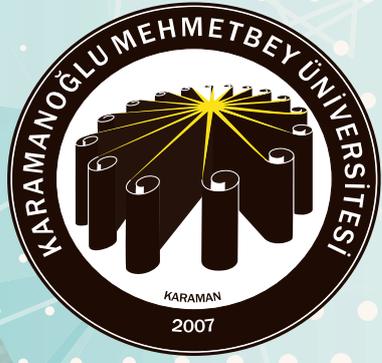


Künye: (Araştırma makalesi) Özbay, Emrah (2022). “A Female Wizard's Cry for Equal Rights: Terry Pratchett's Equal Rites”, *Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi Uluslararası Filoloji ve Çeviribilim Dergisi*, C.4/1, s.53-70. DOI: 10.55036/ufced.1110592



**KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY
ÜNİVERSİTESİ**

**ULUSLARARASI
FİLOLOJİ ve ÇEVİRİBİLİM DERGİSİ**

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
PHILOLOGY and TRANSLATION STUDIES**

**MAKALE BİLGİLERİ
ARTICLE INFO**

Geliş Tarihi / Submission Date
29.04.2022

Rapor tarihleri / Report Dates
Hakem/Reviewer 1 - 04.06.2022
Hakem/Reviewer 2 - 23.05.2022

Kabul Tarihi / Admission Date
22.06.2022

e-ISSN
2687-5586

**A FEMALE WIZARD'S CRY FOR EQUAL RIGHTS: TERRY PRATCHETT'S
EQUAL RITES***

**BİR KADIN SİHİRBAZIN EŞİT HAKLAR İÇİN ÇIĞLIĞI: TERRY PRATCHETT'İN
EŞİT HAKLAR ADLI ROMANI**

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Abstract

The use of fantasy elements to deal with issues related to today's society leads to a significant increase in the readership of fantasy literature. Terry Pratchett, who is the writer of the Discworld series consisting of 41 novels, blends fantasy and satire skillfully in his novels. As the novel's title gives some indication, *Equal Rites*, which was first published in 1987, is about equal rights in terms of gender. Talking about witches, magic, wizards and the Unseen University where women are not allowed to enter as a student or teacher, Pratchett combines the fantasy with serious topics about gender inequality. The story is set in Pratchett's fantasy world -Discworld and the writer uses his other world to hold up a distorting mirror to our own. In this paper, how Pratchett deals with some serious gender-related issues such as male dominance in institutions, women's struggles against the sexist point of view and stereotyped roles of men and women in his fantasy world are analysed via quotations from the novel. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the writer satirizes society by using elements of fantasy for all the inequalities that women face in different areas of life and offer various solutions to those inequalities.

Key Words: Discworld, Equal Rites, Pratchett, Gender Inequality

Öz

Fantastik unsurların günümüz toplumunu ilgilendiren konuları ele almak için kullanılması fantastik edebiyatın okuyucu kitlesinde ciddi bir artışa yol açmaktadır. 41 romandan oluşan Diskdünya serisinin yazarı Terry Pratchett, romanlarında fantastik ve hicvi ustalıklarla harmanlamaktadır. İlk kez 1987 yılında basılan *Eşit Haklar* romanının adından da belli olduğu üzere, roman toplumsal cinsiyet açısından eşit hakları konu edinir. Pratchett, büyüler, cadılar, büyücüler ve sadece erkeklerin büyücü olarak yetiştirilmek üzere kabul edildiği Görünmez Üniversite gibi çeşitli unsurları kullanarak cinsiyet eşitsizliği ile ilgili konuları fantastik edebiyat ile birleştirir. Hikâye Pratchett'in yarattığı fantastik dünya olan Diskdünya'da geçmektedir ve yazar gerçek dünyaya ait ciddi konuları ele alırken Diskdünya evrenini bu konuları okurlarına farklı bir bakış açısıyla yansıtan bir ayna olarak kullanır. Bu çalışmada, Pratchett'in çeşitli kurumlardaki erkek egemenliği, kadınların cinsiyetçi bakış açısına karşı verdiği mücadeleler ve kadın ve erkeğin kalıplaşmış rolleri gibi bir takım ciddi sorunları kendi kurgu dünyasında nasıl ele aldığı ilgili romandan yapılan alıntılar aracılığıyla incelenmiştir. Yapılan analizler neticesinde, yazarın, kadınların hayatın farklı alanlarında karşılaştıkları tüm eşitsizlikler için fantastik unsurları kullanarak toplumu hicvettiği ve tespit ettiği bu eşitsizliklerin çözümü için çeşitli öneriler sunduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Diskdünya, Eşit Haklar, Pratchett, Cinsiyet Eşitsizliği

*This article is produced from the writer's doctoral dissertation entitled: “Satire in Fantasy Literature: Terry Pratchett's Discworld Series”.

