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Balancing on the Edges: The Phenomenological Children of Children's Literature

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Balancing on the Edges: The Phenomenological Children of Children's Literature

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Dedication

For the little girl I was and am, who read like her life depended on it

(because it does);

and for the little girls who are and will be, who refuse to put down their books

(in the hopes that they never will).

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Introduction

"That's impossible."

I was never particularly troubled by impossibility. Like the Queen in *Through the Looking-Glass*, I found it more than likely that I would believe as many as six impossible things before breakfast. This is what happens when one grows up immersed in children's literature, I suppose. I read and re-read, over and over, about witches and wizards, gods and monsters, and a host of other impossible fantasies. I read about cakes that could make you grow, and potions that could cure just about anything (but would incinerate you if you drank too much); I read about people who could hide their eyes on book covers and tree knots and even on other people; I read about dogs that kept time; I read about time collapsing, exhausted; I read about a world that needed saving, again and again, always managing to get rescued.

Perhaps this is why, when I became a student, philosophical ideas (particularly in phenomenology[1]) never seemed far-fetched to me. The world is all layers of interpretations like an onion with no end? Fine by me. We respond to solicitations from the world which invite us to act in certain ways? I've believed in crazier things.

The trouble comes when I ask myself if these descriptions of the world are *real*. When phenomenologists say that the world "solicits" us, is that personification, perhaps some kind of metaphor? Or do we mean, plainly and simply, that the world is reaching out towards us in whatever way it can without hands? Do we mean this literally or literarily?

[1] And if phenomenology seems to you like a word you've never previously encountered, and perhaps you'd like to keep it that way, stay with me. I promise I'll explain it all eventually, and you might even enjoy it.

It seems to me that phenomenology, and the phenomena it describes, exists somewhere in between this distinction, balancing on the edge of metaphor. It is something like the middle voice; not quite active, but not passive either. In the active voice, one might say, "I opened the door," where *I* am the subject doing the verb. Passively, this can be restated as "the door was opened by me." The door is the subject syntactically, and the verb is being done to the door, by me. But the middle voice muddles these distinctions: "the door opened." Who is the doer? What capacities are we ascribing to this door now? It is unclear, wobbling between assumption and personification. And, of course, fantasy can push the edge of metaphor right over that edge. There, we can have "the door opened itself," or even "the door opened its mouth to admonish me for knocking so loudly."

It is at this point that one might derisively respond, "*that's impossible*." I find this a terrifically boring response. Children's author and philosopher C.S. Lewis describes how I feel about this type of responder very well:

> Critics who treat adult as a term of approval, instead of as a merely descriptive term, cannot be adult themselves. To be concerned about being grown up, to admire the grown up because it is grown up, to blush at the suspicion of being childish; these things are the marks of childhood and adolescence. And in childhood and adolescence they are, in moderation, healthy symptoms.Young things ought to want to grow. But then into middle life or even into early manhood this concern about being adult is a mark of really arrested development: When I was ten I read fairy tales in secret and would have been ashamed if I had been found doing so. Now that I am fifty I read them openly. When I became a man I put away childish things, including the fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up [...]
> I now enjoy Tolstoy and Jane Austen and Trollope as well as fairy tales and I call that growth: if I had had to lose the fairy tales in order to acquire the novelists, I would not say that I had grown but only that I had changed. (Lewis 34)

Nothing reveals immaturity like the desperate desire to distance oneself from children's stories. I agree with Lewis, and implore the doubter to rethink how we can use childish fantasy to help us

understand the world. It is my firm belief that children's literature should not be overlooked as a source of feeling, knowledge, and understanding.

A charge often leveled against children's literature by these sorts of critics is that it isn't substantial, or deep, or serious. British children's author and humorist Terry Pratchett commented on this in his 2002 Carnegie Medal Acceptance speech, saying,

> The problem is that we think the opposite of funny is serious. It is not. In fact, as G. K. Chesterton pointed out, the opposite of funny is not funny, and the opposite of serious is not serious […] Humour has its uses. Laughter can get through the keyhole while seriousness is still hammering on the door. New ideas can ride in on the back of a joke, old ideas can be given an added edge.

Just because something is funny does not mean that it isn't serious or worth studying. As Pratchett points out, sometimes humor can access things that seriousness cannot. It would be a mistake to underestimate the power of laughter, which can sneak past locked doors and closed minds.

As a student of literature and philosophy whose academic pursuits were nurtured by a love of children's stories, I feel that the connection between children's literature and phenomenology must be paid some attention. It cannot be a coincidence that *phenomenology* and *fantasy* both come from related Greek roots, meaning "to appear" and "to make visible," respectively. My goal in this project is to do something between those two verbs, something in the middle voice, that will lay bare the relationship between philosophy and children's literature without defaulting into making one the object of study to the other.

