharing a university setting. Both of them, however, start in an academic setting, move out, and back in. Both of them use the familiarity of school to ease the reader’s acceptance of the strangeness of the other goings-on in the book, but alternately, Pratchett’s fantasy setting helps to highlight the idea that “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” The term “defamiliarization” was coined by Viktor Shklovsky, in his essay “Art as Technique,” to explain this authorial technique. “The technique of art is to

make objects ‘unfamiliar,’ to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.” Shklovsky states that “Tolstoy uses this technique of "defamiliarization" constantly. The narrator of "Kholstomer," for example, is a horse, and it is the horse's point of view (rather than a person's) that makes the “content of the story seem unfamiliar” (Shklovsky 18). This technique is often employed in science fiction and fantasy, and, indeed, may be the point of these genres. Alan Wall points out in his “Notes on Defamiliarization” that the idea for this unfamiliarity came from Jonathan Swift’s noticing how the view through a microscope made a flea unfamiliar and the view through a telescope made the moon unfamiliar. These new ways of looking at something familiar made them interesting and exciting, and thus *Gulliver’s Travels* was born, with its exceedingly large and incredibly minute perspectives that “change the nature of the humanity it situates” (20-1). Wall goes on to point out that “[a]ll vivid writing is to some degree defamiliarizing” and that figures of speech are attempts at creating that defamiliarization (21). Waugh’s world is familiar, but he defamiliarizes it with the over-the-top behaviors of his characters and the unbelievable situations that he creates. Because Pratchett uses a fantasy world, he has already set up the defamiliarization, and when he adds his well-turned phrase, the lenses are brought into sharp focus.

Both Pratchett and Waugh use academically-related characters to people their tales, though in very different ways. Waugh’s characters, like his setting, are completely mundane, consisting as they do of professors and headmasters, students and their parents, though those in charge are almost ludicrously flawed. It is hard to believe that a man like the ignominious Grimes could actually be hired and hold a teaching position, and the density of despicably poor teachers in one place nearly defies imagination. Pratchett’s characters appear more fantastic in

their physical descriptions, beginning with the fantastic aspect of the university being run by and for Wizards, but their behavior, while far from exemplary, is for the most part more familiar, with parallel examples being relatively easy to find on any random college campus. Academics in Pratchett's novel include the various professors (who happen to be wizards) in charge of Unseen University, an IT guy who has "built" the first computer (some of the parts seem to have just shown up, and which runs on ants and cheese), Rincewind, a student (wizard aspirant) who can't pass any of his exams, but has a penchant for surviving, and Mr. Saveloy, also known as "Teach," a member of the "horde" who tries valiantly to educate his fellow barbarians in the ways of civilization. The characters in the two novels hold similar positions and serve similar purposes in each book—they are reflections of the people that most people have experienced to some degree or another in their real lives, providing the reader with handhold to ease his acceptance of the story. The main character in each novel follows a similar path through the disparate stories. Rincewind is sent away from the university via a magic spell (*Interesting* 55-60), to perform a duty, that of aiding in the overthrow of an empire (124-126), but ends up in the company of some serious undesirables in the form of "the Horde" (63) a group of barbarians that end up not only less than barbaric, but are actually quite helpful. Rincewind then moves on to XXXX (365-368), before finally returning home (*The Last Continent*). Like Rincewind, Pennyfeather, is sent away, first from the university (7), ending up with some undesirable teachers (18-148), then to perform a duty, an errand for his fiancée that turns out to be human trafficking, (200) and he ends up getting sent away to join some undesirables in the form of his prison mates (215), with the actually guilty party arranging for his release and return to the university. (It takes Rincewind an extra novel, *The Last Continent*, to actually return, but he does get there.) Much more occurs in each novel, of course, but they have this outline in

common. Finding the same sorts of characters peopling a university for Wizards as could be found at a state university anywhere sharpens the focus on the universal silliness that academic satires seeks to highlight.

In his *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge, describing an arrangement with Wordsworth, offers that his own “endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment,” while Wordsworth should “give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the minds’ attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us[...].”(Vol. II, 6). In this way, the reader is able to suspend for a moment the discriminating part of the mind that weighs the value of reality and imagination, and simply accept what is being presented in writing as truth, creating in the reader eyes that again see, ears that again hear, and hearts that both feel and understand (6). Waugh, conversely, takes on Wordsworth’s part of Coleridge’s contract, “to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us” (6). The plot of *Decline and Fall*, although set in the familiar, gives a “supernatural,” fantasy feeling, that likewise requires the suspension of disbelief. It is hard to imagine any likelihood of the plot being able, in the real world, to occur. In the prologue of *Decline and Fall*, Waugh introduces faculty members who are beyond selfish and incompetent in their behavior, the consequences of which are levied on Pennyfeather. Pennyfeather is an innocent student whose life goes from that of an exemplary student to penniless job-seeker after being kicked out for the “indecent

behavior” of running trouserless across the campus after said trousers are forcibly removed from him by drunken alumni (1-12). Waugh continues with his caricature of authority figures by making those in charge suggest that Pennyfeather would be best served by taking a teaching position, despite the charges of indecency, or the fact that he is patently unqualified for the position in question. Morris points out the irony of this situation, stating, “[P]eople who are supposed to be thoughtful and broad-minded are in fact petty and parochial” (4). Here is a further irony. Waugh creates a character similar in both name and self-serving attitude to Charles Dickens’ “Fagin” of *Oliver Twist* fame, though Fagin’s disciples are not pickpockets, but thieves of the money paid for an education and the time of the students that could have actually been spent in learning. The headmaster, Dr. Fagan takes Pennyfeather’s shortcomings in stride, including his sudden dismissal from his university, and hires him anyway. Dr. Fagan doesn’t ask for details, admitting “I’ve been in the scholastic profession long enough to know that nobody enters it unless he has some very good reason which he is anxious to conceal”(15).

Thus, in the first fifteen pages of his novel, Waugh has set up the academic community as unconcerned with fairness or quality, a group willing to wink at positively horrible behavior as long as it is in its own best interests. It is possible that in certain situations, some small part of this scenario might occur, but the mind rebels when asked to imagine the whole of it being real. By making the situation so exaggerated, Waugh is able to shine a light on the preposterousness of the actual academic situation.

Pratchett, on the other hand, places his characters into a situation that could only be fantasy. Their behaviors and interactions, while sufficiently defamiliarized to become appropriate fodder for satire, are largely familiar. Faced with needing to figure out who the

“Great Wizzard” is, and how to send him six thousand miles to satisfy a political request, the faculty behaved in the back-biting, tangential, bickering fashion near and dear to meetings of those who are vying for position and favor. One member, the Librarian, remembers something and hurries off, evoking comment on his unfitness for his job by the Dean, who thinks that having an orangutan on the faculty hurts the school’s image (16). The Dean’s opinion is dismissed by the Archchancellor Ridcully, who assures him that the Librarian is just the thing, and notes that others have asked for their librarians to be changed as well (16-7). Unspoken insults are tacked on to the spoken dialog, and petty personality quirks (“I hate foreigners!”) are uncovered (17). The person (Ponder Stibbons) doing most of the heavy lifting concerning the work that needs to be done is unheard, disbelieved, and wouldn’t be understood if anyone were actually pay attention anyway (17-18). The Archchancellor and the Lecturer on Recent Runes, people who have no idea how things work, argue with Ponder Stibbons, the one person who has any idea how things work and how to get them done. The Librarian, the person who was being maligned is the one who finally comes up with the answer to the question that needs solving, in this case whom to send. He can’t speak, so he solves this by coming back with the “Wizzard” hat in his clutches. If one were to take out the magical/fantastical embellishments, one would have a scene that could be found in most any of the academic novels written since their heyday in the fifties; however, as they stand they add satirical weight, increasing the defamiliarization that forces the reader to look at things in a new light. Adding the fantastical (the semi-sentient computer no one understands, the orangutan librarian, the Burser who has to take dried frog pills to remain even marginally sane,) makes the ordinary feuds of the academic faculty stand out all the more sharply from what, in a perfect society, we *should* find.

Further, we find that Pratchett's fantasy university has experienced something similar to the incident at Waugh's Scone College. In a previous book in the Rincewind series, Pratchett refers to a situation in which half the university gets blown up. The Lecturer in Recent Runes denies any knowledge of it, claiming that he couldn't hear anything because he has "a very thick door" and "with that heavy green baize stuff you can hardly hear any---" (22). This account lacks the details provided in Waugh's novel, but it hints at the same kind of dangerously out of control, fault-deflecting mindset that caused the problem for Penneyfeather.

Though *Interesting Times* and *Decline and Fall* are set in drastically different worlds, their authors each find ways to point out the pettiness and hypocrisy that is present in the academic world, and, by extension, to point fingers at the pettiness and hypocrisy of larger world, both outside the university settings and outside the worlds they have created in their novels. In the next chapter, I will introduce the authors, and offer a glimpse as to the effect their lives may have had on their Juvenalian or Horatian satirical choices.

2 THE AUTHORS

Exploring the background of the writers in question often sheds some light on their writing styles, as their life experiences have inextricably colored their viewpoints and the personal messages behind their writing. When examining how Pratchett and Waugh apply satire to the institutions of academia in their fiction, it is important to understand their own negative educational experiences as children. While the two upbringings were very different, and the two maintain very different views on formal education, as I will discuss in the next few pages, they both draw upon these unpleasant memories to color their satirical handling of *Interesting Times* and *Decline and Fall*.