INTRODUCTION

Fantasy as a speculative fiction creates an imaginative world full of supernatural creatures and rules of magic. As a genre, it includes events or situations that cannot be explained or witnessed in the real world. Fantasy offers us worlds to explore with our imagination: this is one of the main attractions, if not the primary attraction, of the genre. Further, Matthews defines the term as “a type of fiction that evokes wonder, mystery, or magic a sense of possibility beyond the ordinary, material, rationally predictable world in which we live” (2011, p.1). Further, Philip Martin emphasizes how fantasy touches our lives: “Fantasy helps us develop good, if idealistic, goals. Fantasy stories reach for truth inside us, plumbing the deepest wells of belief and wonder” (2009, p.29). Similarly, Terry Pratchett, who is known for his Discworld novels and is one of the most prolific and outstanding British fantasy writers of the twenty-first century, both explores fantasy as a genre, benefits from the imaginative opportunities to tell his stories and shares his views on some of the important social and political topics from a satirical perspective. The writer uses his Discworld novels to hold up a distorting mirror to our own world. In addition to being a fantasy writer, Pratchett is known as a satirist of enormous talent. He is not the only writer who introduces satire as a significant element of fantasy literature, however, what makes him unique among the other fantasy writers is that rather than a completely fantastical world the Discworld universe is close to our real world, thus the messages given in the Discworld are more accessible and appealing to larger readers. As a result of his careful observation, Pratchett presents a commentary on our world in order to satirize it. Pratchett invites his readers to his Discworld universe which is a world of fantasy shaped liked a flat disc carried by four enormous elephants who stand on the shell of a giant turtle named Great A'tuin in space. Further, Pratchett distorts the cliché of the real world and the well-established norms and perspectives in his fictional world.

Focusing on Pratchett's satire on stereotyped roles of men and women which depend on men's superiority and gender inequality in *Equal Rites*, this paper aims to foreground the combination of fantasy and satire in Pratchett's fiction. Male dominance in various important institutions and the challenges women face constantly to obtain equal rights in society may be taken as the prominent targets of the novel. Butler expresses in his *The Pocket Essential: Terry Pratchett*: “Pratchett's feminism never becomes strident, and seems impossible to dispute; this novel was even serialized on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour” (2001, p.28). Talking about witches, wizards, magic, and the Unseen University where women are not allowed to enter as a student or teacher, Pratchett combines the fantasy with serious topics about gender inequality. Wizards'

snobbish attitude in using magic in the Discworld universe is also criticized. As Lorraine Anderson stresses: “Pratchett is not content with just using the predominant discourse for witches, he also explores and satirizes them [...] He (Pratchett) clearly delineates the power imbalance that favours men” (2006, p.18). Further, it is concluded from the novel that in contrast to the common belief that men are better than women in almost every segment of life, Pratchett confutes this argument using Esk and Granny who are more successful than wizards in using magic. In order to better understand the satiric side of the novel, the image of magic may be taken as a metaphor for the various areas of society from which women are intentionally prevented to take part by the patriarchal system. The determination and success of the two female characters and their preservation of these virtues throughout the novel inspire the readers. In addition, both the society in which men control institutional sexism and male dominance in various establishments are satirized by Pratchett. Also, by comparing witches and wizards with each other in terms of different points the writer discusses this serious topic –gender rights. Such a comparison, which forefronts the elements of fantasy, makes the novel more vivid for readers and creates a suitable basis for the writer to show his satirical perspective masterfully.

An Overview of *Equal Rites* as Satire on Gender Inequality

Pratchett’s well-known Discworld Series includes forty-one novels all of which are set in his Discworld universe. *Equal Rites* (1987) is the third Discworld novel in the series and the first of the Witches Novel sequence. As Moran summarizes:

Terry Pratchett began to develop the adventures of the witches of Lancre, a subset of his Discworld series, in 1987 with *Equal Rites*; the witches’ adventures have allowed Pratchett to reflect on topics of gender inequality, stereotyping and cultural bias (2019, p.64).

Similar to Moran’s view, Joule underlines the satirical endeavour of the novel and remarks that: “*Equal Rites* is not a story written for children or teenagers; *Equal Rites* is an exploration of gender roles in literature and a critique of deeply embedded misogyny and sexism within the fantasy genre and wider society” (2021, p.27). Further, Marc Burrows emphasizes the distinctiveness of *Equal Rites* compared to earlier Discworld novels as such:

Pratchett realised that turning fantasy on its head could do more than generate a cheap laugh, and from its title onwards, *Equal Rites* is a story with a strong moral centre, focused on a feminist message; that despite every obstacle set in their way, women are capable of (and possibly better at) everything men are (2020, p.117).