Then again, it is difficult to describe exactly how children's literature and philosophy play together. In a single story, you have phenomenology alongside magic; the self and the body; the impossible and the strange; suspension of disbelief balanced precariously on the edge until it

unexpectedly tumbles into the very heart of the reader, skipping right past what's possible and straight into what's resonant. Perhaps one way of putting it is that children's literature enlivens philosophy. It brings it to life, letting it hang sparkling in the air somewhere between a figment of knowledge and an artifact of imagination.

In this project, I want to show how children's literature works not only as an illustration of philosophical issues, but actively contributes to the existing discourses that it exemplifies. I am also hoping to contribute new ways of thinking about children's literature that moves outside of moral education, psychology, and sociology, but about the literary form and its traits. I want to present a phenomenology of children in fantasy children's literature, providing a new way of thinking about what children's fantasy literature does, and how it not only aligns with embodied consciousness, plurality, liminality, and irrationality, but pushes the philosophy further.

In Chapter I, I will lay out the philosophical backdrop of this project, and show how the adult and the child represent two warring philosophical accounts of Being[2]. I will demonstrate how traditional philosophical discourse surrounding Being usually takes adulthood as the basis for human experience, and then provide a brief overview of the two conflicting realms of philosophy central to my argument (Mediational Theory and Contact Theory). I will then show how Mediational Theory is acted out by the adult world in children's literature, while Contact Theory is represented by children. I will provide a fantasy and a non-fantasy example, ultimately showing how the world structure of children's literature implies a critique of Mediational Theory by representing it in adults, who pale in comparison to children over and over again.

[2] I refer to Being with a capital B to emphasize the word as a philosophical term, particularly one of Heidegger's, and to call attention to the term as the noun form of a verb, rather than simply a noun. 'Being' refers to the way that we were, are, and be in the world; 'being,' lowercase, is frequently used as a synonym for 'living thing.'

Chapter II will be a close reading of *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. In this chapter, I will introduce a framework that I have created to differentiate different forms of children's literature based on their ontological[3] differences, which impacts the philosophical environment of the child characters. While I will present two different types of philosophical characters, I will focus on one of them, the Magical Child, for the rest of the project. In order to understand the Magical Child, I present the philosophy of Mariana Ortega as a foundational aspect of the Magical Child. I then explore the Magical Child in *Percy Jackson*, showing how children like Percy experience multiplicity in their selfhoods, and how magic enables them to engage with the world on a deeper and more immediate level than is usually possible.

Chapter III will be a close reading of Terry Pratchett's *A Hat Full of Sky*, a book about a young witch named Tiffany. In this chapter I will also explore Tiffany as a Magical Child, and show how this story also approaches the philosophical theory I present, albeit in a different way than Percy's story did. I will delve into the multiplicity of witches and the nature of being required by magic, as well as Tiffany's own particularly unique multiplicitous capacities.

Finally, at the very end, I will revisit this idea of the edge, and what it means to exist there.

[3] By ontological, I mean relating to Being, and how different ways of being are organized within a world.

Chapter I: Mediational Adults and Contact Children

> *All grown-ups were once children–though few of them remember it. —Antoine Saint-Exupery, The Little Prince*
>
> *When childhood dies, its corpses are called adults and they enter society, one of the politer names of hell. That is why we dread children, even if we love them. They show us the state of our decay. —Brian W. Aldiss*
>
> *I think it's more likely that you'll lose all your decent qualities as you get older. I think it's a natural process, like getting wrinkles and gray hair. —Trenton Lee Stewart, The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict*

Mediational Versus Contact Theory

In the history of philosophy, there are two accounts of Being that are at odds with one another. The first account was largely formalized by French philosopher René Descartes during the 17th century. Broadly speaking, it separates Being into the category of *mind* and the category of *body*, with emphasis placed on the *mind*. It is preoccupied with singularity, linearity, and relies on dichotomies separating the self and the world and the mind and the body. Beyond Descartes, the philosophy has shifted, but ultimately has held onto these basic tenets. We call this *Mediational Theory* (Dreyfus and Taylor 2).

In order to understand Mediational Theory, we'll start with Descartes and work our way forward. Rationalism, the preeminent Enlightenment philosophy fathered by Descartes, produced the philosophical idea that rationality, logic, and reason are the most important faculties a person can have, and prioritizes them above all else. Philosophers Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor describe in their book *Retrieving Realism* how something like *mind over matter* may as well have been the slogan of the time; the body was regarded as simply a flesh bag with sensory

capacity enclosing a conscious mind (13). This is often referred to as *mind-body dualism*, one of several dichotomous theories to come out of Descartes.