Terry Pratchett was born in 1948 in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England. Raised in a family with “kindness and where appropriate, a side order of brief and effective sternness and may they be forever blessed for this final consideration; without any religious upbringing whatsoever,” his mother turned to bribery to teach him to read (“Inaugural”). An indifferent scholar, he gives far less credit to his teachers in school, where his “above [his] age” learning got him into trouble, than to the public library and the secondhand bookstore he was wont to frequent. Pratchett relates that he always was “a day late” and thus out of step with the schools he attended, and found reason to mistrust the teachers there, though he claims the schools to be good, as British schools go, and the teachers to be what one would expect (“Inaugural”). He passed his 11+ exams to get into grammar school, but chose to attend High Wycombe Technical High School instead, because he felt “woodwork would be more fun than Latin” (Smythe np). This is significant, as British grammar school, like its American counterpart, the high quality college preparatory school, is more likely to open doors to college or more prestigious occupations, and therefore is usually the more sought-after of the two (Turner 861). He passed

five of the six required O-levels, (Ordinary levels) each of which typically represents two-three years of study in a particular area, and had started classes for taking his A-levels (Advanced levels) of which three are usually required for admission to university, but decided to go to work as a journalist rather than continue in school. The single A-level he did succeed in earning was in journalism. Pratchett left school to start his official writing career as a journalist for a local paper, *Bucks Free Press* in 1965 (Smythe np). At age seventeen, Pratchett wrote his first book, *The Carpet People*, which was published in 1971. This, and his next two books, *The Dark Side of the Sun* (1976) and *Strata* (1981) received reasonably good reviews, but earned lukewarm sales. He finally set about to satirize what he perceived as the “bloated convention of stereotypical fantasy fiction” in his first Discworld book, *The Color of Magic* in 1983. This book poked fun at the entire fantasy genre; highlighting its flaws and laughing at its foibles. Here was the beginning of a career built on multidimensional, flawed characters, ludicrous situations that still manage to be recognizable to readers as mirrors of real life, and a setting that seems impossibly “out there” but even that manages to mirror some of the questions that are asked about the origins of our own world.

By contrast, Evelyn Waugh was an integral part of academia, albeit unwillingly. Given the name Arthur Evelyn St John Waugh at his birth in Hampstead in 1903, he was called Evelyn to avoid confusion with his father, Arthur. He disliked his name and the gender identity issues it caused (Wykes 11). At age seven, he began attending a local school, “Heath Mount,” where he was a day student for six years. His time there seemed to be pleasant enough, though by his account “[s]ome [assistant masters] liked little boys too little and some too much. According to their tastes they mildly mauled us in the English scholastic way, fondling us in a manner just short of indecency, smacking us and pulling our hair in a manner well short of cruelty. [...]”

Then and for many years later prep-school masters were drawn from a heterogeneous and indefinable underworld into which—little did I know it—I was myself destined to descend” (*Learning* 84). Indeed, his schooling was too pleasant to prepare him for what he was to find at Lancing School, where he lived as a boarder from ages thirteen to seventeen. Never the pleasantest of places, the privations of World War I made Lancing all the worse and even more so for someone unaccustomed to abuse, privation and loneliness. Waugh’s autobiography contains descriptions of the filthy latrines (107), the scanty, poor quality food and the lack of privacy (108) that plagued his days there. His loneliness at holidays led him to teach his children “to say a special intention at the Ascension Mass for all desolate little boys.” His time at Oxford did nothing to improve his view of academia; he partied his way to a Third Class BA (the lowest classification, about the bottom fifth of a given class), whereupon his father decided that he should be done with his education and find a job. As his character Pennyworth also finds, there was “only one profession open to a man of [his] qualifications. However incomplete one’s education, however dissolute one’s habits, however few the respectable guarantors whom one could quote, the private school lay open to anyone who spoke without an accent and had been through the conventional routine of public school and university” (*Decline* 215). So, at the age of 23, Waugh took a position teaching history, Latin and Greek, where he found “positive relish in making their lesson as tedious as the subject (very easily) allowed” (223-224). This school and the people he met there, combined with his own educational experiences, became the basis of the school at Llanabba Castle, the school where Paul Pennyworth finds himself in *Decline and Fall*.

Given his immersion in academia, however unwilling, it is perhaps not surprising that Waugh has produced in *Decline and Fall* a classic academic novel. Waugh’s novel follows the

first of the two basic plots postulated by Ian Connor as quoted in *Faculty Towers*. “The one concerns the disruption of a closed world, and a gradual return of order and regularity to it, while the other concerns the passage through this closed world of a character who must in the end be allowed to escape its gravitational pull” (Showalter 3). Though *Interesting Times* also follows the first of Connor’s two formulas to a great degree, Pratchett did not produce an academic novel, per se. *Interesting Times* includes academic satire, but is, like the rest of Pratchett’s Discworld novels, social commentary cloaked in fantasy. Given the dissatisfaction that both authors experienced in their own educations, it is not surprising that this discontent comes out in their various depictions of academia, an idea that is espoused by the authors, not merely surmised. Pratchett states,

Quite a lot of my history found itself scrubbed up, repainted and part of book. I am pretty certain, for example, that a keen, clever, academic bugger could map the wizards of Unseen University to the staff of High Wycombe Technical High School from the late fifties onwards; not all of them got eaten by dragons. Indeed, some of them, including the head of history who I really liked, have been immortalised in print. In the scenery of my books I see the little village where I grew up. Characters speak who remind me of my grandmother and it seems that the mill fondly grinds up every experience, every encounter, and never, ever switches off. And sometimes I detect the influence of my tutors, even if they didn’t know who they were. (Inaugural).

Waugh likewise recalls figures from his school years to mind when writing *Decline and Fall*. A rather disgusting and unwholesome creature he worked with while teaching “...provided certain

features for the character, ‘Captain Grimes’, in my first novel” (*Learning* 227). Waugh does not state so forthrightly, but clearly the parallels can be drawn between Pennyfeather’s situation and Waugh’s own as far as options for employment went.

Pratchett’s setting for many of his stories is the Discworld, a flattened disc of a planet whose cardinal directions are “hubward” and “rimward.” Water runs over the edge of the disc, and is magically brought back to the hub to make another run. It is carried on the backs four elephants, which are in turn carried on the back of a turtle, the Great A’tuin, who is swimming endlessly through space (sparking debate as to its gender and mission). It is populated by people, trolls, werewolves, vampires, and dwarves; by politicians, gentility, generals, street cops, business owners and call girls. The story lines address such topics as Shakespeare, witchcraft, interpersonal relationships, the price and responsibility of power, origins of the universe, war, right and wrong, religion, sexism, “sizism,” and classism. So, as wild as it appears, the writing about all the fantastical creatures in an unlikely world is actually very relevant to the reader from our world. Though Pratchett’s world is clearly fantasy and Waugh’s world is recognizable as something that could be found in north Wales, as it purports, Waugh’s story is nearly as fantastical as Pratchett’s. It is necessary to suspend disbelief, per Coleridge (*Literaria II* 6), to a great degree to accept that someone (Pennyfeather) could: be expelled from college for indecent behavior (*Decline* 12), get a job as “a junior assistant master to teach Classics and English [...] with Subsidiary Mathematics, German and French. Experience essential; first-class games essential” when he didn’t know a word of German, couldn’t play cricket and was lacking both experience and testimonials (13); go on to experience the horrors of situation and personage he finds at Llanabba (18-148), get thrown in jail on someone else’s behalf (201-15); get rescued from jail by making it appear that he had died during an appendix operation (271-6), then get

(re)accepted into his old institution by growing a mustache and wearing a “commoner’s gown” to disguise himself as a “distant cousin” of Pennyfeather (284), finally sitting for his exams and being placed where he had been academically a year previously (284) with no one any the wiser.

While both Pratchett and Waugh seem to have happened on a rich vein of material to lampoon in their own lives, they also both use deliberate implausibility, including hyperbole and farce, to “sell” it. The reimaging of ordinary academic life to the satirical exaggerations developed by Pratchett and Waugh makes its foibles show all the clearer in the funhouse mirror of satire. As I will show in the next chapter, elements of satire drive the humor in both *Interesting Times* and *Decline and Fall*.

3 THE GENRES

In creating their respective novels, Pratchett and Waugh produced works that conform to several different genres: the academic novel, the satire, and, to varying degrees, the fantasy. A comparison of how these writers use these elements will add understanding and worth to the works of a writer whose main genre, fantasy, may, to some, relegate such novels to the subliterate level.

According to Elaine Showalter, the academic novel is found by most critics to be a “basically satirical” subgenre started in the 1950’s, though there are hints of it to be found as early as 1857 in Anthony Trollope’s *Barchester Towers*. This subgenre includes such titles as George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1872), Willa Cather’s *The Professor’s House* (1925), and Dorothy Sayers’ *Gaudy Night* (1936) (Showalter 5-6). The genre proper includes, among others, C.P. Snow’s *The Masters* (1951), Kingsley Amis’s *Lucky Jim*, Mary McCarthy’s *The Groves of Academe*, and David Lodge’s *Changing Places*, *Small World*, and *Nice Work*. Because an academic novel by definition has most of the action occurring on a college campus, neither Pratchett’s *Interesting Times* nor Waugh’s *Decline and Fall* precisely fit. *Decline and Fall* is closer, starting off at a university and continuing in a grammar school. *Interesting Times* likewise includes descriptions of and scenes in the “Unseen University,” but most of the action occurs outside of it. However, they both include the themes of “power, inclusion and exclusion” that Janice Rossen finds to be the basis of the university novel (qtd. in Showalter 3). Both Pratchett’s and Waugh’s novels include classical tropes including the absent-minded professor, the cluttered academic space, and the lackadaisical student, to name a few. According to Rob Morris’ essay, “The Academic Novel,” Waugh wrote in the time of the “awakening,” which offers “the pretense to the actual college experience,” with the behavior of the student body

becoming more reckless and permissive as it moves toward the deeper changes of the 1950's and forward (4). One trope that Morris puts forward is that college is always in crisis (1), a characteristic that both novels share. In *Interesting Times*, the crisis is multidimensional, coming both from the outside, in the form of the Patrician (7-13), and internally, in the form of a lack of education occurring, the fault of which is equally shared between the faculty and the students (14-15). In *Decline and Fall*, the crisis seems to be the failure of the school to act in the best interest of the students, first in allowing them to be terrorized by alumni (3-8), and later in providing miseducation (288, 293). Morris also adds the “Academy as farce” trope—the “farce of administrative hypocrisy and petty squabbles among faculty over teaching methods or ideologies” (4). This trope is clearly in use in both of the novels in question, though the squabbles in Waugh’s novel are more fully realized in the Llanabba School than in his university. The hypocrisy of offering a place for academic excellence and truly providing nothing of the sort looms large in both novels. Teachers who don’t teach seem to have a contract with students who don’t learn for all to turn a blind eye. Waugh’s chapters on Discipline (40-48) and Conduct (49-56) are rife with these instances; Pratchett sets up this contract on page 14.