A Female Wizard's Cry for Equal Rights: Terry Pratchett's Equal Rites

In *Equal Rites*, Pratchett recounts the story of a girl Eskarina- aka Esk, who is destined to be a wizard must learn how to control her magical powers at Unseen University, yet she is not accepted there just because of her gender. The story is about the difficulties that a young woman faces when she attempts to enter a traditionally male profession and her persistence and stance against such a male-dominant point of view of society. Lina Sinclair summarizes *Equal Rites* as follows:

Equal Rites is a story that imagines what could happen if a girl was accidentally 'chosen' to become a wizard. [...] By raising this question in a universe more patriarchal than our own, the very nature of gender as an imaginary historical construct is raised in ways that might not be possible or at least more complicated in our own world (2015, p.9).

Equal Rites can be taken as an example of bildungsroman which is a form of literature that traditionally takes a young boy or girl as its subject. As a result of Esk's development and travels, the difficulties she faces increase which implies the power of pervasive sexism in the intangible social system. In her article Janes Brennan Croft takes the *Harry Potter* and *Discworld* series as representatives of contemporary fantasy books and compares them in terms of education, and points out the gender-based difficulties in the Discworld novels:

The system in Harry Potter's world is one of co-education, where all humans who have magical potential theoretically have equal access to the same education and to positions of power in any field after graduation; in contrast, in Discworld, witches and wizards occupy totally different niches, are trained separately according to traditional concepts of gender-related strengths and weaknesses, and tend to value and excel in different types of work (2009, p.130).

Equal Rites sketch out some crucial social topics that Pratchett deals with and explores repeatedly in his Discworld Series. Since *Equal Rites* is an early Discworld novel – as is stated, it is the third novel in the series, the novel can be regarded as a prototype of the Witches sequences and explores the relationship between an individual and society. *Equal Rites* can be considered as an exploration of gender roles in literature and a critique of deeply embedded misogyny and sexism within the fantasy genre and wider society. Pratchett takes 'wizardry' as a symbol of the things from which women are prevented by the patriarchal community. These things may vary from one community to another, but, in general, these things can be getting a promotion in work life, or starting a university education. The limitations that men decided to put in women's life are criticized and how that male-centred point of view is engrained in all the residents of a society is

revealed in *Equal Rites*. In order to regard this situation as something undebatable, that point of view is seen as the lore of society.

Pratchett starts with directing his criticism at the deep-seated traditions about what women cannot perform, comprehend or be by using Granny's remark: "Female wizards aren't right either! It's the wrong kind of magic for women, it is wizard magic, it's all books and stars and jommetry. She'd never grasp it. Whoever heard of a female wizard?" (1987, p.14). Pratchett creates an irony via Weatherwax's words for justifying the limitations put in front of women instead of criticizing them. As stated by Linda Broeder: "Pratchett often employs an ironic mood, by either inventing or over-reasoning the subject under attack" (2007, p.44)

In accordance with Broeder's words, we can talk about inversion here since men's superiority over women is adopted and declared by a woman. This adoption can be seen as evidence of the hegemony of patriarchal perception to which all the individuals of the society are exposed. In addition, Weatherwax emphasizes that women cannot comprehend the topics of science and books, such an opinion is an endeavour to hinder women from involving in scholarly topics. Nevertheless, Pratchett confutes those opinions by keeping Esk's success in wizardry at the forefront throughout the novel. What is also remarkable in Weatherwax's words is that no consistent argument is put forward in order to clarify why women are not allowed to be wizards, there is only a quasi-consensus regarding it in the community. The fact that there has never been a female wizard in the past of Discworld is deliberately presented as a tradition of the society, thus preventing possible attempts. At the beginning of the novel, the current status of women in the society is revealed as it is, in this way Pratchett glorifies Esk's great success which she gains in spite of all those well-established patriarchal traditions.

In brief, satire can be defined as the use of humour, irony and exaggeration to attack a vice or folly. As Butler expresses: "Humour is a change to describe and to some extent criticize the real world. In his fantastical comic space Pratchett can, good-humouredly, offer such criticism" (2004, p.87). Accordingly, Pratchett draws attention to Esk's thoughts in order to reveal women's approach to books and while doing it, he employs humour. One day, Esk pays a visit to Weatherwax she knocks on the door, but Weatherwax does not open it. Worried about Weatherwax, Esk remembers that there is a spare key in the privy in the garden and goes to get it. In the privy Esk sees some pages of an old magazine hung on a nail and her thoughts are mentioned as such: "Granny has a philosophical objection to reading, but she'd be the last to say that books, especially books with nice thin pages, didn't have their uses" (1987, p.23). It is expressed in Weatherwax's previous remark that women are unable to understand books. Thus, using Esk's

assumption about the magazine in the privy Pratchett discloses the expected relations between women and books in a patriarchal community. On one hand, men use books to learn and improve themselves, on the other hand, women benefit from them to meet their daily physical needs. The writer handles this situation humorously, by using humour he also criticizes a serious topic as underlined by Rosen: "Satire cannot be pure entertainment because it contains too many indications that it is also serious or satire cannot be seriously moralistic, as it purports to be, because its investment in comedy precludes any kind of systematic teaching" (2012, p.3).

