



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

Hugvísindasvið

# **“Who watches the watchmen?”**

*Power Relationships in the Discworld Watch Series*

**B.A. Essay**

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**Maí 2014**

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## Abstract

This essay explores some chosen books from the popular Watch series written by Terry Pratchett in the period from 1994 to 2006 in order to analyze power relationships and the growth and character development of Samuel Vimes into a respected authority figure and a power-player of equal standing and importance as the ruler of the city and the heir to the throne. Samuel Vimes is the main protagonist of the Watch sub series of Pratchett's Discworld book series. Vimes is the head of the police force, which is called the Watch, in Ankh-Morpork, the largest city on the Discworld. The first part of the essay examines Vimes's character traits and personality, focusing on the three-part split in his personality and how it corresponds to the Freudian three part model of the psyche. The analysis of Vimes's personality is an important foundation for further analysis in the essay as throughout the Watch series Vimes moves from being simply an alcoholic policeman in dented armor to being a respected and feared pillar of the community. The essay also deals with the beginning of Vimes's growth as an established authority figure due to the recognition of his unique abilities when it comes to influencing and controlling Carrot Ironfoundersson, the secret heir to the throne of Ankh-Morpork and a fellow policeman. In addition, the essay elaborates on Vimes's relationship with Lord Havelock Vetinari, the cunning and manipulative supreme ruler of the city as the power relationship Vimes has with Lord Vetinari is absolutely vital to Vimes's final position as an authority figure. The essay uses both the literary theories of Marxism and Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The books used for reference from the Discworld Watch series by Terry Pratchett are; *Men at Arms* (1994), *Feet of Clay* (1997), *Night Watch* (2003) and *Thud!* (2006).

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
1. The Importance of Internal Defense Mechanisms.....	4
1.1. Deconstruction, the ego and self control as a base for power .....	4
1.2. The darkness within.....	5
1.3. To Protect and Serve .....	6
2. Kings and Axes .....	10
2.1. The heir to the throne .....	10
2.2. Vimes's influence on Carrot.....	12
2.3. The axe in the table .....	13
3. The Tyrant and The Commander of the Watch.....	16
3.1. Lord Vetinari as a power player .....	16
3.2. Employment benefits.....	17
3.3. Power Balance.....	20
Conclusion.....	23
Works Cited.....	24

## Introduction

This thesis examines power relationships in the Discworld Watch series by Terry Pratchett, focusing on Samuel Vimes's character development into an awe-inspiring, respected figure of authority. This causes him to have influence and power over the most important power-players in Ankh-Morpork, Carrot Ironfoundersson and Havelock Vetinari, eventually becoming an equally important power-player himself. The Discworld series is a best-selling fantasy series written by Terry Pratchett, which has 40 books so far, not including official supplemental material. The Discworld itself "is a flat disc carried on the backs of four elephants astride a giant turtle floating through space" (Pratchett, *Men* 1). Within the Discworld series there are several subseries, commonly referenced to as: The Witches series, The Wizards series, The Death series, The Moist Von Lipwig series, The Tiffany Aching series which is a subseries of the Witches series and the Watch series. There is also a collection of stand-alone books. As the entire series happens in the same world, many of the characters show up in other subseries, often with the predictable hilarious consequences. This essay will focus on the Watch series, which chronicles the story of the development of the police force in Ankh-Morpork over a period of time and its growth from an almost useless group of three watchmen to a fully functioning law enforcement establishment. The Watch novels focus on the local police force and are usually crime or mystery novels and often parodying various famous aspects of the genre. The protagonist of the Watch series and the main focus of this essay is Samuel Vimes. Through the course of the Watch series he goes from being the alcoholic Captain of the Night Watch to being the respected and feared Commander of the Watch. There are two other important characters within the series that this essay mentions; Carrot Ironfoundersson and Lord Havelock Vetinari. Carrot Ironfoundersson, primarily known as Carrot, is a fellow policeman and eventual Captain of the Watch. He, rather more importantly, is the secret heir to the throne to Ankh-Morpork. Lord Havelock Vetinari is the supreme ruler of the city, and features heavily in the Watch series as the Watch itself is an important and visible part of how the city operates when it comes to the law, and he is everyone's boss. The setting of the Watch series is mainly Ankh-Morpork, the largest city on the Disc. In the first chapter of this essay Vimes will be analyzed in order to understand the foundation of his character and how this impacts his ascension to a place of authority. The second chapter explores the beginnings of Vimes's development as an acknowledged authority figure in Ankh-Morpork. The third chapter details Vimes's continuing development as a powerful and respected public figure and his relationship with

those within the Ankh-Morpork community. The literary theories used in order to analyze the behavior and aspects of the characters' behavior are mainly Marxism and Freudian psychology. In this essay I will be focusing on four novels within the Watch series: *Men at Arms*, *Feet of Clay*, *Night Watch* and *Thud!* *Men at Arms* explores and illustrates the theme of Carrot's potential power as King and introduces the yet unnamed 'others' which are a part of Vimes's split personality. The choice of *Feet of Clay* as a book to focus on is of importance because of its portrayal of the power-relationship between Samuel Vimes and Lord Vetinari and because it continues on the theme of kingship present in earlier books. *Night Watch* is an extremely important addition to the list of Watch books in light of the fact that it elaborates on Vimes's struggle against the beast, an "other" he has created within his mind and because of the important shift in Vimes's power relationship with Lord Vetinari. *Thud!* is a vital choice because it continues the theme of the two "others" as well as establishing Vimes as a respected authority figure and pillar of society.