Many things went on at Unseen University, and, regrettably, teaching had to be one of them. The faculty had long ago confronted this fact and had perfected various devices for avoiding it. But this was perfectly all right because, to be fair, so had the students.

The system worked quite well and, as happens in such cases, had taken on the status of tradition. Lectures clearly took place, because they were down there on the timetable in black and white. The fact that no one attended was an

irrelevant detail. It was occasionally maintained that this meant that the lectures did not in fact happen at all, but no one ever attended them to find out if this was true. Anyway, it was argued that lectures had taken place *in essence*, so that was all right, too. (14)

Pratchett drives home the “essence” of the lectures in the following footnote: “All virtual lectures took place in room 3G, a room not locatable on any floor plan of the University, and also, it was considered, infinite in size” (15).

While it is clear that, due to not remaining in the university system for the entire novel (a situation that according to Morris simultaneously increases its staying power and removes it from completely fitting into the academic novel genre) (6), there are sufficient markers in both *Decline and Fall* and *Interesting Times* to at least consider it as one of the genres into which these novels could be properly situated.

Like many other academic novels, both *Interesting Times* and *Decline and Fall* are satire. Historically, the definition of satire as a device varies according to the academic expert. Northrop Frye claims that satire “assume[s] a special function of analysis, that is of breaking up the lumber of stereotypes, fossilized beliefs, superstitious terrors, crank theories, pedantic dogmatisms, oppressive fashions, and all other things that impede the free movement of society” (*Nature* 20). Daniel Defoe (Preface to *The True Born Englishman*) and Alexander Pope (*Poetical* 345) agree that satire is designed to induce change by highlighting societal issues. Jonathan Swift disagrees that change will ensue, arguing that “Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world and that so very few are offended with it” (Swift

138). Perhaps one of the most complete definitions is offered by M. H. Abrams in his *Glossary of Literary Terms, Revised*. “Satire,” says Abrams, “is the literary art of diminishing a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, or scorn. It differs from comedy in that comedy evokes laughter as an end in itself, while satire “derides”: that is, it uses laughter as a weapon and against a butt existing outside the work itself” (43). He goes on to add that it is intended to be “corrective of human vice and folly” (43). The difficulty in defining satire causes Edward and Lillian Bloom to note that “[l]ike the god Mercury, satire is elusive and variable, wearing many disguises and satisfying many expectations” (15).

Satire is a multifaceted genre, encompassing a variety of goals and means of attempting to reach them, so an all-encompassing definition is beyond expectation. Despite the lack of a single comprehensive definition, it is possible to codify how satire behaves. According to Gilbert Highet, two attitudes are evident in all satire. First is that the situation, person or group that needs changing be described “as vividly as possible” (19). The other is that the language used to make a frank description is “uncompromisingly clear” (20). By using strong, nearly rude language in the descriptions, the satirist intends to shock his/her readers out of their complacency and force them to both see the truth and be moved to “feelings of protest” (20). If such writing shows the writer’s emotions to be a mix of amusement and contempt, then it passes the test and is satirical (21). Highet proposes that if the writing goes beyond amused scorn into hatred, it is no longer satire, but another genre entirely (22). Both *Interesting Times* and *Decline and Fall* pass these tests, though there is more amusement produced by Pratchett’s writing, and more contempt in Waugh’s.

Highet holds that the language used in writing the piece is a good indication of the satirical verdict. “Any author, therefore, who often and powerfully uses a number of the typical weapons of satire—irony, paradox, antithesis, parody, colloquialism, anticlimax, topicality, obscenity, violence, vividness, exaggeration—is likely to be writing satire” (18). Both Pratchett and Waugh would be found guilty of all charges if put on trial for using these satiric weapons. Likewise both *Interesting Times* and *Decline and Fall* display the authors’ consciousness of the “difference between what things are and what things ought to be” that Pollard notes is necessary for satire (3). Highet points out that satire is difficult to do well, and so needs “a huge vocabulary, a lively flow of humor combined with a strong serious point of view, and imagination so brisk that it will always be several jumps ahead of his readers, and taste good enough to allow him to say shocking things without making the reader turn away in disdain” (242). While both Pratchett and Waugh exhibit these qualities, Waugh treads very close to the line of making his reader turn away with disdain, especially in the person of Grimes, who has no redeeming qualities whatsoever and behaves repugnantly. Still, he controls the character by keeping just enough of the “smile of derision” to maintain the satirical quality. An example of Pratchett’s ability to “say shocking things” without causing disdain can be found on page 195 of *Interesting Times*. Rincewind has been captured and is being held in a dungeon, where, in a case of morbid optimism, he is attempting to dig his way through the mortar with a straw, figuring that it will be a mere millennium or two to make an impression, when he hears dreadful shrieks. His companion, Two Flower, explains that the Emperor must be awake. “That’s kind of an early morning torture, isn’t it?” Rincewind asks. Two Flower explains that it really is not the emperor’s fault, likening it to the stage of “pulling wings off flies” that “common children [children of commoners] go through” (195). At this point, the reader may be recoiling, feeling

that this is not at all a *normal* stage, when Rincewind swoops in to break the tension. “*I never did,*” said Rincewind.” Just when the reader is nodding along in agreement (unless of course he *did* pull the wings off of flies) Rincewind finishes with the unexpected “You can’t trust flies. They may look small but they can turn nasty.” The revulsion toward the wings being pulled off of flies is mitigated into at least a smile at Rincewind’s reasoning.

Hight’s next requirement, vocabulary,” is likewise met by both authors. Waugh’s prose is elegant and clear, and Pratchett’s vocabulary is striking in its variety and precision. When there is not an appropriate word available, Pratchett doesn’t quail at creating one to do the job. For instance, in the first Discworld book he asks what is the color of magic? Since that is not something that can be answered in a world where magic does not (for most people) exist, Pratchett invented “octarine.” Octarine is a color, “the pigment of the imagination (*Color 52*), which appears to be fluorescent greenish yellow purple (*Color 23*) viewed through the eyes of cats (*Color 53*) and wizards, who are the only ones who can see it. “The octarine” also a place, if another dimension can be called a place. Thus, cats can “see into the octarine”(Color 53). Pratchett accounts for the ability of wizards to see octarine (which from its component yellow, blue and red *should* produce a brown) by inventing octagonal bits in their eyes to accompany the normal cones and rods that allow normal humans to see in color. This demonstration of Pratchett’s “brisk imagination” continues as he takes his invention a bit further. The theme of eight (“octo”) in this scheme is important; there are eight days in a Discworld week, and eight colors in the Discworld rainbow (of which octarine is the eighth color). Additionally, the number eight has “considerable occult significance” (*Color 6*), causing all eighth sons of eighth sons to be wizards (*Sourcery 1*) though not all wizards are even eighth sons, never mind eighth of eight). Going one better, the eighth son of an eighth son of an eighth son is a magnificently

powerful wizard called a Sourcerer—the source of magic (*Sourcery* 35). As magic is of great importance on the Discworld, the number eight is clearly of great importance as well, and thus, the color that bears its name would be significant.

In creating the name for this color, Pratchett plays on the fact that in the Western world, the number seven is of great significance, especially in biblical terms, where it represents perfection or closure. There are seven gifts of the spirit (King James Version Isa. 11:1-3), seven deadly sins (Prov. 6:16-19), seven days of creation (Gen. 2:2), from which we get our seven day week, with a seventh day of rest. The announcement of the end of God's Mystery (time) will be made by the sounding of the voice of the seventh angel (Rev. 10:7). Pratchett makes use of this lore, but takes it a step further (literally one step--to the number eight) in order to create an aspect of the world he employs to satirize the one in which we live. As an ordinary color that actually exists in our world would simply not be up to the task of being the "color of magic," Pratchett was obliged to create both the color and the lore that surrounds it. So, Pratchett took the factual and actual situations that exist in the real world, and, employing the "weapons of satire," embellished and exaggerated them, and created octarine, which is a subtle means of poking fun at old traditions in education.

To sum up what has been said so far, satire can be characterized as writing that is intelligent, humorous, linguistically recognizable expresses a moral point of view and attempts to force the readers to see what they would normally ignore, and further, to be moved to change what they see. Both Pratchett and Waugh deal with concrete, topical subjects; in this case, educational issues, and do so using what one would hope is exaggeration, parody, colloquialism and other "weapons of satire," so it seems safe to conclude that they are both, in fact, writing

satire. Despite this evidence, in his 1946 *Life Magazine* article entitled, “Fan Fare,” Waugh insisted that his books were not intended as satires, as satire was a matter of period, flourishing in a “stable society” with “homogenous moral standards” such as could not be found in the “disintegrated society of today” (Life 60). George McCartney considers Waugh’s “denial of satire” to be “best understood as Waugh’s consummate satiric ploy” (2).