Being a fantasy writer, Pratchett often employs elements of fantasy to show his satirical point of view. The narrator draws attention to a dialogue between Granny and Drum Billet, namely between a witch and a wizard. Within the concept of the novel the dialogue between the two does not seem much interesting, however, Drum Billet transfers his soul to an apple tree after his death and Weatherwax accesses an owl's mind and alights that apple tree to talk to the wizard. The dialogue between the two is as such:

'It is the wrong sort of magic!' screeched Granny. It's wizard magic, not women's magic!

'Then you must train her', it said.

'Train? What do I know from training wizards!'

'Then send her to university'.

'She's female!', hooted Granny, bouncing up and down on her branch

'Well? Who says women can't be wizards?' (1987, p.34).

The first point that draws attention here is the creation of irony with the use of an owl symbol. In many different cultures, an owl is generally regarded as the symbol of wisdom but Weatherwax's arguments in that dialogue are not wise at all. Weatherwax's ideas illustrate the influence of gendered expectations on all the individuals of the community. In addition, from a different perspective, it can also be claimed that with the help of this irony Pratchett could be underlining Weatherwax's potential for wisdom which she has not realized yet. Linguistically speaking, the wizard is a name given to men and the female equivalent is a witch which has negative connotations. The word wizard on the other hand suggests wisdom. The etymology of wizard is "wise", whereas the one for witch is "wicca". Upon Drum Billet's suggestion of sending Esk to the university so that she can receive appropriate training to be a wizard, Weatherwax responds that she is female. Demonstrating Weatherwax's disapproval, which supports the dominance of the patriarchal world order on individuals, Pratchett satirizes the sexist stereotypes

in the community. Drum Billet's hypocrisy is also foregrounded in order to be criticized. He questions the reasons why women are not allowed to be wizards, however, this questioning starts only when he defines himself as "*Not a wizard any more, just a tree*" (1987, p.35). If Drum Billet had been alive and working at the Unseen University he would absolutely have agreed that women should not be admitted to the university, just like other wizards. The change of mind that occurred in him after his magic was over indicates that he was not sincere. Despite her efforts, Weatherwax could not find a logical response to Drum Billet's question. However, there is not the slightest deviation in her commitment to the male-dominated social rules: "Granny was absolutely certain of one thing, Women had never been wizards, and they weren't about to start now" (1987, p.35). This attitude of opposition to the possible change efforts to ensure gender equality in society is satirized. Further, while criticizing this understanding which aims to put obstacles in front of women, the use of a female character makes the criticism more striking and shows the influence of male-centred notions on women who are firmly against any attempt of improvement for themselves. In Pratchett's fiction, the spread of such beliefs and ideas within a community is explained by D.W. Rick as follows:

Beliefs and social forces shape one and seek to force one into their patterns, was made all the more effective through Pratchett's use of the fantastic, transforming a social phenomenon into a kind of magical curse, a dangerous and malicious self-aware force that, despite being initially conceived by people, would go on to prey on more and more people, using them to further itself. Seldom have I encountered such a vivid depiction of the viral nature of ideas—especially destructive ideas, such as bigotry or hatred (2019, p.169).

The well-established belief regarding inequality between men and women is as damaging as bigotry and hatred. When such a wrong belief is interiorized by an increasing number of people, sooner or later even the women's mentality is captured by that patriarchal belief and it is transferred from one generation to another.

Pratchett also satirizes the fact that while some professions are regarded as men's jobs, some others are believed to be women's jobs. For instance, while being a doctor is associated with men, being a midwife is associated with women. Further, being a doctor is regarded as a trained job, but midwifery is regarded as a self-taught one. In a society, doctors are considered more intellectual than midwives. If the professions attributed to men and women are taken into consideration as binary oppositions, it is clear that the negative side of the opposition is linked to women. However, in a deeper sense, it is understood that the professions that women carry out are closer to nature and they directly touch the realities of people's lives such as birth, death, and illness. In the novel,

since Esk is just eight years old, her pure observation and views regarding witches and wizards are highlighted in order to handle this topic. Esk describes wizards as follows: "They were wise, she recalled, and usually very old and they did powerful complex and mysterious magic and almost all of them had beards. They were also, without exception, men" (1987, p.63). Even an eight-year-old child establishes a relationship between the idea of superiority and men in accordance with what she observes in society. Further, Esk talks about witches as such: "Witches were cunning, she recalled, and usually very old, or at least they try to look old, and they did slightly suspicious, homely and organic magic, and some of them had beards. They were also, without exception, women" (1987, p.63). Pratchett gives his readers an opportunity for comparative analysis of Esk's view on wizards and witches by giving them successively. The most essential characteristic of being a wizard or a witch is magic and about the magic in the Discworld universe Allice Nuttall states that:

There are the wizards, associated with an academic environment that is 'civilised, cosmopolitan, the site of Architecture, intellect and theory'. [...] By contrast, there are the witches, characterised as rural and domestic, based in villages and dealing primarily with the births, deaths and illnesses that make up the day-to-day lives of their local communities (2018, p.23).