## 1. The Importance of Internal Defense Mechanisms

It is important to establish what Vimes's character and personality are before delving into character development. Freudian psychoanalytic theory serves well for the purpose of the analysis of Vimes's split personality. Vimes's personality is divided into three parts: his own individual character traits, The Watchman and the beast. This division corresponds to the Freudian three part model of the psyche, "dividing it into the *ego*, the *super-ego*, and the *id*, these three 'levels' of the personality roughly corresponding to, respectively, the consciousness, the conscience, and the unconscious" (Barry 93).

It follows, then, that this chapter will be split into three sub-sections. The first section is about Vimes's own characteristics, the second focuses on the "other" called the beast and the last section is about the second "other" which is called the Watchman.

### 1.1. Deconstruction, the ego and self control as a base for power

Freud states in his book *The Ego and the Id* "We have formed the idea that in each individual there is a coherent organization of mental progresses; and we call this his *ego*" (7). Sam Vimes's personality is the deconstruction of the stereotypical world-weary, aging, secretly sentimental but still extremely competent policeman, often from a background of poverty with a drinking problem and a hair-trigger temper which can be found in crime fiction around the world. As such, Vimes' character and subsequent power as a figure of authority, is based on his incredible self-control. Vimes, it becomes evident early on, is capable of causing a lot of damage due to his anger issues and temper. Due to this he has had to take measures in order to protect himself, his family, the Watch and everyone else in the city.

In order to do that Vimes has created two "others," split personalities he can use to control each other and therefore himself. As mentioned above, one is called the "beast" and the second is the "Watchman". The amount of damage Vimes can cause increases as his power and influence grows, and thus the necessity of the two "others" also grows. The two "others" exist as separate defense mechanisms and it is important to understand their position as such when analyzing Vimes's actions and thoughts. Both serve a function, the beast gives Vimes power to push on when all the other options are gone and the Watchman primarily serves to protect and police Vimes himself. The Watchman watches the watchman, so to speak. These two "others" exist within his own mind, both as a part of him and as separate personifications of certain aspects of him.

## 1.2. The darkness within

The beast “other” is personified raw, animalistic rage. The beast is the darkness below the surface. It is the eagerness to hurt, the ache and the anger and the simmering bile. In the novels the beast is presented as a chained demonic animal in the darkness of Vimes’s mind. Rosemary Jackson in her book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* when discussing the issue of the evil kind of “other” states:

Blackness, night, darkness always surrounded this ‘other’...The term *demonic* originally denoted a supernatural being, a ghost, or spirit, or genius, or devil and it usually connoted a malignant, destructive force at work. (54)

The beast “other” Vimes has created does not express itself with words, but with screams and howls, demanding violence, blood and death. It also expresses itself like an animal would, and is described as sniffing the air and tensing before it believes that it will be released. “The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions” (Freud, *The Ego* 15). In this case, the passions of the id would be the rage of which the beast is made of, so the beast corresponds to the id. Vimes controls the beast by actively repressing it until he needs the strength that the beast gives him. In order to feed that animal called beast Vimes suppresses his rage, anger and frustration. He lets the beast have it all and store it up until there is an appropriate moment to let it out. However, it is important to note that Vimes never calls for the beast unless he has no other option and that it only breaks free of its chains when Vimes has completely run out of options, such as when he is at death’s door or when a great injustice has occurred and only he is the answer. When the beast takes over Vimes’s body, which it does when the anger or fear Vimes feels reaches critical levels, or when Vimes lets it off the chain, it is often identified within the narrative by the color red, such as Vimes seeing red in some manner, or as red mist surrounding him. The fact that the beast takes over Vimes’s senses, forcing him to become extremely violent as the beast is essentially nothing but a destructive force, indicates that he loses control over a large part of himself. This loss of control makes Vimes a very dangerous man, which is one of the reasons why he spends so much effort in repressing the beast as well as sending it back into the darkness of his mind when it is no longer needed. In *Night Watch*, Vimes stops himself from murdering a serial killer named Carter, who he has been chasing the entire novel and arrests him instead.



Red rage froze. There was the beast, all around him. And that's what it was. A beast. Useful, but still a beast. You could hold it on a chain, and make it dance, and juggle balls. It didn't think. It was *dumb*. What you were, what *you* were, was not the beast. You didn't have to do what it wanted. (466)

It is important to note that despite the fact that Vimes considers the beast to be a useful part of himself as he relies on being able to draw on its strength, he is also extremely afraid of it. Vimes spends his life fighting the darkness within him and actively choosing to make good decisions instead of giving into what the beast wants. Losing control of the beast would destroy his life, and all that he holds dear. His position as a figure of authority is based on the fact that Vimes is able to control the beast. Therefore, Vimes has also created ways of protecting himself from the beast that do not exist within his own mind. The first method Vimes uses is to drink heavily as this is the only method he knows that works, which causes him to become an alcoholic. The second method he creates, after he becomes sober, is to establish a safety net around him, which includes his family, the Watch and Lord Vetinari. The external safety net around Vimes is made up of figures that remind him of authority and the importance and the very requirement of self control. His family reminds him of how easily he could lose them if he gives into the will of the beast. The Watch reminds him of his status as an authority figure and all that is required of him in such a role. Lord Vetinari is his boss and has the power to remove him from authority and the job which has so defined his life, if he loses control of himself. This safety net is there to ensure that he does not cause significant damage to anyone when he loses control of the beast, and are able to stop him in various ways. When the safety net is absent, Vimes is far more likely to lose control of the beast so that it takes over his body, and become a berserker even if the Watchman protects Vimes's own mind and personality.