Once the definition of satire is confirmed, there is yet to place the works into one of the two main divisions of satire that take their names from the Classical poets whose styles they emulate. Horace (65-8 BCE) was the funnier and gentler of the two, Juvenal (second century CE) the rougher and more aggressive. Satirists fall (sometimes not neatly) into these two main classes; the bitter ones who emulate Juvenal, and those who are more amused by what they see, who follow Horace’s lead. The optimist (of which Horace and Pratchett are examples) believes that the folly and evil he sees are not permanent; he believes that by helping people to see them, he can, like a good physician, cure them of these ills. Conversely, the pessimist or misanthropic satirist (like Juvenal, and to a great degree, Waugh) tends to hate mankind and to believe that man’s evil nature is unlikely to be fixed (235). His aim is “to wound, to punish, to destroy;” this satirist is the executioner (235-237). Again, Waugh and Pratchett seem to be on opposing sides, with Waugh as the bitter man and Pratchett as the one (now ironically, when viewed in light of his Alzheimer’s) full of vitality and *joie de vivre*. It is interesting to view these two authors in light of Hight’s proposal that satirists generally “belong to one of two main classes.” There are those who had been disappointed in their youth and see the world as a place of unremitting injustice, or those who are “happy men of overflowing energy and vitality” who place themselves above “not quite all there” people who make up the masses (241). Waugh seems to fit nicely into the former; the injustices of his youth splashing across the pages of his novels like

the viscera of a field-dressed buck. Pratchett's youth, while not idyllic, seemed to have more opportunities for joy, and his more amused and optimistic satire would seem to reflect this. Pratchett has been described as "a satirist every bit as incisive and erudite and wide-ranging as Swift. If Pratchett's contemplation of human foibles is on the whole as much a matter of amusement as of anger, it nevertheless resides in a mocking intelligence and a cordial (and not always genial) contempt for useless activities" (P. Hunt 87). Highet's theory concerning the nature of the types of satirists may not work in all cases, but it does seem appropriate to Pratchett and Waugh.

Another genre that needs to be examined when studying Pratchett and Waugh is that of fantasy. Fantasy is controversial on many levels, starting with the definition of fantasy itself. Also on the list of controversies is its place as literature, and its suitability for children, or conversely, for adults. Though the definition of fantasy has been heavily contested since the Middle Ages, certain constants appear. Manlove's 1975 definition of fantasy appears to encapsulate these constants by stating that fantasy is "a fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of the supernatural with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms," much of what is included in the canon is, indeed, fantasy (Manlove 1). Some examples include *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*, which all meet this test. Books and plays such as these are usually categorized in some other way by academia, possibly to avoid the stigma of the label "fantasy." Other definitions of fantasy are less complimentary. If fantasy is defined as the sort of pulp stories where one can practically hear dice rolling before each action, serving to "form permanent bubbles of delusion" for adolescent "fanboys", it becomes clearer why being included in this genre would be the kiss of death (Zipes 53). However unfair it is to judge a genre by its

worst examples, this seems to be the case too often with fantasy. This injudicious dismissal of fantasy has provoked commentary by such scholars as J.R.R. Tolkien. In his essay “On Fairy-Stories,” Tolkien debunks the idea that fantasy lacks literary merit, or that it is a genre only fit for children. Instead, he notes that fantasy is not only an ancient literary form but is found in all cultures (47). Tolkien postulates that stories set in “Faerie” (a world that is not our own) use the strangeness of the backdrop to highlight the nature of man (38). In an interview, Pratchett offered the following. “When you think about it, fantasy is the oldest form of fiction. What were the storytellers of old doing when they talked about the beginnings of the world? They were weaving fantasies” (Richards n. pag.). Fiction that seems to take place in our world, but has elements of fantasy is often classified under different genres that take into consideration its form more than its content—elegy, fable, epic, poem, myth—and ignore the fantasy aspect. For example, both *Beowulf* and the *Iliad* feature creatures no one has seen and activities that are beyond human ability, but they are considered epic poems rather than fantasies, though they exhibit elements of both epics and fantasies.

While Pratchett’s Discworld setting, with its magical, other-worldly atmosphere, would appear to be the only fantasy of the two novels in question, given that Waugh’s university and school settings appear to be extant in England or in Wales at the time of its writing, Waugh’s characters and situations have the air of the unbelievable that border on the fantastic. It is necessary to suspend disbelief to a great degree to accept that someone could go through all that Pennyfeather did in the space of one short year. One could accept Jan Foster’s assertion that Waugh’s “distortions and exaggerations have also the quality of fantasy,” that make his writing simultaneously believable and impossible (Foster n. pag.). Conversely, while Pratchett’s work is undeniably fantasy, it does not preclude dealing with real-world issues, such as privilege (195),

the lack of education going on in the education system (14), the place of luck in success (1-5, 23-24, and just about any time Rincewind is on the page), revolution (32, 49, 69-71 and more), incomprehensible technology(38-42),death and taxes (73-4), the “Art of War” as diplomatic policy (76-82), the dangers involved in teaching (89), economic strategies (115), the importance of one’s utterances (133), the process of creating currency (140-141), the relative importance of people versus things(153), etc.

There are, indeed, some legitimate reasons for wanting to distance a work from the moniker of “fantasy.” Theodore Sturgeon, writer of science fiction, fantasy and horror, mentor of Ray Bradbury and book reviewer, (Hartwell *x*) postulated that “90% of everything is crap” (Gordon 93), so it is unsurprising that given the boom in fantasy since 1955 (Jakubowski 223) that there would be a corresponding increase in the amount of very poor fantasy produced. Jakubowski postulates that fantasy writing has become “a sad prisoner to market forces, and increasingly formulaic landscape of worn clichés, dueling swords and warring dragons, a vast kingdom of unending wish fulfillment for a generally passive, often subliterate audience” (223). (He does go on to say that this mass proliferation gives us a larger 10% that is gold (224).) Pratchett himself wrote “The Color of Magic” to parody the plethora of poor imitations of fantasy that mushroomed out of the post-Tolkien period.²

² While every genre produces good and bad examples, there are so many terrible fantasy books published that a search on Google comes up with 5,630,000 hits when queried with “worst fantasy books.” Many of those hits are entire sites devoted to discovering (or exposing) the worst fantasy books ever. The reasons given for these “worsts” include poor writing overall, misogyny, sexism, overused tropes, “wannabe-itis” (when someone reads a good author and

tries, unsuccessfully, to copy him), verbosity (Tolkien gets accused of this, with some reason), poor or non-existent character development, one-dimensional stories, excessive erotica, excessive violence, outlandish names, lack of originality, unbelievability, and bad similes/metaphors/analogies.

In addition to the previously listed issues, academic sources suggest several other problems. Many of the fantasy books have been self-published. According to Manley, “[t]he brutal reality is that 99.9 percent of the books that are self-published have been rejected by mainstream publishers for one of two reasons: the book is a poorly written piece of drivel, or the book is on a subject that no one cares about with the possible exception of the author’s family and his two best friends.” Jonathan Hunt notes that “[m]any fantasy books are published in a sequence, and the relationship between these books, whether the sequence comprises loosely connected episodes or one long story broken into several parts, can be problematic” (485). Hunt further notes that “while all genres of writing face some degree of sequel prejudice in the evaluation process, nothing brings it out more than fantasy literature,” the scale of which is often too great for a single tome (485). Another common problem in fantasy is breaking the rules of the setting. “A fantasy story’s setting exhibits consistency and coherence” is one of the characteristics of the genre set forth by Diana Herald and Bonnie Kunzel as they define the genre in *Fluent in Fantasy: The Next Generation* (xii). Failure to do so tends to make the reader feel cheated. While all of these issues are in some measure applicable to any genre, the sheer volume of fantasy makes it more likely that a reader will run into any or all of these in any given book. Together these factors make it easy to dismiss fantasy as some kind of poorly written, escapist detritus.

Given the controversy associated with fantasy, a legitimate question would be why would one choose to write in this genre at all? Why, indeed, would Pratchett choose fantasy for his satire? In Pratchett's own words,

The other worlds out there in space got me interested in this one down here. It is a small mental step from time-travel to paleontology, from sword 'n' sorcery fantasy to mythology and ancient history. Truth is stranger than fiction; nothing in fantasy enthralled me as much as reading of the evolution of humankind from proto-blob to newt, reptile, tree shrew, Oxbridge arts graduate, and eventually to tool-using mammal. I first came across words like 'ecologist' and 'overpopulation' in SF books in the late fifties and early sixties, long before they'd become fashionable.

I also came across the word 'neoteny', which means 'remaining young'. It's something which we as humans have developed into a survival trait. Other animals, when they are young, have a curiosity about the World, a flexibility of response, and an ability to play which they lose as they grow up. As a species we have retained these. As a species, we are forever sticking our fingers into the electric socket of the Universe to see what'll happen next. It's a trait that'll either save us or kill us, but by god it's what makes us human beings. I'd rather be in the company of people who look at Mars than people who contemplate humanity's navel --- other worlds are better than fluff.

So let's not get frightened when the children read fantasy. It's the compost for a healthy mind. It stimulates the inquisitive nodes, and there is some evidence that

a rich internal fantasy life is as good and necessary for a child as healthy soil is for a plant, for much the same reasons.

Here's to fantasy as the proper diet for the growing soul. All human life is there -- a moral code, a sense of order and, sometimes, great big green things with teeth. There are other books to read and I hope children who start with fantasy go on to read them. I did. But everyone has to start somewhere.

One of the great popular novelists of the early part of this century was G.K. Chesterton. Writing at a time when fairy tales were under attack for pretty much the same reason as books can now be covertly banned in some schools because they have the word 'witch' in the title, he said: "The objection to fairy stories is that they tell children there are dragons. But children have always known there are dragons. Fairy stories tell children that dragons can be killed. (Pratchett, "When Children Read")

So, Pratchett finds fantasy to be the way to stay young, to fight the fights that everyone finds in the world and maybe even win. Beyond that, for someone with a quick imagination, a new world provides a new way to get people to look at the same old thing, by making it new again. Pratchett's books use the alternate world, Discworld, to focus attention on the "simple or fundamental things" that Tolkien praises in good fairie stories (Tolkien 78). Similarly, Pratchett defamiliarizes the foibles of our world by creating a world that doesn't follow the rules of our reality, characters that are not just from another town or country, but another reality. The strangeness of a flat world, "carried through starry infinity on the backs of four giant elephants, who were themselves perched on the back of a giant turtle" (*Light* 1) and peopled by possibly

every kind of humanoid found in fantasy, works as the perfect foil for the everyday problems of mere humans.