Esk chooses positive and strong adjectives for wizards' magic while somewhat negative and weak ones are used for that of witches. It can be inferred from Esk's word usage that wizards' superiority, namely men's superiority over women, reflects the language people speak. Further, even a child aged eight is moulded by the sexist views of society. Such a situation ensures the continuation of the male-centred views within a society since the idea of male dominance over women is transferred from older generations to younger ones. Wizards' superiority in the Discworld series is also emphasized by Nuttall as follows: "Almost invariably, the wizards we see throughout the *Discworld Series* are ensconced in city-based universities, researching a strictly scholarly form of magic and rarely leaving their ivory towers" (2018, p.23). As it is indicated, the professions carried out by women are closer to human lives while those of men, despite being regarded more intellectually, are disconnected from the realities of life, Nuttall points out this issue by describing men residing in their ivory towers.

After revealing those male-centred views, Pratchett starts to deal with the related problem directly using Esk's curiosity regarding that issue:" There was some fundamental problem in all that which she couldn't quite resolve. Why wouldn't ..." (1987, p.63). As is stated Esk is just 8 years old so she is too inexperienced to find a solution to the absolute male dominance in every

segment of the society. Nevertheless, the significant point stated here is that Esk is unsatisfied with what she sees in the society she resides in, and using the unfinished question, the writer forces people to utter the question ‘why wouldn't there be female wizards or male witches?’ Pratchett not only boosts people to surpass the limitations about gender inequality which have been put in front of them but also wants them to re-evaluate this issue regardless of their earlier ideas centred around patriarchal points of view.

Esk has seven elder brothers, and the writer critically approaches the fact that in a patriarchal system in which boys are grown up by learning their own superiority over females Esk is detested by her brothers just because of her power. Such hatred exemplifies the claim that the male-centred mentality is instilled in people at an early age. Thus, an individual finds oneself as a supporter and protector of an existing social system which depends on male dominance when s/he grows up in an environment surrounded by such a mentality. Pratchett underlines Esk’s brothers’ depreciatory attitudes towards her as such: “They peered up their sister with a mixture of fascination and scorn. Witches and wizards were objects of awe, but the sisters weren't. Somehow knowing your own sister was learning to be a witch sort of devalued the whole profession” (1987, p.64). Generally, in the society where Esk lives being a witch or wizard is something praiseworthy, but Esk’s brothers are annoyed by their sister’s success since the position Esk achieves contradicts with what they learn in accordance with patriarchal mentality. They expect Esk to be on a secondary role in all areas of life so Esk’s prominent position disturbs them. In parallel with their attitudes towards Esk, it is likely that in their future life Esk’s brothers will react to their wives and daughters just like they behave Esk. Thus, continuity of the vicious circle based on gender inequality is ensured by indoctrinating men’s superiority over women under the guise of well-preserved traditions of society.

As a talented satirist, instead of overtly stating his criticism all the time, Pratchett usually employs implied messages which may be more as effective and striking than the direct ones. While introducing Esk’s family, Pratchett mentions Esk’s father and tells his name, in addition, he gives much information about her brothers and readers learn the names of Esk’s two brothers; however, no specific information is given regarding Esk’s mother, readers do not know even her name. In *Equal Rites*, there is no part separated for Esk’s mother. What is more, in order to give decisions about Esk’s future life, Granny has a talk with only Esk’ father. This situation implies that Esk’s mother’s ideas about her daughter are ignored and she does not have a right to express her opinion. What is expected from the women in the patriarchal society is the silent obedience as exemplified by Esk’s mother. Thus, the undervaluing that Esk’s mother faces may be considered as Pratchett’s

implied criticism of community and the key point about this criticism is that reader's being unaware of such an undervaluing verify the complete control of patriarchal thought over the readers in their daily life. By doing so, Pratchett encourages his readers to re-think their deep-rooted views regarding gender equality and to notice the incorrect arguments which seem to be plausible within the framework of customs based on women's inferior position compared to men's.

In addition to humans, Pratchett also uses other species of the Discworld universe to satirize the determination of women's role in accordance with their relation to men. To that end, the dwarfs - one of the elements of fantasy fiction- are employed to indicate the male-centred of view. One day, Granny falls into a pit, and when dwarfs try to help her, their dialogue covers some critical perspectives:

'Um,' it began, 'look mother – '

'I'm not a mother,' snapped Granny. 'I'm certainly not your mother, if you ever had mothers, which I doubt. If I was your mother I'd have run away before you were born'

'It's only a figure of speech,' said the head reproachfully.

'It's a damned insult is what it is!' (1987, p.102).