### **1.3. To Protect and Serve**

In order to repress the beast and protect himself and others from it, Vimes creates the second other, called the Watchman which is his internal spirit of justice. Unlike the beast, the Watchman is not a demonic figure that attacks. Instead it is a guardian and a protector. The Watchman is portrayed as a physical watchman, complete with Watch uniform and equipment, such as a lantern, and most importantly, a human in contrast to the animalistic beast. The Watchman "other" usually does not express itself, only watches and guards, but when it does express itself it does not speak with Vimes's voice, but its own. The Watchman makes certain that Vimes uses the strength that the beast gives him only for the pursuit of

justice. It is the Watchman that pulls the beast back into the darkness of Vimes's mind when the beast's strength has been used, and keeps the beast in its place. The Watchman corresponds to the super-ego in Freudian psychoanalysis. One of the functions of the super-ego according to Freud "consists in keeping a watch over the actions and intentions of the ego and judging them, in exercising a censorship" (*Civilization* 73), which the Watchman does most prominently by keeping the beast in check and by not allowing Vimes to submit to the urges of the beast any longer than vitally necessary.

The importance of the Watchman as Vimes's protection from the beast is shown best in *Men at Arms* when Lord Vetinari threatens to take Vimes's badge if he does not stop investigating a murder. As the badge is Vimes's symbol of power, both for himself and others, Vimes responds to the possibility of the badge being taken away from him by having a nervous breakdown, shown by him falling off the wagon by getting drunk and clutching his badge so hard that his hand becomes blood-stained. Drinking alcohol, for Vimes is a destructive defense mechanism and a way of keeping himself under control, as it is alcohol that protects and controls the beast for years when the Watch is an almost useless institution, numbing the beast so that it could not cause too much damage. As the Watchman "other" is the part of Vimes that is the policeman, it needs the policeman badge to exist, as the policeman in his head mirrors the one he is in real life. Taking away the badge from Vimes means that he will lose the protection of the Watchman and therefore a part of himself, essentially leaving him at the mercy of the beast. In *Night Watch*, Vimes thinks: "The badge was important. Yes. It was shield-shaped. For protection...It protected him from the beast, because the beast was waiting in the darkness of his head" (300).

The fact that Vimes's super-ego manifests itself as a policeman is extremely important when the origin of the super-ego is examined. Freud states "the origin of the ego ideal; for behind it there lies hidden an individual's first and most important identification, his identification with the father in his own personal prehistory" (*The Ego* 21). It is kept ambiguous within the Watch book series if Vimes's father disappears or dies when Vimes is very young, either way, he is not around. So Vimes has to look for other father figures. As he joins the Watch in his early teens in addition to the fact that being a member of the Watch is a family tradition, it is a fairly safe bet to assume that he began looking for father figures there as his own father is unavailable. Freud states "As a substitute for a longing for the father, it [the super-ego] contains the germ from which all religions have evolved" (*The Ego* 27). As Vimes has found the father figure in the figure of a watchman, he then begins to infuse the most important values and qualities of the standard watchman, that of belief in Justice and the

Law into the part of him that is a watchman, making the Law his own religion. The father figure of the watchman is also the authority figure that Vimes accepts along with the values, morals and beliefs that are connected to the profession.

The Watchman has another function beyond that of protecting Vimes from the beast, as the Watchman is also Vimes's belief in the Law and Justice personified as a policeman, its other role is to work as a guardsman against Vimes's actions and thoughts. It works as a patrol within his mind, constantly watching his every action, word and thought for any traces of corruption and injustice. Interestingly, Vimes's mind is portrayed as a city, where there is always night and drizzling which is important as Vimes spent the lion's share of his life as a watchman in the Night Watch. Because Vimes's mind is shaped by his experience as a guard, both his mind and the Watchman "other" reflect that alike Vimes in the real world, the Watchman watches the city in search of unlawful behavior. Jackson remarks "Like the super-ego, the 'I' watches, judges, measures and condemns the self as it tries to meet the demands of its social other" (*Fantasy* 89). The strength of the Watchman is shown in *Thud!*, when an incredibly strong, legendary ancient spirit of vengeance called the Summoning Dark invades and tries to take over Vimes's mind, activating and fusing with his beast to the point that Vimes becomes insane with terror and rage for a short amount of time. At that moment Vimes is desperately reaching out for his external security net when he is alone in a cave. In order to hold on to some vestiges of his sanity when his body has been taken over by the beast, Vimes connects to the safety net that is his family by reading to his absent son the book he reads to him every day at six as a part of his fatherly duty and as an expression of love for his son. The Summoning Dark is defeated by the Watchman after an internal battle and thrown out of Vimes's mind, although it has never completely left him. As the Watchman is the part of Vimes that is a policeman, the Watchman also polices and guards absolutely everyone around Vimes as well, without discrimination or mercy. The fact that Vimes polices and guards everyone around him means that Vimes will arrest anyone for their crimes, no matter how high up the social ladder, which is fitting as the Vimes family motto is "*Protego et Servio*" (Pratchett and Briggs 300) roughly translated as "To protect and serve." The phrase, to serve and protect, is also known to be associated with law enforcement officials here in the real world and is a reference to that, indicating that being a Vimes has been linked to being a policeman for a long time.

The beast "other" as the passionate id gives Vimes strength and power to push his limits, and contributes to Vimes's power and authority by causing people afraid of making him truly angry. However, it is the existence of the extremely strong Watchman "other" as the

super-ego that enables Vimes to become such a high ranking authority figure. The Watchman constantly makes certain that there is no corruption and injustice in Vimes's mind and because of this he remains uncorrupt and as such impossible to bribe. Vimes's strength as an authority figure lies in the fearsome qualities the Watchman grants him, such as a belief in justice so ironclad that it grants him determination to bring some justice into the world no matter whose toes he must trample on in the process.