Pratchett tips off the reader to his satirical predilection with the creation of Discworld itself—a flat planet, water flowing endlessly from hub to rim (with no effort made to explain where it comes from or where it goes), carried on the back of four elephants who are in turn carried on the back of a turtle swimming endlessly through space. Everything about this setting seems to be a nod to the idea of “substance” postulated by Locke, who said,

If any one should be asked, what is the subject wherein colour or weight inheres, he would have nothing to say, but the solid extended parts; and if he were demanded, what is it that solidity and extension adhere in, he would not be in a much better case than the Indian before mentioned who, saying that the world was supported by a great elephant, was asked what the elephant rested on; to which his answer was a great tortoise: but being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied, something, he knew not what (118).

Thus we can see that the very world upon which Pratchett builds his fantasy plots is satirical, as he has made a functioning world based on what appears to be a cosmological myth (though my research did not find any actual mythology in this form in the Hindu religious texts, suggesting that this cosmos is, in fact, Locke’s own orientalist fantasy). The “mirrors” in Pratchett’s “world and mirror of a world” are often of the funhouse variety, bending and stretching issues out of shape so their true shapes become more apparent to the reader. According to Jeffrey Hunter, “[Pratchett’s] prose style carries an overt satirical bent, allowing him to discuss such important social issues as gender roles, religious fanaticism, war crimes, and

violence without seeming to sermonize” (61). Pratchett satirizes such topics as religion (*Small Gods*), tourism (*The Color of Magic*), human nature (*Guards! Guards!*), war (*Jingo*), and civil rights (*Snuff*), among others.

The sheer volume of material that has been produced discussing this ancient, on-going literary form would indicate satire’s importance to the literary world. Satire’s tenets are used as measuring sticks for many venerated works of literature. Clearly, satire is a legitimate lens, albeit not the only one, through which we may view new works of literature in order to understand them and evaluate their worth. Comparing Pratchett’s satire to Waugh’s will likewise add understanding and worth to a writer whose main genre, fantasy, may equate to low-brow entertainment, without any literary merit. To discover some of that literary merit, I will compare the satirical treatment of academia by both Pratchett and Waugh in the following chapter.

4 SATIRICAL TREATMENT OF ACADEMIA

One area where Pratchett's satire is especially effective is in his treatment of the university system. He takes on student/faculty relations, the tenure system, tech support, research, the power of knowledge, the library system, traditions—in short, all of the components of Higher Education—and uses the lenses of defamiliarization and satire to point out ordinary things and make them new and interesting again, ensuring that his readers will see the issues he wants them to see. Waugh attacks the same sorts of things, but whereas Pratchett's Horatian satire is likely to bring a smile of recognition, Waugh's Juvenalian satire is more likely to cause mental recoil—surely it could not be that bad! Waugh writes from a caustic point of view, suggesting a belief that human kind is both reprehensible and beyond redemption. Pratchett's view is that man is imperfect but not evil, and could probably change if shown the error of his ways.

With these positions in mind, I will address three general categories that both authors satirize in their academic novels: the faculty, the environs and the bureaucracy of academia. Waugh attacks each of these with the mordant wit, biting sarcasm, grotesque phrases, and ironic observations that typify praiseworthy Juvenalian satire; Pratchett holds up a funhouse mirror, addressing each topic with the gentler lampoon, understated burlesque, clever anachronism and understatement that exemplify masterful Horatian satire.

The Esteemed Faculty

Both Pratchett and Waugh explore the trope of the addled professor charged with the education of the next generation, though Pratchett's professors seem to be rather benign in their

excesses, whereas Waugh's professors not only hurt students, but are *aware* they are and continue to do so despite that awareness. As I mentioned in Chapter One, Waugh's faculty members care nothing for fairness, only the ability to gain more of the delightful elixirs that can be had by imposing the most fines, no matter whose life is ruined in the meantime, gleefully speculating on whose belongings would be destroyed without making the slightest attempt to prevent this destruction (*Decline* 3). This stands rather at odds with the fact that Scone College manages to re-admit a man who has only been away for a year on the strength of his tests and the "disguise" of his mustache (284). A faculty that knows the contents of a student's room well enough to know which items the Bollingers are apt to destroy seems unlikely to be able to be fooled when a third year student reappears after a single year's absence, especially when he is still using the same name. Waugh created this situation deliberately to further highlight the ill-treatment of students as individuals, and the predatory financial practices of schools who will admit anyone with funds to be extracted. Moving from Scone College to Llanabba, Waugh establishes teachers that are not expected to *teach* anything, only to keep the students quiet (43). His "educators" threaten great violence ("I shall very nearly kill you with this stick") and assign the worst kind of busywork (the "longest essay, irrespective of any possible merit") and bribe the students into cooperation(45). Waugh designed each of these examples to produce a kind of horror in the reader's mind. We know that these kinds of behaviors exist, as we know there are roaches in the cupboard, but Waugh's satirical light sends them scurrying across the reader's plane of awareness, eliciting "feelings of protest" and inducing a desire to call the exterminator. These feelings are the sort elicited by the Juvenalian satire for which Waugh is famous.

In contrast to the acerbic nature of Waugh's satirical vision, Pratchett's satire creates a warm amusement with the familiar-seeming mixture of faculty members similar to those with

whom one is likely to have either first- or second-hand knowledge—the lazy (most of the Unseen University Wizards, as evidenced by the “lectures” taking place in a non-existent room, page 15), the unimaginative Ridcully who “glared at his faculty with the clear innocent glare of someone who was blessed at birth with no imagination whatsoever”, page 22), and the petty Dean, who insists that UU should have a “properly dominant male [orangutan]” for a librarian (16). Ironically, but perhaps fittingly, the character representing the mentally unstable sort of faculty member, the Bursar, is the one who is in charge of the university’s money. Students who have had issues with the money system in a university may understand this choice on Pratchett’s part. Pratchett creates the Bursar’s character as “not technically insane,” since he has “passed through the rapids of insanity some time previously, and is now sculling around in some peaceful pool on the other side,” (19). Pratchett furthers this idea by having the Bursar’s nomination for being sent as the “Great Wizzard” disallowed because “you can’t get [dried] frog pills there” (19). Pratchett takes the character from merely crazy to the other side of insanity, to a place where hallucinogenic can actually induce something close to sanity³. Each move further along the spectrum increases the defamiliarization and the perception of the near-lunacy that Pratchett portrays as the academic world. Pratchett’s choice of frogs as the ingredient is a nod to creatures associated with magic, thanks in part to William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* Act 4, Scene 1 soliloquy by the witches, in which “toe of frog and eye of newt” are cast into the conjuring pot.⁴ The

³ Licking frogs is a controversial cultural phenomenon, but poison arrow frogs do produce psychoactive substances in their skins (Gibbons 16).

⁴ Pratchett makes frequent use of intertextuality and allusion, writing using the concept of “White Knowledge,” which he describes in the following:

addition of familiar intertextuality to the foolishness Pratchett has illuminated brings the reader to a smile of recognition, but not to rage.

When Pratchett satirizes the small-minded professor in the body of the Dean, he creates a foil to the pragmatic Ridcully, which, when compared to its non-fiction ideal is still very much outside the norm. An ape librarian at a university is a reasonable cause for concern. So it is reasonable for the Dean to express concern that the librarian is an orangutan. Pratchett makes fun of a pedantic faculty by demonstrating that the Dean's issue is not, however, the fact that the librarian is an ape and therefore would be of little benefit to the students who, ostensibly, would need to utilize the Librarian's expertise. The Dean's prime concern is that the librarian is not a dominant enough male—that another school might have a more dominant male for a librarian. This is Pratchett's jeer at the competitiveness that is so common in universities (and elsewhere). Ridcully represents the pragmatist, but is taken to extremes. It is nice that he recognizes the Librarian's unique qualities (he can "rip your arm off with his leg" and "stays awake more than an hour a day" unlike most of the rest of the faculty), but for all of his ersatz practicality, Ridcully fails to see that a librarian really ought to be human. Pratchett again takes the "normal" (a pragmatic faculty member) and inflates it to the ludicrous, producing another means to satirize the faculty.

If I put a reference in a book, I try to pick one that a generally well-read (well-viewed, well listened) person has a sporting chance of picking up; I call this "white knowledge," the sort of stuff that fills up your brain without you really knowing where it came from. Enough people would've read [Fritz] Lieber, say, to pick up a generalized reference to Fafhrd, etc, and even more people would have some knowledge of Tolkien—but I wouldn't rely on people having read a specific story. ("Words" n. pag.)

While he would likely be looked upon as quite bizarre in our world, the ape-as-librarian is accepted without comment by most of the faculty. The use of an ape as a character, according to Valentine Cunningham's essay, "Twentieth-century Fictional Satire," is a regular trope in modern satire, harking back to Swift's Yahoos (405). Pratchett likewise includes an ape, but rather than making him a nasty, promiscuous creature, representing the "lowest-of-the-low bodiliness, all unrestrained sexuality and excrementitiousness" as Cunningham suggests, (405), the Librarian is, well, a librarian. He is quiet, conscientious, and far faster than the human variety at reaching the books on the highest shelves. The fact that the orangutan cum Librarian has a penchant for making human yo-yos out of anyone who mistakenly calls him a "monkey" creates opportunities for further humor as the reader mentally prepares himself for the time when the mistake is inevitably made. The inclusion of violence is a nod to the violence of the world, paralleling Swift's violent treatment of Gulliver, as discussed in Neil Chudgar's article, "Swift's Gentleness." "The world and its people produced in Swift that savage indignation which, as his epitaph records, lacerated his heart; in his literary works, it is commonly understood, Swift lashed back. References to the sting of Swift's writing, the sharp point or abrasive roughness or caustic potency of his satire, abound in the criticism" (137-8). Both Pratchett and Waugh address the violence of the world, each in his own manner—Pratchett with a benevolent "boys will be boys" attitude, Waugh with his "scorched earth" policy.