Treating the term 'mother' as pejorative, at first sight, could be surprising; however, what Pratchett foregrounds in this dialogue is that women are given importance or are defined in accordance with their relation to men. A dwarf's address to Granny is emphasized to that end. As Weedon remarks: "Women, on the other hand, have no position in the symbolic order, except in relation to men, as mothers, and even the process of mothering is given patriarchal meanings" (1987, p.54). Even the language that develops and shapes within the scope of male-centred discourses and mentality privileges men over women. As Simone de Beauvoir emphasizes in her well-known work *The Second Sex*: "Thus humanity is male and man defines human not in herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as autonomous being" (1989, p.15). Pratchett criticizes the male-centred culture which invades nearly all the areas of life and using dwarf's words he concentrates on the patriarchal discourse. As Pekşen explains "the phallogocentric structure of patriarchal discourse dominates and controls every institution which results in the inferior status of the woman" (2009:1). One of the desired results of the male-centred system is 'the inferior status of women' in society and patriarchal discourse is among the reasons for this situation.

Pratchett directs his criticism at the lower status of childless women compared to the mothers' status in a community. While a childless woman is not considered an independent

individual in the society, she is respected only when she becomes a mother. Pratchett satirizes the mentality that a woman should be a mother or a wife in order to be respected in her society. The dialogue below between the wizard Treatle and Esk exemplifies such a selfish patriarchal mindset as well:

‘I have nothing but the highest respect for women,’ said Treacle, who hadn't noticed the fresh edge to Esk's tone. ‘They are without parallel when, when –’

‘For having babies and so forth?’

‘There is that, yes,’ the wizard conceded generously (1987, p.109).

Pratchett criticizes the fact that women are respected only when they are a wife or a mother who is expected to give birth, serve men as well as do all the housework. The fact that Treacle does not complete his sentence implies that he is unable to offer any other reason why the women should be respected except for ‘having babies and so forth’. In Lacanian terms, women are regarded as the lack on their own and their relation to men gives them chances to gain status, albeit an inferior one.

Using lots of similes and metaphors in his novels, Pratchett achieves a satirical point of view. In her voyage to Ankh-Morpork in which Unseen University is located, Esk encounters Treatle and asks him whether women can be wizards. Treatle finds this question absurd since the response is obvious, they cannot. His thoughts regarding Esk are expressed as follows: “She was simply just another figure around the campfires. He was the Vice-Chancellor of Unseen University, and quite used to seeing vague scurrying figures getting on with essential but unimportant jobs like serving his meals and dusting his rooms" (1987, p.107).

Treatle’s impertinent comparison indicates that women are not regarded as individuals on their own, and the passive role given to them is emphasized. Men’s humiliating remarks about women are satirized and the disparaging comparison helps the narrator foreground these thoughts so that they can be criticized. While women are hierarchized into an inferior status in the patriarchal society, men are put on the top. The implication of the expression ‘figure around the campfires’ should be noted, women are treated like they are the figurants of male-dominant life, they do not have any major role or importance within the society.

In order to better comprehend the satirical aspects of the novel regarding women’s position in society, it would be wise to analyze the previous expression about the dwarf’s address to Granny as ‘mother’ and this remark together because the male-centred mentality and language are jointly

related to each other. In addition, the writer satirizes the fact that in their society, women are regarded as 'figures' rather than individuals and inferior status or secondary roles are deemed suitable for them. As a result of this biased perspective, women's any attempts for improving themselves are prevented. Also, the expression 'figure around the campfires' may be taken as a reflection of the male-centred mentality on language. Such discourses leak into the daily language and become a tradition of society thus, their continuity is guaranteed.

Traditions or social norms are also utilized to impose the male-centred system on society and Pratchett underlines Esk's status at the university which totally contrasts with what she expects. Esk's primary purpose is to be trained as a wizard at the Unseen University so that she can control and use her magical powers, but she finds herself working as a servant there. Pratchett uses Esk's magical staff - an element of fantasy to emphasize this contrast. Ironically, Esk's magic staff is assigned the role of a mere broom -the only tool considered suitable for a woman. She is described as follows:

She just started sweeping until the staff realized what was expected of it, and then she could amuse herself until it was finished. If anyone came the staff would immediately lean itself nonchalantly against a wall. But she wasn't learning any wizardry. She could wander into empty classrooms and look at the diagrams chalked on the board, and on the floor too in the more advanced classes, but the shapes were meaningless (1987, p.143).