## **2. Kings and Axes**

This chapter deals with the beginning of Vimes's growth into an acknowledged authority figure and how his relationship with Carrot Ironfoundersson has influenced this development. The chapter is divided into three subsections. The first one establishes Carrot as an important power-player and illustrates why Vimes's unique bond with him is important. The second section deals with the cause of Vimes's influence over Carrot and Vimes's growth as an authority figure in light of that. The third section concerns Vimes's unique ability to control and influence the heir which establishes him as a powerful figure of authority.

### **2.1. The heir to the throne**

Vimes's development into an authority figure truly begins when it becomes known that Vimes is able to control, influence and stop Carrot Ironfoundersson from becoming the King of Ankh-Morpork.

Carrot is undoubtedly the rightful heir to the throne of Ankh-Morpork, and this unknown yet known identity is the source of his power. For what is kingship but a symbol of ultimate power, as the king is a part of the highest social rank and class. The king appears in all kinds of stories, such as modern adventures or ancient myths and legends. The king as a character archetype is an important part of the fantasy genre, which as Rosemary Jackson points out in her book on the fantasy genre "can be traced back to ancient myths, legends, folklore, carnival art" (95). He is often portrayed as being Great and Good and Rightful, which gives him the power of immunity. Within these narratives, the king can most often be recognized and qualified for kingship by having the birthright to the throne and/or having the right attributes for a king.

Carrot Ironfoundersson has two things that identify his birthright as king, namely a crown shaped birthmark and a very sharp, non-magical sword. Interestingly, Carrot also has all the right attributes of a classic Good King. He is extremely likable, to the point of it being almost a supernatural quality. He is also good-natured, charming, knows and cares for everyone within the city, and is obsessively interested in the preservation of Ankh Morpork itself. Carrot does not have any known vices and lacks any bad qualities, to the point of it being disturbing, which means that the power-players who try to influence him by exploiting his vices inevitably fail since there are none to exploit. His power lies in his status as the heir to the throne which automatically makes him an important player within the city. His

potential for unlimited power as the True King and his incredible influence which is based upon his likability makes him an unofficial yet very official force to be reckoned with. Carrot uses his power to establish that he is almost completely untouchable. An example of this would be that even Lord Vetinari as the official tyrant and ruler of the city is completely unable to stop him from taking the throne since Carrot has both the attributes of a king as well as evidence of his birthright as one. Another reason for Carrot's immunity is the fact that kings are considered to be a link between humanity and divinity and therefore sacred. Eugene Webb points out in his book *The Dark Dove: The Sacred and Secular in Modern Literature*:

According to this school of thought, the sense of the sacred has certain features that are constant to it wherever it appears: a feeling of awe, even of terror, before the sacred...a sense of the majesty (*majestas*) of its vast superiority of power; a fascination with its fullness of being (*mysterium facinans*); a sense of its total otherness. (6)

All these features appear in people's reaction to Carrot's royal status. Most importantly the sense of otherness and his fullness of being which is connected to the sense of transcendence, which might be considered to indicate even further than the sense of awe and even terror, that Carrot is not like regular humans and therefore should not be treated like one, but as a sacred human instead. Samuel Vimes states in *Men at Arms* about the difference between Lord Vetinari as the supreme tyrannical ruler of the city and a king as a ruler: "But he [Vetinari] doesn't wear a crown or sit on a throne and he doesn't tell you it's *right* that he should rule" (70), which emphasizes that even though his lordship holds the position of power that the king used to have he does not have the sacredness and therefore immunity connected to royalty. In *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams states:

Any culture includes available elements of its past...The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present. (122)

Carrot uses his status as heir to the throne as well as the knowledge other people have of this status and the possibilities it holds, to establish his complete authority over those who consider themselves to be power-players or are being uncooperative. He makes this knowledge a physical reality due to the fact that he carries his ancestor's sword everywhere with him instead of his official Watch-issue sword, and uses it to indicate his status as the heir when he feels it is necessary to remind people of his potential power over them in the future.

## 2.2. Vimes's influence on Carrot

Vimes is able to control and influence Carrot because unlike the other power players in the city, Vimes does not try to do so by making use of Carrot's vices, but his virtues. He makes certain that Carrot is working for and thinking of what would be for the good of the city which he knows that Carrot loves, as well as actively dispensing justice as a watchman. Additionally, it is important to note that Vimes constantly establishes himself as an authority figure who is above Carrot in rank within the Watch. Vimes is the Commander, Carrot is a Captain, Vimes is the boss and Carrot is the workman. More specifically, he keeps Carrot as his second in command, as the man who takes action instead of managing and does not take kindly to Carrot taking over aspects of his job, unless there is an emergency, such as Vimes leaving town. Because of Vimes's established superior authority in the Watch as well as the closeness of their two ranks, Vimes is able to use the Watchman to constantly watch Carrot in search of corruption, injustice or behavior that is unlawful, keeping him in check.

As Carrot cannot be controlled by any other authority figure, and uncontrolled he is a threat to the whole system on which the city relies to operate because he has the ability to greatly disrupt many of the currently functioning power structures by taking the throne, Vimes becomes powerful as he is the only one able to influence the king-to-be to not take the throne. Vimes does this in *Men at Arms* by explaining that in the long run monarchy would not be good for the city. This is an important psychological move on Vimes's part as he knows that Carrot loves the city obsessively, just as Vimes himself loves the city. Vimes is also pushing Carrot to act according to one of Carrot's hardest held beliefs, that "personal isn't the same as important" (Pratchett 358), so that even if Carrot wanted to be King, that is decidedly not what the city needs. Such a development as a king taking the throne would halt the cultural evolution of the city by letting it step back into the tradition of being a powerful kingdom. "For tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits" (Williams 115). Vimes himself is living proof of what cannot be accomplished under monarchy. Vimes's power does not rely on his birthright, but on his own actions being rewarded and his determination in the equality of all under the law. He continues the Ankh-Morpork tradition of having no kings as supreme rulers by changing the mind of the heir, which makes it possible for the city to continue to flourish in absence of old rules connected to being a city governed by royalty.