Pratchett took the "civilized ape" a bit farther, giving him both detective and musical skills. For example, he is seen in *Interesting Times* recalling that he had seen the somewhat-scorched hat marked "Wizzard" in his library and bringing it to the attention of Ridcully as a clue to the identity of the mysterious "Wizzard" (*Interesting* 17, 19). Similarly, in *Guards! Guards!* the Librarian is the one to notice the magical tome has been stolen from the library (88),

a crime he considers “worse than murder” (97), which he communicates with only his two-syllable vocabulary (ook, sometimes written ook, and eek). Always one to take the joke a step further, in *Soul Music*, the librarian plays “our mighty organ,” a moniker given to the instrument by the Archchancellor, “much to the embarrassment of the rest of the faculty”(15). Besides further “civilizing” the ape, Pratchett takes this opportunity to play with language, both in the name of the instrument (remarking on the faculty’s discomfiture so one cannot fail to notice the innuendo) and in the names of the stops. While Vox Humana is a real stop, Vox Dei and Vox Diabolica are not, so their inclusion adds to both the defamiliarization and humor of the situation. So, even while using a classical satirical trope, Pratchett turns it on its head and makes it something fresh and new to further his vision.

While Pratchett is presenting an ape as an almost highbrow person, Waugh is busy presenting people as something akin to apes, and worse, as actual targets for demolition. His description of the Welsh brass band would be more fitting to a troupe of apes than to a group of humans. “They were low of brow, crafty of eye and crooked of limb.” The band members are described as “slavering,” moving “furtively” like “wolves,” one of the members described as carrying something “under his ape-like arm” (80). As Cunningham’s writing suggests, the fact that they are simply wiped from the sight of the doctor, and Philbrick wants to shoot them makes for an offensive, unfunny bit of satire (410) that is clearly Juvenalian, evincing as it does the sharply distasteful emotions, though against whom will more likely depend on the decade and country of your birth than anything specifically textual. Most twenty-first century Americans, unlikely to understand Waugh’s prejudice against the Welsh, may find the disdain produced is more for the characters than the race of people being satirized.

Pratchett's development of the character of the Librarian echoes Waugh's development of both the Welsh band and the teachers at Llanabba, using irony, violence, vividness and exaggeration to create memorable characters. Pratchett's characters are far more humorous and less odious than any of Waugh's faculty members, again in keeping with Pratchett's Horatian style. For example, in contrast to the august personages of Ridcully and the Dean, Rincewind, one of the main characters in *Interesting Times*, is portrayed as not merely a bad student before, ironically, rising to his state of highest incompetence as a faculty member, but a truly dreadful one. He has never gotten a passing mark on any of the tests he has taken at Unseen University. His spelling is suspect, having created a hat marked "Wizzard." He did not, indeed, graduate (his degree is *B. Mgc. Unseen University (failed)*) (Color 67), but was given a retroactive, honorary degree for performing "a service of great benefit to magic" for Ridcully (*Interesting* 37).⁵ It is possible that Pratchett is aiming one of his mirrors at himself—his educational career being undistinguished at best, and culminating in not one, but nine honorary degrees. (He appreciates the honors given him, but, always looking to interject a bit of humor, "[j]ust before that ceremony began Terry[...] also held a short ceremony to make University of Warwick researchers Professor Ian Stewart and Dr Jack Cohen "honorary Wizards of the Unseen University." Pratchett lampoons even his own life!). When Rincewind describes himself as being the deputy librarian, the Dean helpfully restates as being "the Ape's number two"

⁵ The service to be performed was a favor for Ridcully (go to on the quest) which Rincewind could ill ignore, since his other choice was to be "nailed upside down to one of the supports of the Brass Bridge for two high tides and then being beheaded" as punishment for impersonating a wizard (37). The threatened violence here is part of the "violence" of satire.

(*Interesting* 36). This is an example of how, in both vocabulary and jokes, Pratchett does his best to “lead” the reader to understanding, in case you miss it the first time, without completely ruining the joke or the dawning of understanding of the word by spelling it out completely. In this case, after Rincewind describes himself, and the Dean restates the description, just in case you missed it, the Dean reiterates once more, “*I say, did anyone notice that? An ape’s number two? Rather clever, I thought*”(*Interesting* 36). Though the joke here is almost impossible to miss, Pratchett is careful to keep the thrill of discovery in it for the reader.

It is also possible that Pratchett is creating an “everyman” with the character of Rincewind. Rincewind exhibits the kinds of foibles that are common to humanity—the kind that Pratchett, with his Horatian point of view, is asking us to forgive. Rincewind’s choice of statement when asked to “[s]ay something in Wizard language” is “[s]tercus, stercus, stercus, moriturus sum,” (in the vernacular, roughly, “Shit, shit, shit, I’m going to die!”) exhibiting the kind of hopelessness a person having been abused by fate might feel (*Interesting* 117). Even though Rincewind is almost constantly abused, he never lashes out at others, relying instead on his well-developed ability to run away. In this way, Pratchett gives the nod to the underdog in the bullfight of life. As one of Pratchett’s characters, Granny Weatherwax says, (and his agent, Colin Smythe, confirms as Pratchett’s own belief), “Sin, young man, is when you treat people as things” (*Carpe* 278). It is the belief that people must be considered of utmost importance that colors Pratchett’s satire. Couple this with the following two quotations. “The phrase ‘Someone ought to do something’ was not, by itself, a helpful one. People who used it *never* added the rider ‘and that someone is me.’ But someone ought to do something, and right now the whole pool of someones consisted of her, and no one else”(*Hogfather* 85). And:

“Ah. Something bad is happening.” [says Miss Tick]

Tiffany looked worried. “Can I stop it?”

“And now I’m slightly impressed,” said Miss Tick. “You said ‘Can I stop it?’, and not ‘Can anyone stop it?’ or ‘Can we stop it?’. That’s good. You accept responsibility. That’s a good start. And you keep a cool head. But, no, you can’t stop it.” (*Interesting* 30)

These quotations taken together, highlight a belief that people are important, if flawed, but that they can improve themselves by self-reliance. This is at the very foundation of Pratchett’s Horatian satire—beyond his bemused view of mankind, his love of humanity shines through, even as he acknowledges human failings. *Decline and Fall*’s main character seems to have been created with similar pacifistic tendencies, but they only go as far as those in power over him. When Pennyfeather has control, he shows himself to be as ignoble as those who have wronged him, as is to be expected in Waugh’s Juvenalian satire.

Besides creating funny, very human characters in their own rights, Pratchett also uses his characters to satirize the conventions of fantasy. Ponder Stibbons is described as “the youngest and most depressingly keen member of the faculty” (17). Rather than look on intelligence and a desire to move ahead as a positive, Pratchett lets his audience know immediately that these traits are not prized in the faculty by the choice of his descriptors. Typically, in fantasy or science fiction, the “scientist” is written in to symbolize progress, positive or negative. If the “progress” is meant to be viewed negatively like Dr. Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the scientist will be mad; if positively, the scientist will seem wise, such as the Drs. Murray in Madeline L’Engle’s *Wrinkle in Time*. Ponder would be expected to represent the “mad scientist,” but here, Pratchett has written him as the voice of reason among the very unreasonable

faculty. Ponder is one of the inventors of the anachronistic proto-computer, “Hex,” both of whom make their first appearances in *Soul Music*. Hex starts out a simple collection of tubes and ants and punch cards, able to do simple addition, but by the time we encounter it again, it seems to have become sentient (*Soul* 236-7). The students have added a male sheep’s skull (RAM) to make it able to do more advanced work (“occult transformations”(18)), and the unreal time clock (19), but some other bits just seemed to have appeared, including a mouse and an aquarium (screensaver) (39-40). This “not quite magic but more than technology” creation can be seen as a nod to Arthur C. Clarke’s Third Law, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic,” (qtd. in Cordeiro 48), or as merely a clever anachronism, designed to make Pratchett’s readers take a closer look at the familiar trope through this defamiliarization.

Pratchett often makes non-living things into characters in their own rights. Hex is one example of this.⁶ The name of this proto-supercomputer, like many other character names in Pratchett’s Discworld novels, is a pun; the word “hex” is both a spell, and short for “hexadecimal,” a base-sixteen number system used in computers. Ponder Stibbons is, likewise a play on words. “To ponder” is to think about something deeply. While in his first appearance he

⁶ Other examples include Luggage, Rincewind’s sentient (and rather malevolent) multi-legged companion who follows Rincewind, carrying clothing for Rincewind, and death for Rincewind’s enemies. Death likewise occurs as a speaking character throughout the series as does “Death of Rats”, (imagine a rodent grim reaper) just to further make fun of the personification of death. Tiffany’s grandmother, already dead when we first meet her in *The Wee Free Men*, is a very important character, kept alive in Tiffany’s memories. Each of these non-living characters serves to defamiliarize the view of these common items (the grandmother being the personification of a memory) and force a sharper look.

is not very academically minded, but by the time Pratchett introduces him again in *Interesting Times*, he seems quite studious, ready to “ponder” the mysteries of the world. Pratchett is well-known for this type of humorous naming convention. In fact, he uses it often enough to make one wonder anytime one does *not* see a joke if perhaps one has missed something. Some other punny names in *Interesting Times* include the Senior Wrangler, the Unseen University, and Mr. Saveloy. My research found that the Senior Wrangler could have been named after either the most experienced person who controls groups of horses, or conversely, as the title bestowed on one receiving the highest marks in Mathematic Honors at Cambridge University, a practice that ended over a century ago (“Cambridge”). Since it is hard to tell what any of the professors do by virtue of observation, either of these could be the case. However, since that title was traditionally earned on the basis of a debate, the Senior Wrangler, who is given to much argument, is likely to have been more of the mathematics definition. However, in one of Pratchett’s signature footnotes (which can be jokes, commentary, or, on occasion, contain footnote[s] to the footnote—thus Pratchett satirizes even the footnote convention in literature) in an earlier novel, *Reaper Man*, Pratchett explains the situation this way: “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 Wrangler at Unseen University was a philosopher who looked *like* a horse, thus neatly encapsulating all definitions.” (37). In crafting this character, Pratchett uses not only a pun, but layers of meaning that serve to further underline the hidebound traditions and overall lack of teaching that goes on in the university setting. The amused nod that this writing evokes indicates that it is Horatian satire.