Although it is Esk's destiny to become a wizard, traditions based on a male-centred mentality put barriers in front of her so that she cannot reach a higher position in her society. In addition, Pratchett's style to combine his criticism of social and political topics with elements of fantasy masterfully makes him unique. Here, a magic staff turns into a mere broom which indicates that women's capacity is wasted in a patriarchal community. The patriarchal system does not give an opportunity to women to show that women are just as talented as men, accordingly their abilities are ruined. Attempts to go outside or beyond this determined framework are immediately blocked by the male-dominated social order. In this sense, Esk's staff can be regarded as a clear indication of her mastery in wizardry, yet she has no choice but to use her power only while cleaning. Esk is allowed to use her power only for trivial household chores. This situation reveals the fact that women can do great work when given the necessary environment and opportunities, but they are only given tasks that are suitable for their low position in society. Further, it is understood from Esk's definition that she is illiterate and preventing women from education, which is one of the essential steps for progress, is also satirized here. In the novel, Simon, who is Esk's peer and is

trained to be a wizard, is literate, but Esk is not. Such a dramatic difference between these children of the same age can only be explained by gender inequality in the society. While the writings on the classroom board are ‘meaningless’ for Esk, her peer Simon improves himself by attending courses, learning new things and reading books. Esk is fully aware of this situation as is indicated in the novel: “She was also coming to conclusion that she ought to learn to read. This reading business seemed to be the key to the wizard magic” (1987, p.147).

In the Unseen University, however, wizards also know the importance of learning about wizardry and they deliberately teach her nothing. To conclude, Esk arrives at the Unseen University with the aim of learning how to control her inborn supernatural powers and become a wizard yet due to her gender, she starts serving men giving different lessons to younger boys on how to be wizards, that is the only way a woman may reside in this institution. As long as women accept that inferior status they can stay in the Unseen University. The roles of traditions and male-centred mentality which are regarded as the major reason for gender inequality in all fields of daily life are criticized by the writer.

The writer handles Esk as a character to highlight two diametrically opposed subjects; one of them is Esk's persistent effort to become a wizard despite all the opposite opinions, and the other is that she starts to show signs of submission to social norms and male-dominated rules. In the university, when Esk comes across Simon who has a book under each arm, her feelings are portrayed as follows: “She felt alone and lost, and more than a little betrayed. Everyone seemed to be busy living their own lives, except her. She would spend the rest of her life cleaning up after wizards. It wasn't fair, and she'd have enough” (1987, p.151).

Pratchett lays bare the hardship Esk faces and portrays her determination to have what she already deserves, namely, being a wizard. Despite all these difficulties, she does not give up; therefore, she may be representing the hope for the struggle against gender inequality. Pratchett does not hesitate to criticize Esk when she shows even a little sign of submission. Upon Granny's attempt to enter the great hall to talk to the wizards, Esk warns her immediately. In the following dialogue, Granny's reaction to Esk may be regarded as Pratchett's message to those who tend to give up the struggle for equal rights:

‘Um, women aren't allowed in,’ said Esk.

Granny stopped in the doorway. Her shoulders rose. She turned around very slowly. ‘What did you say?’ she said. ‘Did these old ears deceive me, and don't say they did because they didn't.’

"Sorry," said Esk. "Force of habit."

'I can see you've been getting ideas below your station,' said Granny coldly (1987, p.160).

Esk's attitude reminds us of Granny's at the beginning when talking to Drum Billet. Accordingly, the danger emphasized by the author is that Esk is on her way to becoming a submissive resident of this patriarchal society who will cease to question inequalities, Esk's persistence to question is crucial and is a symbol of the struggle she should not even think of giving up. Instead of attacking her directly, the author emphasizes that she has to give her decision; she will either keep on going after her desires despite all the negative attitudes of the society or will change her mind, stop struggling and accept the inferior status of women in the society. In order to better understand the role Pratchett attributes to the Unseen University, it would be appropriate to take it as the microcosm of the male-centred society. All the wizards, who are without exception men, reside on the upper floors and live comfortably, yet women live on the basement floor and do everything they can in order to meet the needs of men. It is only when they start cleaning or bring something to the wizards, they are allowed to go upper floors. Nevertheless, there are some rooms that women cannot enter in any case. Esk, who finds herself surrounded by those irrational restrictions, begins to show a little sign of submission. Before Esk starts her journey to become a wizard, she is fully aware of the difficulties she is supposed to face throughout this journey yet she does not hesitate to do so. However, the remark 'women aren't allowed in' can be regarded as an example of the reflection of the male-centred mentality in educational institutions. In addition, Granny's angry reaction to Esk can be commented as hope in women's fight for equal rights in a community surrounded and controlled by the patriarchal system. Granny Weatherwax assumes Esk's role as a wise elder and paves the way for her when Esk's endurance seems to disappear against the male-centred rules. In addition, Granny's entry into the hall of the university, which is restricted to women, shows a positive change in the status of women at the university and indicates the positive results of women's efforts for equal rights. Granny and Esk's joint struggle with wizards against the shadow creatures to save the Discworld universe brings them close to each other. When Granny wants cigarettes from Cutangle who is the Arch-chancellor of Unseen University, his thoughts are as follows: "Cutangle opened his mouth to point out very courteously that tobacco was a habit reserved for wizards, but thought better of it. He extended the tobacco pouch towards Granny" (1987, p.176). Since Cutangle is the head of the Unseen University, any possible changes in his mentality and behaviour represent a lot. Earlier he used to believe in the necessity of male superiority over women however, now he accepts to share his belongings with a woman. Nevertheless, causing a change in men's mentality is not always easy since they grow up in an environment where men are regarded as being superior to women, similarly, Treatle does not