By doing this Vimes is locking in Carrot's power as it only exists in potential as long as he remains heir, which stabilizes the city. An example of Vimes's power and influence over Carrot would be when Carrot explains to Lord Vetinari in *Men at Arms* that Ankh-

Morpork does not need a King after Carrot has been influenced by Vimes to hold that opinion.

‘*But* if there was some pressing need...then perhaps he’d think again.’ Carrot brightened up. ‘It’s a bit like being a guard, really. When you need us, you really need us. And when you don’t ... well, best if we just walk around the streets and shout All’s Well. Providing all *is* well, of course.’ (373)

This is also a subtle threat towards Lord Vetinari, that if Carrot does not think that the city is on the right track, or that the Patrician is not ruling it well enough, there is always the chance that he will take over. However, the Patrician establishes that as both of them have agreed on the benefits of promoting Vimes as the Commander of the Watch that this position will also include the tradition of regicide. As Carrot’s position as heir and the influence that has in the city is established early on in the Watch series, Carrot has a substantial influence over Lord Vetinari, and uses it to suggest improvements to both the Watch and the city which Vetinari is unable to deny.

### **2.3. The axe in the table**

It is not just Vimes’s ability to halt Carrot from becoming King that makes him a respected and feared authority figure; it is also his ability to stop him from taking the throne. The fact is that Vimes is unable to tolerate the existence of kings who are considered to be above the Law, because his inner spirit of justice, the Watchman does not allow exceptions to the belief that the execution of justice should be the same for everyone. Vimes is a person who believes so intensely in the fact that justice and the law should be obeyed by all that he created an “other” who personifies his belief and the fact that kings are considered to above the Law is to Vimes a clear case of corruption and injustice. Vimes will not accept authority that does not comply with the set of rules that his super-ego rigidly enforces for everyone.

At the end of *Feet of Clay*, Vimes, in order to stop Carrot from becoming King, brings an axe down into the long table in the Rats Chamber in the Patrician’s Palace. The Rats Chamber is where important meetings are held by city leaders. The axe in the table is a clear warning to anyone who tries to manipulate events so having a king ruling the city is considered to be a preferred alternative to the city’s current political system or to anyone who plans on becoming king, for Vimes is clarifying that if there is a King of Ankh-Morpork again he will behead him. Threatening to kill the heir to the throne if he makes a decision Vimes does not approve of may sound excessive. However, if it is kept in mind that Vimes is a man



who demonstrates what he believes mainly through actions instead of words is up against a person who will become untouchable when he becomes King, the only way to truly stop someone like that is to end their existence.

Additionally, the placement of the axe in the table is a deliberate and aggressive cultural reference on Vimes's part to Vimes's ancestor, Suffer-Not-Injustice Vimes, otherwise known as "Old Stoneface" Vimes who rebels against and beheads Lorenzo the Kind, the last evil king of Ankh-Morpork. Vimes's ancestor beheads the king with an axe because the corrupted court would not do so. As a result of this Vimes's ancestor is labeled a regicide, stripped of the rank and title of Commander of the Watch, parts of him are buried in different graves and his name is disgraced. Since Discworld operates on cyclical narratives, it was once a Vimes who could stop the king with the swing of an axe, a Vimes is now the one who is able to do that again. Vimes eventually accepts the nickname "Old Stoneface", as well as the rank and title of Commander of the Watch which is the highest rank possible within the Watch, and all that the nickname is connected to, along with the history and eventual fate which might be his own. However, "as yet another incentive for Vimes to accept promotion, Lord Vetinari has arranged for the role of Old Stoneface in the city's history to be 're-assessed' by the Guild of Historians" (Pratchett and Briggs 303). A statue of "Old Stoneface" is built to honor his role in the city's history and his actions are now considered to be beneficial to the city. By doing this Lord Vetinari might be trying to protect Vimes from facing the cultural and historical dishonor of his ancestor if Vimes has to use the axe, as well as agreeing with Vimes about the fact that there should not be kings. In the Preface of his book *Marxism and Literary Criticism* Terry Eagleton states:

Marxism is a scientific theory of human societies and of the practice of transforming them; and what that means, rather more concretely, is that the narrative Marxism has to deliver is the story of the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression. (2)

By threatening to stop the revival of monarchy if it ever reappears, Vimes is not only ensuring that the new status quo of everyone being equal when it comes to the law, but also ensuring that the oppression, corruption and exploitation connected to the feudal hierarchy within Ankh-Morpork in the past in the time where it was ruled by kings, will not return on his watch. Gary Day points out in his book *Class* "The ascendancy of the bourgeoisie showed that social position was no longer dependent on birth but effort" (8). By denying that the birthright and attributes of the heir to the throne should allow him to become king, Vimes also

denies the feudal hierarchy and makes the point that everyone, just like him, can rise to become powerful and respected because of their actions and effort instead of their birthright.