Both the name and the function of the Unseen University itself seems to be a play on the “Invisible College,” a term coined by Robert Boyle in letters written in 1646-47 to describe a loose collection of scientists whose associations eventually coalesced into the Royal Society (Webster 19-22). Besides the fitness of “Unseen University” as a name for a school dedicated to magic, Pratchett further plays on the school itself, because the Invisible College was so very dedicated to furthering knowledge, and the Unseen University is so very dedicated to avoiding anything that has to do with teaching or learning.

While examining Pratchett’s naming conventions, it is worth noting that “Saveloy” is both a sausage, *and* goes back to the Latin for “brains” (cerebellum) (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). Saveloy is also a misfit among misfits in *Interesting Times*. While this name is less funny and more cerebral than some of Pratchett’s inventions, the character himself is a gentle jeer at fantasy conventions. Pratchett exaggerates the difficulties in teaching to the point of ludicrousness. Though Saveloy is not part of the faculty at Unseen University, he was a teacher of geography who later decided to make his living “by the sword,” joining the Silver Horde (88). Pratchett lampoons the hardships of the teaching profession by having someone ask Saveloy how he could become a member of the barbarian group, with “the privation, the terrible hazards, the daily risk of death” (88-89). By painting Saveloy as misunderstanding which occupation is being described, thinking instead that the speaker had been a teacher and has thus experienced all of these, Pratchett shows how foolish most of the complaints of the privations of teaching are in the scheme of things (89). He underscores this idea when Mr. Saveloy counts his time in “Form Four” as military experience (134).

As a member of the Horde, Saveloy tries very hard to teach the ways of civilization to the barbarians, without success (134, 161, 258, 294). The fact that Pratchett seems to consider

“barbarian” as a job description supports the idea that the conventions of fantasy themselves are being satirized. The idea of the “Silver Horde” is “[d]erived from the 'Golden Horde', one of the successor states to the Mongol Empire, based in the steppes of Southern Russia and the Ukraine, and ruled by descendants of Genghiz Khan. There was even a movie, *The Golden Horde*, starring John Wayne as Genghiz Khan. As my correspondent puts it: "Disbelief suspended by the neck until dead, dead, dead" (*Annotated* Ch. 3). Rather than merely appropriating the name, Pratchett constructs his “horde” as far from the John Wayne/Genghiz Khan sorts as possible by describing them as wrinkled, silver-haired or balding, even wheelchair-bound old men with “nearly five hundred years of concentrated barbarian hero experience in ‘em” (*Interesting* 83) to underscore the ludicrousness of the situation.

Pratchett lampoons the high-sounding titles to be found in the “real” academic world by giving Ponder Stibbons the titles “Head of Inadvisably Applied Magic and Praelector” (*Night* 40) and “Reader in Invisible Writings” (*Last* 14), as well as the “Keeper of Hex,” and Rincewind had the multiple titles (all unwanted positions) of “Egregious Professor of Cruel and Unusual Geography” (*Last* 33), the “Chair of Experimental Serendipity”, the “Reader in Slood Dynamics,” the “Fretwork Teacher,” the “Chair for the Public Misunderstanding of Magic,” the “Professor of Virtual Anthropology,” the “Lecturer in Approximate Accuracy” and the Health and Safety Officer (*Turtle* 157)—despite not having passed a single exam. Rincewind was also Assistant Librarian (*Sourcery* 10). Other titles held by Pratchett’s professors include the Chair of Indefinite Studies, the Senior Wrangler, and the Lecturer in Recent Runes (50), all jobs at the pomposity of academia. Waugh does something similar by giving his characters totally outlandish names. The Junior Dean is “Mr. Sniggs,” and the Domestic Bursar is “Mr. Postlethwaite. Not to be outdone, two lines down we find “Sir Alastair Digby-Vaine-

Trumpington”(1). As previously mentioned, Waugh’s Fagan alludes to Dickens’ Fagin. The spoofing of British naming conventions and of the university titles are indicative of a quick wit and provide a view of the “sardonic vision” one must be born with to create excellent satire, according to Frye (17).

Over and over in Waugh’s *Decline and Fall*, we see that there is nothing in the system that is set to benefit the student—the only benefit is to the system. Pennyfeather is hired to teach at Llanabba Castle despite having a sketchy background and encouraged to keep his reasons for leaving Oxford to himself as “We schoolmasters must temper discretion with deceit” (Waugh 14). In addition to his aforementioned lack of qualifications, Pennyfeather is pressed into teaching organ, which he does not play (24). His fellow schoolmaster calms his fears about what to teach. “Oh, I shouldn’t try to *teach* them anything, not just yet, anyway. Just keep them quiet” (43). Indeed, Paul learns to “temper discretion with deceit” (24) by making it appear that he has skills he doesn’t possess. This mirrors Waugh’s plight when he took his teaching position, as his forthrightness about his qualifications or rather lack of them came back to haunt him. The students, learning the truth, were instantly disrespectful of him (*Learning* 220). The intense negativity of his experience in his own life may have pushed Waugh toward his harsh world view.

The schoolmasters catch the students whistling (21), which elicits threats of beatings that clearly do not impress the students. They are caught smoking cigars (43), which it turns out were given to them by one of the masters, and for such infringement punishment was threatened on the entire class should the miscreant not give himself up (they maintain their code of silence). They are caught answering to the wrong names, leading to fisticuffs on the part of the boys, and

to threats of detention which, being unenforceable, devolves into another beating threat (44-45). Waugh's acerbic account likely gives parents, children and decent educators everywhere a sense of antipathy. While there is plenty for those in the real world to recognize as finger pointing, there is, as with the rest of Waugh's satire, little hope offered for any transformation.

While Waugh's professors use real-world methods of escaping actual duties, Pratchett's "professors" (wizards) are more likely to go to metaphysical extremes. Pratchett parallels this oxymoron (schools that don't teach) at the Unseen University, where "regrettably, teaching had to be one" of the activities that occurred; however, both the faculty and the students had "perfected various devices for avoiding it" (*Interesting* 14). Lectures are scheduled, and therefore considered to be given (14); but the lecture hall (3B) was not on any map of the university (15), and neither students nor wizards (the professors of Unseen University) made any effort to attend (14). The fact that the lecture hall itself does not exist seems to be just too inconsequential to mention (15). Indeed, the fact that a wizard is sleeping by the fire in the Uncommon room when he is scheduled to be lecturing is "a technicality upon which no diplomatic man would comment" (15). Later it is noted that "senior wizards need a lot of lecturing to digest their food" (16). All of these defamiliarized examples, that is, ordinary situations in the real world turned to an unfamiliar view, in this case fantasized, illustrate Pratchett's gentle smiling at the proceedings of the educational institutions. Pratchett's satirizing here has something of an air of the indulgence of a parent for his errant offspring. Yes, she is being naughty, but isn't she cute?

Waugh's method of satirizing the faculty is a good deal more bloodthirsty than Pratchett's. Philbrick, one of the teachers at Llannabba, unwisely produces an actual service

revolver to use as a starting pistol (79), resulting in the injury (89), and, after many bland reports of his worsening condition (turning black and swollen, 123, “still laid up” 127, “foot was being amputated at a local nursing home” 137), causing the death of the student (“It’s maddenin’ Tangent having died just at this time,” 198). The callousness of Waugh’s characters, who either rejoice (like the student reporting that it is turning black) or bemoan the inconveniencing nature of the situation (Lady Circumference is not disturbed by his death, only by his accidental interference in her wedding plans) evinces a sense of horrified disbelief in the reader, especially if he finds himself laughing about it. This is a good example of Juvenalian satire at work; polite society would frown on laughing at someone’s death, so the involuntary smile that Waugh wrings from you may be accompanied by with the mental recoil from the same impulse.

The Environs

The environs at both the Unseen University and the Llanabba Castle School underpin the characters in the satires. Waugh tends to incite antipathy, whereas Pratchett leans toward the ridiculous. Waugh’s school must be a horrible place, indeed, if the headmaster finds prison incarceration to be a pleasant time, compared with his time at Llanabba Castle. The narrator describes it thusly:

The next four weeks of solitary confinement were among the happiest of Paul’s life. The physical comforts were certainly meager, but at the Ritz Paul had learned to appreciate the inadequacy of purely physical comfort. It was so exhilarating, he found, never to have to make any decision on any subject, to be wholly relieved from the smallest consideration of time, meals or clothes, to have

no anxiety ever about what kind of impression he was making; in fact, to be free.

(229)

The description of how happy and peaceful his life was goes on for about a page and half. While the description is of his life in solitary confinement, the fact that this is so pleasing is commentary on how dreadful his life had been as a teacher, and by extension, how dreadful the plight of school teachers in real life. “It was the first time he had been really alone for months. How very refreshing it was, he reflected” (229). A more direct jab at the life of a student or headmaster can be found in Pennyfeather’s musings: “... for any one who has been to an English public school will always feel comparatively at home in prison. It is the people brought up in the gay intimacy of the slums, Paul learned, who find prison so soul destroying” (253-4). Later in the book, Pennyfeather remarks, concerning his imprisonment, “Anyway, it is quite bearable. I’d as soon be here as at Llanabba” (264). In all of these examples, Waugh displays his utter contempt for the educational society that he found so distressing in his own life. David Wykes, in his book on Waugh’s life, posits that Waugh found humor, though, as well. “Like Waugh, Paul has discovered that the world is a shocking, arbitrary, and vastly unjust place—but vastly amusing too, if one can stay out of its jaws” (60). Humor, if it is present, is dark indeed, a seriously Juvenalian satirical reaction to the environment he finds, and then re-creates in *Decline and Fall*.