want to see Granny in the hall: “But it's against the lore to allow w-” (1987, p.191). Pratchett points out the difficulty in changing men’s well-established beliefs regarding women’s status in society by giving two contrasting male reactions. The fact that all the obstacles imposed on women depend on the ‘the lore’ indicates how deeply engrained as well as groundless they are and the validity of the lore is also examined via Cutangle’s question to Treatle: “Show me where it's written down” (1987, p.191). Cutangle starts to change and become an advocator of women’s rights. However, Pratchett's satire in this situation should not be overlooked; Pratchett unmasks the male hypocrisy through Cutangle as is seen in this case men accept to take action in collaboration with women only when a possible danger begins to threaten them.

At the end of the novel, Esk and Simon work collaboratively in order to save the Discworld and they achieve it and upon this victory, Granny demands Cutangle to declare Esk as a wizard and asks him: “Where does it say it?” said Granny triumphantly. Where does it say women can't be wizards?” (1987, p.195). Firstly, the word choice is important because the word 'triumphantly' underscores Esk and Granny’s achievement as a result of their struggle against the male-centred system. Moreover, Cutangle's response “It doesn't say it anywhere, it says it everywhere” (1987, p.195) reveals the difficulty of the situation because as can be understood from the Cutangle’s first sentence the inferior status of women in society does not depend on any written rules which makes it complicated to fight against the gender inequality. But Cutangle’s second sentence emphasizes the prevalent point of view which stems from traditions shaped in accordance with the patriarchal system. What is satirized by the writer is that due to traditions and people’s submission to them blindly, patriarchal discourse, rules and culture remain protected and can be transferred from one generation to another.

The fact that women cannot be wizards since it is against the lore is emphasized throughout the novel, but the lore can be easily changed by men as Granny announces to Esk: “You're a wizard! said Granny, simply. The Arch-chancellor changed the lore, Quite a simple ceremony, really” (1987, p.201). Pratchett satirizes the fact that although men give decisions in society, they choose to hide behind the lore in order to secure their positions as superior. In addition to Esk’s becoming a wizard, Granny is also offered a position at the Unseen University by Cutangle: “If you might see your way clear to becoming, that is, whether you would accept a Chair” (1987, p.203). Even though both announcement of Esk as a wizard and the offer Granny receives seem to be a result of their achievement, it is only when the two contribute to the university and help wizards solve serious problems men accept to utilize the power they have.

CONCLUSION

Unlike other well-known fantasy series such as *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*, in the Discworld Series, the baser elements of the real world are tackled as the evil of the story. Accordingly, in *Equal Rites*, being unable to think beyond preconceived notions and the indoctrination of male-dominant ideas in society without allowing people to question them can be taken as evil. Being the third Discworld novel in the series, *Equal Rites* can be taken as an early example of Pratchett's approach to dealing with complex and serious issues of the real world within the context of fantasy fiction. Pratchett deals with a debatable topic – gender inequality in *Equal Rites*. While dealing with gender inequality, Pratchett does not only focus on how it exists but why it exists and how it is continued.

Using the story of Esk, who is destined to be a wizard but is prevented by the patriarchal system, Pratchett satirizes the system which prioritizes men in every segment of the society and the use of the lore to that end. In addition, Pratchett wants to criticize the social background of male superiority and female inferiority with the help of Esk, so that women could dare to pursue their own freedom and rights, and resist their repressed destiny. The writer deliberately portrays Esk as a determined, self-reliant girl who ultimately gains victory over men's privileged status in society in order to underscore women's achievement in any fields of life they take part.

Pratchett speaks out lots of the contemporary issues about the exclusion of women from social life, business, and education, and he refutes them by using Esk. Men's vanity and women's dignity are also compared in the novel since it is proved with different examples that Esk and Granny are more capable than their counterparts but what they demand is not superiority but equality in all segments of society. In order to highlight the harsh discrimination from which women suffer, Pratchett employs several satirical techniques like contrast, irony and disparaging comparison. The absurdity of expectations regarding different gender performances is also pointed out through a comparative analysis of some serious gender-based issues like patriarchal discourse, motherhood and discrimination in professional life given from both men's and women's perspectives. In *Equal Rites*, the gender discrimination, which is still topical and serious, is satirized with Pratchett's humorous approach and various elements of fantasy fiction such as magic, witches and wizards are used. The creation of a successful combination of satire and fantasy contributes *Equal Rites* to be regarded not only as a harsh criticism of gender inequality but also as an enjoyable and vivid fantasy novel.

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