The action of placing the axe in the table not only continues to halt the narrative of the heir taking the throne so that everyone within the city and beyond knows about it, it is also a statement of Vimes's power and influence as an authority figure, as the fact that he is able to make such a public aggressive cultural reference establishes that Vimes has become as respected, feared and as powerful as a power-player as the heir to the throne of the city. Interestingly, Lord Vetinari emphasizes this shift and increase in power by leaving the axe in the table as a reminder of the warning Vimes has given, which is also a statement of loyalty to Lord Vetinari himself. By preventing Carrot from taking charge of the city, Vimes protects the tyrant and indicates that he prefers Lord Vetinari as his boss and ruler of the city.

Finally, even after Vimes has established that he will chop the head off the future King of Ankh-Morpork if he ever appears, he makes it clear in *Thud!* when Vimes meets the government inspector A.E Pessimal that he continues to use the Watchman, who watches, serves and protects everyone around Vimes and constantly searches for corruption and injustice, to watch the other watchmen and himself.

*'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? your grace.'*

'I know that one,' said Vimes. 'Who watches the watchmen? Me, Mr Pessimal.'

'Ah, but who watches you, your grace?' said the inspector, with a brief smile.

'I do that, too. All the time,' said Vimes. (29)

### **3. The Tyrant and The Commander of the Watch**

This chapter explores Vimes's growth into an established authority figure and the part his relationship with Lord Havelock Vetinari has in this development and why. The chapter is divided into three subsections. The first one is about establishing Vetinari as an important power-player to illustrate why Vimes's relationship with him is important. The second section concerns Vimes's relationship with Vetinari and how it influences his growth into an authority figure. The third and last section focuses on Vimes as an established, awe-inspiring and respected authority figure and power-player in Ankh-Morpork. Vimes's character development into an authority figure in Ankh-Morpork is largely due to his relationship with Lord Vetinari and his influence because Lord Vetinari promotes him, allows him to grow into a respected authority figure and eventually to become one of the most important power players in the city.

#### **3.1. Lord Vetinari as a power player**

Lord Vetinari is the tyrant and therefore the supreme ruler of the city of Ankh-Morpork, which gives him the title of Patrician. As such, he is officially the most powerful and influential man in the city and by extension the Watch series. Lord Vetinari is an extremely manipulative and cunning man who maintains his power mostly through delegation. Since being a tyrant means that he has power over people both within the city and without, and despite the fact that he has technically unlimited power he cannot do all the things he wants to accomplish by himself. However, instead of ordering people to do what he wants, he makes suggestions. He makes people pull their own strings and usually the final outcome of what he wants benefits the people he has manipulated, thus creating a desirable situation for all involved. This is a vital aspect on how he stays in power. Essentially he manages all the other power players and the city so that life with him in charge is slightly better than one without him thereby making him essential to the city as no one else is able to manage the power dynamics and political factions as well as he can. "Hegemony is like an internalised form of social control which makes certain views seem 'natural' or invisible so that they hardly seem like views at all, just 'the way things are'" (Barry 158). As time passes and the rule of Lord Vetinari becomes a fact, rather than a way of controlling people. Everyone becomes used to it as well as the stability that he brings to the city and subsequently the tyrant becomes more powerful as his social control has become an accepted part of living in the city.

### 3.2. Employment benefits

As Lord Vetinari is the most powerful man within the series, he is Vimes's immediate boss as the Watch is a part of the government and Vimes is the head of the Watch. Lord Vetinari victimizes Vimes by promoting him and giving him gifts, promotions, rewards and titles such as an increased number of watchmen and the title of knight which allow him more power and influence and raises the level of respect people have for him. Vimes does not want these promotions and rewards even if they are useful to him and would like to have remained as a simple Captain of the Watch. The gifts also function to buy Vimes's loyalty and devotion to Vetinari. Both of these are ways of controlling Vimes as Lord Vetinari gives power and can take it away just as easily. After all, he is a tyrant. Vetinari also gives power in the forms of respect or status, to people who possess very limited power in the first place such as within the Guilds connected to classes lower than the aristocracy and the Watch, who then owe him and wish to have him in power so that they may have both political and personal stability in their lives. "The 'trick' whereby we are made to feel that we are choosing when really we have no choice is called by Althusser *interpellation*" (Barry 158). By forcing Vimes to accept gifts and rewards that elevate Vimes's social status, Lord Vetinari is officially raising Sam Vimes from the ashes of a job that gave him minimal respect in the community in order for Vimes to grow into the leader he has the potential of being instead of allowing him to cling to a status that is within his comfort zone.

Vimes is allowed to grow into a figure of authority by Lord Vetinari, who mainly uses two methods to encourage this growth. The first one is to allow Vimes to defy authority by pushing the limits of what is allowed within his relationship with Lord Vetinari, the authority figure he is defying. He allows Vimes to defy others who are also above him, however the tactic is most evident within their explicit relationship. Lord Vetinari allows Vimes to get away with being rude and sarcastic to him as well as to disobey his orders as long as it serves a greater purpose. The second method Vetinari uses is to let Vimes utilize the power he has at his disposal to run wild, frightening and angering people of influence, forcing them to acknowledge Vimes's position and obey his wishes. The best example of this would be in *Feet of Clay*, where Lord Vetinari is poisoned which forces him to take a back seat. In his stead he allows Vimes to turn the city upside down looking for the person who has poisoned him, upsetting many important people in the process. Lord Vetinari reveals later on that he has figured out who the true criminal is, but decides to let Vimes handle things on his own

since Vimes was, in Vetinari's opinion, having so much fun being himself. By doing this Lord Vetinari subtly allows Vimes to become more confident in his abilities as a policeman and powerful pillar of society and forces other influential figures in Ankh-Morpork to acknowledge Vimes as such.

'Commander, I always used to consider that you had a definite anti-authoritarian streak in you.'

'Sir?'

'It seems that you have managed to retain this even though you *are* authority.'

'Sir?'