Another example of this type of dark, almost repulsive humor is found when Waugh describes a sporting event that goes as horribly wrong as is possible. Headmaster Dr. Fagan spends an inordinate amount of time and money acquiring non-essentials, but the most basic underpinnings for a successful sports day are ignored. The students don’t even know when the

event will take place so they can't so much as be sure they have the proper footwear. "You see, we never know beforehand when there's going to be sports, so we don't have time to get ready" (*Decline* 58). The staff is worried about a band, flowers, fireworks and grand prizes when the schedule of events hasn't even been decided, and the heats had not been run the night before the contest (72-73). The hurdles that arrived were for equine, not human, jumpers (79), the hurdles used in previous years having been burned for firewood (62). As previously stated, the lack (or type) of preparation actually leads to a student's death. In each of the previous examples, there is a disconnect between what is reasonable or expected, and the reality of what happens, the defamiliarization that forces the closer look. There is a dark, satiric tone in these descriptions—one can surmise that while we can look and possibly even laugh, there is no actual chance of redemption for these people or situations.

Pratchett, on the other hand, creates an environment that satirizes the academic world with Horatian delight. His descriptions of the environs not only satirize the conventions of fantasy, as he did with some of his characterizations, but provide another means of giving additional information about the characters involved. For instance, when describing Archchancellor Ridcully's study, he begins by outlining what, in this wizardly world, should be expected by noting its absence. "Gone were the alembics and bubbling flagons that were the traditional props of Wizardry" leads into the description of what it is now, highlighting the contrast, a full-sized snooker table dominating the room, but rendered useless by its blanket of papers that covered it "until there was no sign of green felt" (48). The walls are hung with stuffed heads of "a number of surprised animals," which is not a shocking idea, but then he adds "a pair of corroded boots Ridcully had as a Rowing Brown for the university in his youth" as an addition to the antlers of one of the stuffed heads (48). Pratchett not only makes fun of the

traditional wizard's room, but goes further into satirizing the wizard/professor by making the make-over include a gaming table which is then rendered useless by covering it with papers *that he finds worthless*. "Ridcully assumed that anything people had time to write down couldn't be important" (47-48). The room doesn't look like you would expect, but the new description even defies its own logic, as the plaything is negated by the piles of work, which is in turn negated by the fact that it is unvalued and will never be read. So, we have the leader of the entire university as a person who does not find the trappings of wizardry to be suitable for his private space, and does not have any use for anything written. Modern readers know that real-life Archchancellors would not have "albemics and bubbling flagons" (48) but the fantasy-savvy reader would expect such accoutrements for an archchancellor who is also a wizard. This kind of defamiliarization—starting with the familiarly unfamiliar (expected, but not produced "flagons") then changing it twice more, always keeping the reader slightly off balance to highlight the absurdity that he finds in his satirical subjects--- is very typically Pratchett. Similarly, we learn more about Rincewind by the state of his room, using broad exaggeration to what one might expect of a student's room. The battered wardrobe is something expected, and the wicker chair with no bottom and three legs doesn't present a great surprise, but the "mattress so full of the life that inhabits mattresses that it occasionally moved sluggishly around the floor, bumping into things" gives one pause (46). Each new sentence offers a new level of amusement and surprise. It is this kind of layering of satirical comment that helps to elevate Pratchett's satire from humdrum to noteworthy.

The physical environment is not the only environment to be held up to the satirical mirror in these two novels. In both of them, the authors take on the psychological/mental environment as well, in the form of the bureaucracy of the schools, as will be discussed in the next section.

The Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy of the schools the reader finds in both *Interesting Times* and *Decline and Fall* is another area where the markedly different satirical styles of Pratchett and Waugh become apparent, though both do a highly creditable job in their own ways. Waugh introduces a student called “Beste-Chetwynde,” who is supposed to be taking lessons from Pennyworth on the organ. Because, as we saw, Pennyworth cannot play (though he does not admit it), he likewise cannot teach the organ. (He is hired and given the task despite there being no secret made of these facts.) However, this is really not an issue, as the student cheerfully admits that Pennyworth can’t teach him much because he (Beste-Chetwynde) only takes lessons to get out of taking gym class (25-6). Lack of teaching and lack of learning are ingrained in the bureaucracy of the school.

At the beginning of *Decline and Fall*, Waugh has the faculty of Scone College watching the more-or-less annual dinner of the Bollinger Club erupting all over the campus. It is not exactly annual because the dinner gets suspended every now and then due to the terrible behavior the alumni display. Waugh describes the destruction of students’ belongings—after the faculty finishes guessing which items will be most likely to be selected for this abuse. The items destroyed include a grand piano, cigars, china, sheets, a Matisse, and, since one poor student had nothing of monetary worth to destroy, a manuscript. While the faculty clearly expected this, not only is no attempt whatever made to stop this behavior, but conversely, the faculty is shown rubbing their hands with glee over the high fees that will be collected—fees that will allow them access to some particularly prized port when the fines have reached fifty pounds (1-4). That the students will be harmed, at least financially and likely mentally and physically, seems not to bother them in the least. Waugh has the narrator further prick the sensibilities of the reader by

describing this as “a lovely evening.” The idea that this kind of behavior could exist is execrable; the “that is just the way it is” delivery is the backbone of the Juvenalian satire practiced by Waugh, looking, as he does, through the belief that the world is beyond saving but that we should see the horror of it, nonetheless .

Contrasting the aforementioned head-shaking horror shows are the more hopeful, humor-laced vignettes offered in *Interesting Times*. Pratchett starts the book with an exchange between the Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari, the benevolent dictator of Ankh Morpork, and Archchancellor Mastrum Ridcully, head of the college of wizards. In a subdued display of relative power, each makes the other know that he could destroy him, Vetinari by having Ridcully summoned and executed if he failed to appear, and Ridcully by turning Vetinari into a frog, and so decide that diplomacy, with its gears lubricated by alcohol, would be the wisest plan of action. Vetinari invites Ridcully for a drink, and Ridcully accepts, because failing to would be impolite. Situations of assured mutual destruction are common in our world; none of them would be resolved by the “amphibian solution,” but most of us can recognize the “command imbibitions.” It is “a matter of protocol” with “everyone on their best behavior” so that “civil unrest and slime on the carpet can be averted” (7). This example displays several of the qualities that make good satire. It is humorous and linguistically identifiable (the “amphibian solution” as a counterpoint to the “nuclear solution” fits both of these) and, in expressing its gentle moral indignation, presses on the reader the idea that this kind of diplomacy is silliness that perhaps should be met with greater forthrightness.

Both Pratchett and Waugh use stereotypes as the basis for their faculty members, the physical environments, and the bureaucracies present in academia, then push the stereotypes a bit

further to make their points and to create their respective brands of humor. The faculties are lazier, meaner, and sillier than the real world counterparts. The environments are gleaned from what students may have experienced in their educational forays, but again, they go past, either in the amusing style of Pratchett or the horrifying style of Waugh. Pratchett's bureaucracy is more of an exaggeration of the usual political situation, whereas Waugh focuses more on the repugnance of real world academic bureaucracy, each using their version of satire. The hyperbole in all of these situations is the lens employed by both Waugh and Pratchett to focus the reader's attention on the foibles of the academic faculty. The tone used to create this focus differs according to the writer's style; Pratchett's tone is amused tolerance, whereas Waugh's tone is sharp and disapproving. The result is that the reader looks on Pratchett's academia with a smirk, and on Waugh's with horror.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, Terry Pratchett and Evelyn Waugh are deemed talented authors by modern readers, perhaps despite having multiple best-selling books. While literary merit has as many definitions as there are people using the term, if, as Helen Gardner states, “one must give weight to both what the writer is trying to say, and his success in saying it,” then both Pratchett and Waugh can be looked upon as having such merit (Kernan 49-50). The criteria for assessing each of these are necessarily subjective, but would generally include the timelessness and universality of the topic, the voice, and language. Pratchett and Waugh both present incisive views of academic life, and create compelling stories using a variety of literary techniques. Both offer distinctive voices and fresh, intriguing language, as evinced by Pratchett’s turn of phrase and improvisation and Waugh’s dexterous vocabulary choices and naming conventions. Both authors successfully evoke the conventions of multiple genres, further boosting their literary value. The experiences that each of these writers endured as children, both at home and in the schools, and in Waugh’s case, as a teacher, have shaped their life views, and in turn their writing. Waugh, having experienced his formative years during the horrors of war, seems to have been left more cynical and unhappy, and his writing is in turn more Juvenalian and misanthropic. Pratchett, on the other hand, had a more hopeful childhood, with the negative experience being largely confined to his formal schooling, thus his writing is more optimistic and closer to the Horatian model in satirical style. In spite of their different experiences, we see both choosing academic satire in their works, a genre that allows them to draw upon the fertile memories of the experiences of their youths as they each struggled through the academic minefield to point out the foibles of society.

Both Pratchett and Waugh use defamiliarization in their satire as a means of drawing attention to things that otherwise might be just too common to see. Pratchett's writing is overtly fantasy, creating a fictional world and people that cannot exist in order to hold up his satirical mirror to allow the reader to see himself and others in a new way. The foolish characters in Waugh's writing appear to be the sort that you could meet at any university, but are in many ways as fantastical as Pratchett's. By taking the everyday and making it unbelievable, Waugh forces a new look at the topics he uncovers. Both of these methods shed a satirical light on the follies of academia.. Pratchett and Waugh are adept at using the "weapons of satire" to create stories that are interesting, humorous -- in Waugh's case, rather sardonically humorous, but humorous nonetheless-- and lively. They both display a quick wit, and a lovely command of the English language that allows their writing to shine with a special polish not found in those less skillful.

Juxtaposing the newcomer Pratchett alongside the more established Waugh, comparing them as academic satirists, helps the fantasy aspect of Pratchett's writing to recede, and the more literary aspects of it to come to the fore. The close examination of the various tools of satire in this thesis shows how Pratchett has used them to good effect, perhaps nudging those who would reject the fantasy setting as subliterate to reconsider their assessment. The direct association of Pratchett and Waugh's novels highlights Pratchett's witty, entertaining, well-written satire whose unusual setting is no detriment, but works well to focus the funhouse mirror on the foibles of modern academia.

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