'That's practically Zen.' (Pratchett, *Feet of Clay* 396)

As Vimes becomes more used to the power he wields he becomes more confident and proud, and a better authority figure. An example of this would be Vimes's acceptance of the title of Commander as well as his actions in *Night Watch*, where he is described as a man used to serious command. For example he easily takes charge of the old Night Watch in a few days because of the fact that he walks as if he owns the city, his voice is authoritative and that he knows how to manage the men to inspire their loyalty as well as knowing every trick in the book when it comes to subtly and not so subtly defying authority.

Additionally, there is an important shift in the relationship between Vetinari and Vimes that happens at the end of *Night Watch*. Vimes has just returned to the present after time travelling back in time and trying to prevent the deaths of his fellow watchmen in a brutal civil war, an attempt which failed. Lord Vetinari appears in the graveyard where they are buried and offers Vimes a reward, to build a statue in their honor because they did what they had to do. However, instead of grudgingly accepting the reward as he usually does, Vimes refuses. His reasons for the rejection are violent, volatile and heartbreakingly rendered. This is the turning point because it shows that Vimes is no longer afraid of Vetinari. He tells the tyrant, his boss, and the man who could have him executed why Vetinari is wrong in offering. "They did the job they didn't have to do, and they died doing it, and you can't give them anything" (Pratchett, *Night Watch* 469). Vimes goes on to say that building a statue would only inspire others to foolishly try to become heroes and that the watchmen should be left alone. The fact that Vimes is now secure enough in his position to feel that he should be able to shout the Patrician in such a manner, even if only out of grief, anger and pressure, speaks volumes. Lord Vetinari warns him that this is the only time he will tolerate this behavior. However, he also tries to make up for his mistake by inviting Vimes later to his office and by giving him back the Treacle Mine Road Watch house, the house where the

series started as well as the house the fallen watchmen had been stationed at, thus symbolically closing a circle in the Watch series.

From this point on, their relationship is based on mutual respect, and though Vetinari still controls Vimes by playing on his emotions like a master violinist, he does so less blatantly. In the beginning of the relationship the pressure is obvious and open, with threats and oblique references to their relationship as boss and employee. Later on, there is certain lightness to it and Vetinari mostly uses sarcasm and gentle teasing by addressing Vimes with his unwanted titles to rile him up. The early relationship relies on one emotion, rage, to force Vimes into the emotional state in which Vimes is the most efficient at doing his job. By making Vimes angry at him or at the world Vetinari strengthens the beast which in turn increases the activeness of the Watchman. In order to calm the beast in a way that the Watchman as the super-ego and conscience considers acceptable Vimes will chase after whomever he deemed responsible for causing the disturbance and bring them to justice. In contrast, later in the book series when their relationship is more respectful Vetinari often encourages Vimes by appealing solely to the Watchman “other”, by asking Vimes to catch criminals for the sake of their city rather than as a sole means of calming the beast. Their power relationship is no longer characterized by Lord Vetinari behaving in a blatantly emotionally and psychologically destructive way to get Vimes to do his job, but rather one of Vetinari building him up into a respected authority figure and allowing him to develop the self confidence with which to do his job effectively. At this point, in *Thud!* Lord Vetinari continues to give Vimes gifts and rewards for his actions, but they are no longer as much to buy his devotion which has been established throughout the series by Vimes saving Vetinari’s life multiple times as well as Vimes’s reliance on Vetinari and vice versa. Rather, the rewards and promotions serve the function of raising Vimes’s status in society and his own valuation of himself. It should be mentioned that Vimes often rejects the ceremonial duties linked with the rewards Vetinari has forced him to accept, refusing to fit into the mold of his new status and enforcing his core position and identity as a policeman. The most common mode of maintaining his identity is to express utter hatred for his ceremonial uniform and running off halfway through official events in order to chase criminals, which happens often throughout the series.

### 3.3. Power Balance

Sam Vimes gradually becomes Lord Vetinari's sword and shield. He serves both as a weapon to be used in the service of the city and as well as a guard for everyone, including the Patrician himself. When the events in *Thud!* take place, Vimes has become an important power player in Ankh-Morpork as he is now, alongside the Watch, is powerful and influential enough to be able to arrest anyone for their crimes. Vimes grudgingly admits that he considers that some of the titles and rewards he has received for his actions are useful because they raise his status so that the high society, which used to be untouchable, because they did not see the Law in the same way as ordinary people, can now be arrested by someone of their status, thereby forcing the Law to be applicable for everyone. Lord Vetinari sends Vimes after criminals with no regard to their status even if that means sending him to other countries under the pretense of diplomacy, as Vetinari knows that Vimes will always chase after the suspects in order to see that justice is done, no matter what due to Vimes's stubbornness as well as the addition of the beast and the Watchman. Vetinari's reason for sending Vimes away to dispense justice is partly because Vimes's actions when he is pushed generally cause awe and disruption, and secure Vetinari's position as the ruler of the city. Despite the fact that Vimes acknowledges and accepts that Lord Vetinari is his boss, his ultimate master is the law. Above all Vimes considers himself to be an officer of the law and the servant of the city, not the servant of the Patrician or the government. It is Vimes's competence as a policeman and leadership abilities along with the fact that he remains completely uncorrupt, which allows him to garner a respected and feared reputation in Ankh-Morpork and beyond.

An example of Vimes's character development into an established, respected awe-inspiring authority figure whose constant goal is to keep the peace and make sure there is law and justice around, as well as his status as Lord Vetinari's sword and shield is remarked on in *Thud!* by Lord Vetinari himself.

'Sam Vimes once arrested *me* for treason,' said Vetinari calmly. 'And Sam Vimes once arrested a dragon. Sam Vimes stopped a war between two nations by arresting *two* high commands... Watchmen across half the continent will say that Sam Vimes is as straight as an arrow, can't be corrupted, won't be turned, never took a bribe. (228)

Vimes's importance as an authority figure as well as a power-player is truly established by the fact that he is now both respected, influential and powerful enough to be able to truly police and protect Lord Vetinari, even though Vetinari always holds his status as Vimes's boss. At this point, illustrated by Vimes's titles and abilities in *Thud!*, Vimes has become as powerful and influential a power player as Lord Vetinari. Interestingly, it is not

Vimes's official duty to protect the Patrician, explicitly, but Vimes considers it to be his *personal* duty as he has to protect everyone without favor, also considering himself Lord Vetinari's guard. In addition, keeping Vetinari alive maintains stability, both for Vimes and the city overall and ensures that there is no king as Vetinari fills the position of the ruler. So, ensuring Vetinari's safety is a part of Vimes's duty to protect the city.

Lord Vetinari and Vimes meet each other frequently order to keep each other updated on current events of the city, and to watch each other for signs of the other one losing control in some way. Vimes's position as an authority figure is important in this context, as Elizabeth Wright states in her book *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice*:

Power, therefore, is not to be seen as simply oppressive, for it always has a double effect: it is bad in so far as it constrains both those at the top and those at the bottom in frozen gestures of domination and submission, but because this inevitably leads to counter-strategies of evasion and subversion it cannot help but also be productive. (160)

In other words, people will always try to break the rules when it comes to power, and Vimes is there as an established power-player and authority figure to ensure Lord Vetinari stays in his role as the sane, manipulative tyrant, and it is also the other way around. One of the reasons Vimes has Vetinari as a part of his safety net and becomes edgy if parted from him is because Lord Vetinari is Vimes's boss and the ruler of the city and he is able to stop Vimes and take control of the situation if the beast proves to have become uncontrollable or if Vimes loses the second other, the Watchman. If Vimes breaks free from his established role in the relationship between himself and Vetinari by losing control of himself, Vetinari will be there as someone who is able to stop him. It is not made clear what Lord Vetinari would do to stop Vimes, but it can be safe to assume that it would either involve Vetinari actually taking his badge or killing Vimes. In the same vein, it is hinted throughout the series that if Lord Vetinari ever loses control that Vimes will kill him. The fact that Vimes has become powerful enough to be realistically able to dispose of the ruler of the city speaks volumes about how awe-inspiring an authority figure he has become. In fact, he has become equally powerful as Lord Vetinari, and his lordship has allowed him to become so, in order for Vetinari to be policed, protected and taken care of by a man who to the world represents Justice and the Law. In a manner of speaking, Vimes's rise to power as orchestrated by Lord Vetinari has been so that Vimes becomes a part of the Patrician's personal and professional safety net, as well as one for the city. Because of Vimes's character development into an authority figure he becomes vital to the working of Ankh-Morpork and therefore as important a power-player as



Carrot Ironfoundersson and Havelock Vetinari. Vimes's existence and actions as an authority figure ensures that Carrot does not try and take over the city by becoming King and Vimes constantly watches Lord Vetinari for signs of corruption and instability and does his best to keep him in his position as the ruler of the city. Vimes ensures that both Carrot and Vetinari keep to the roles they are currently in and do not break the rules laid out for them and disturb the power-relationships that have been established in the city which means that both the city and their current relationships with each other remain stable as long as the rules are not broken.

## Conclusion

The foundation of a character that develops into a respected authority figure who has influence and power over the most important power-players in Ankh-Morpork, Havelock Vetinari and Carrot Ironfoundersson and gradually becomes an equally important power player has to be solid. Samuel Vimes's character is that of a person whose main strength is incredible self control as he is the deconstruction of the world-weary policeman from a poor background with an addiction problem and a temper. The first chapter examines how his split personality, using the Freudian three part model of the psyche, functions as an elaborate inner defense mechanism based on Vimes's control over himself and the base of his power. His split personality, especially the Watchman which corresponds to the super-ego is important to his growth as a figure of authority. This is elaborated on in the second chapter which illustrates Carrot Ironfoundersson's power as the heir to the throne to Ankh-Morpork as well as Vimes's position as an authority figure being established because he is the only person who is able to influence and stop Carrot from becoming king. Vimes will not accept a figure of authority that does not have to obey the law as Vimes's super-ego manifests in the figure of a policeman. This figure is known as the Watchman which he uses to watch everyone, including himself for signs of corruption and injustice. The importance of Vimes's split personality becomes clearer as his respect and status as an authority figure solidifies and Vimes grows into the part. Vimes does so after being pushed by Lord Vetinari to accept rewards and titles for his services for the city that elevate his status and therefore respect in society. Lord Vetinari manipulates Vimes in such a way that Vimes makes use of both of his "others," both the anger of the beast and the determination of the Watchman. Vimes eventually becomes as powerful, respected and held in awe as the ruler of the city himself and therefore able to fully police and protect him to the point that they meet often in order to keep an eye on each other. There are hints that if either of them loses control over themselves that the other one would step in and take care of it. The power relationships between Samuel Vimes, Lord Vetinari and Carrot Ironfoundersson are complex and set in rigid rules and work only for as long as all obey the rules they have set for themselves to follow. However, no one knows what the future holds, or what might change in the next Discworld Watch novel except Terry Pratchett. It might well be that the power balance that holds these men in chains might become unstable and tempt them to break free from the rules to the point that there is no turning back. Such a change would mean a great change for Ankh-Morpork and as a result of that, the very Disc itself.

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