Subject-object dualism is another: the idea that oneself, that "I," am a subject, and everything around me is an object. One's relationship to the rest of the world is represented by rays; *I* decide, *I* act, *I* think, and the objects around me do not have that capacity. This means separating the world into things that come from "inside" the subject, and things which exist "outside" of the subject (objects). Descartes argues that the "outside" can only be understood after knowledge occurs "inside" (Dreyfus and Taylor 2-3). That is to say, we can only comprehend things after we apply reason to them, which comes internally.

In the philosophical community, Descartes is old news. Still, even post-Cartesian philosophy is mediational, clinging onto some of the essence of Descartes' ideas. Dreyfus and Taylor explain how variations like the "linguistic turn" and materialism still rely on the idea of an "inside" and an "outside," where the "inside" is doing the heavy lifting, knowledge-wise (4). They refer to this as the "only through" claim, which is a shorthand for the justification Cartesians and post-Cartesians give for the inner-outer distinction, that justification being "I have knowledge *only through* these inner states, which we can call 'ideas'" (2, emphasis mine). It is the "only through" which Dreyfus and Taylor emphasize. The assertion being made is that one must mediate the "outside" world through some kind of "inner state."

Though contemporary philosophers no longer view this "inner state" in the same way that Descartes did, their philosophies belie a dependency on a Cartesian inner-outer framework.

Dreyfus and Taylor point out how the philosophical thought experiment about the brain-in-the-vat[4] ultimately is undermined by a mediational assumption. They write,

> If one asks the proponent of the brain-in-the-vat hypothesis why he focuses on the brain, he will reply something to the effect that thinking "supervenes on" the brain. But how does he know this? How do we know that you don't need more than the brain, maybe the brain and nervous system, or maybe even the whole organism, or (more likely) the whole organism in its environment, in order to get what we understand as perception and thinking? The answer is that no one knows. The brain-in-the-vat hypothesis only looks plausible because of the force of the mediational structure, our captivity in the picture implicit in modern epistemology, which requires something to play the role of "inside." (4)

The whole idea of the brain-in-the-vat falls into the trap of seeing the world as divided into "insides" and "outsides," with the mind always playing the role of the "inside," and the body relegated to the role of the "outside." Dreyfus and Taylor stress how embedded this assumption is in philosophical thinking, saying that it is "implicit in modern epistemology." Of course, just because something is implicit doesn't make it trustworthy, and so we find that, upon closer inspection, philosophies which believe themselves to have outgrown Descartes are still influenced by Mediational Theory.

These aspects—mind-body dualism, the inner-outer problem, subject-object dualism—are the more technical aspects of what makes Mediational Theory mediational. Also embedded in these ideas, and in Mediational Theory, are analytic understandings of philosophy which suggest that the world is rational, orderly, and linear. The world is logical: two conflicting statements cannot both be true, for instance, or a person can only be in one place at once. These are logical statements based on a rational, singular understanding of the world. Attached to Mediational Theory is an understanding of the world predicated on order and linearity.

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[4] The brain-in-the-vat thought experiment is a reconfiguration of a Cartesian thought experiment. It goes like this: How do you know that you're really, truly in the world, and not simply a brain in a vat with scientists stimulating your brain such that this experience feels real?

Mediational Theory's Alternative

In response to Mediational Theory, philosophers like Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty developed phenomenology. We can first describe phenomenology as what it is not. It is not mediational. There is no subject-object dualism. The mind is not more important than the body, nor is it really separate from it. Singularity is rejected for plurality and multiplicity. Linearity is seen as reductive while irrationality proves itself more expansive. We call this *Contact Theory*.

Contact Theory pushes back on mind-body dualism, arguing against detached consciousness and arguing for embodied consciousness. The body is just as active in consciousness as the mind, and in fact should not be divided into such simple categories. The separation between the body and the mind is artificial, and an overemphasis on detached rational thought loses sight of the importance of experience as a philosophical guide. Subject-object dualism is also rejected; the world is not divided into subject and objects, but rather there is an interplay between the self and the world, and the barrier separating the two is thin, if it even exists. Dreyfus and Taylor explain how Contact Theory gets its name from this, as it relies not on some conduit between the alleged "inside" and "outside," but instead delivers an immediacy:

> A basic move which gives rise to this theory is a re-embedding of thought and knowledge in the bodily and social-cultural contexts in which it takes place. The attempt is to articulate the framework or context within which our explicit depictions of reality make sense, and to show how this is inseparable from our activity as the kind of embodied, social, and cultural beings we are. The contact here is not achieved on the level of Ideas, but is rather something primordial, something we never escape. It is the contact of living, active beings, whose life form involves acting in and on a world which also acts on them. (18)

There are a couple of points being made here; the first is regarding "re-embedding thought and knowledge" in "bodily and social-cultural contexts." This is to say that while Mediational

Theory divides thought and knowledge from its context, Contact Theory wants to put it back, making thought and knowledge "inseparable" from its context. Dreyfus and Taylor then gesture to "something primordial," by which they mean to indicate that the contact of Contact Theory is not in the abstract level of "Ideas,"as Plato might say, but on a more immersive, basic level; something that is baked into our living. Lastly, they describe contact as "acting in and on a world which also acts on them." Unlike Mediational Theory, which holds to a subject-object dualism, the world in Contact Theory is more involved and more reciprocal. The world "acts on" you even as you "act on" it. The "acting on" that you are doing is the "primordial" contact that Dreyfus and Taylor refer to earlier, rather than a contact made through "Ideas." In plain speech, this can simply be referred to as *experience.*

In Contact Theory, there is a model of being in the world that is split into three realms, which helps illustrate the different kinds of access to the world in Mediational and Contact Theory. The first realm is the "Space of Causes." The Space of Causes is, arguably, the most basic of the three; one facet of being is stuff that just sort of *happens*, like how billiard balls will move in particular directions based on how they collide. In essence, the Space of Causes is physics. Then there is the "Space of Reasons," so named because this is where one *reasons,* exerting mental energy to think and reflect. This is where logic and rationality live.

In Mediational Theory, the Space of Reasons and the Space of Causes are the only two spaces that there are. But Contact Theory in phenomenology sees a gap between the Space of Reasons and the Space of Causes. Phenomenology argues for the existence of a "Space of Motivation," which is where most human being-in-the-world[5] actually takes place. The Space of

[5] Being-in-the-world is a term of Heidegger's, and for our purposes, it emphasizes human existence as situated and contextualized within the world, not existing in some kind of vacuum or outer place. We can think of it simply as the opposite of Descartes' "thinking thing."

Motivations describes non-reflective thinking and action. The Space of Motivation is for ways of being that both don't require conscious thought but are more involved than the Space of Causes (Dreyfus "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental" 5-14).

Philosopher Hubert Dreyfus calls our meaningful daily interactions within this space "skillful coping," which is to say a way of being and acting that doesn't require reflective thinking, but instead is immersed in the action, space, and moment. These are practices and skills in which we are "experts," which for Dreyfus simply means you don't have to think about *how* to do it to do it. Walking is such a skill, for many people. Playing an instrument is another example. Knitting, or, for that matter, using your hands at all. Even grandmasters playing chess. These are all things that experts (in the Dreyfusian sense) don't have to think about to do. When the master knitter knits, or the master tennis player volleys, they are in a sort of flow state; colloquially, they are "in the zone." Rather than stopping to think about what action best suits their needs, they are automatically acting in the ways that they need to in order to accomplish their tasks (Dreyfus "Skillful Coping"). This is not logic and reason-based, as there is no reflection happening unless they pull themselves out of the flow state. While they are "in the zone," they are in the Space of Motivations.

Casting Mediational and Contact Theory

It is the task of philosophy to describe these ways of Being; it is literature's unique capacity to see Mediational and Contact Theory as theories with personality. Children's literature gives a character to each, turning Mediational Theory into the adult and Contact Theory into the child. The adult in children's literature is rational, logic-driven, and interested in reality rather

than possibility. The child, on the other hand, resists these categories, which often are painted as boring or limiting.

The adult standing in for Mediational Theory is not surprising, given that when philosophers theorize about humanity and Being they tend to talk about the experiences of adults, particularly if their account of humanity involves rationality and detachment. If to be human is to be a fully rational thinking thing, where does that leave children? As a villainous lackey in *The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Prisoner's Dilemma* says, "I don't quite count children as people, you see. It's true they rather *resemble* people—but then so do puppets" (Stewart 179). Philosophers seem to agree, with their philosophies implying that children are almost, but not quite, people. Traditional philosophy theorizes about "people" or "human beings" with the assumption of adulthood; as a result, we can say that philosophy, especially Mediational Theory, is really only a theory of adulthood (and perhaps not even an accurate one). Children are excluded from these philosophical theories, resembling but not actually achieving the status of personhood. At some point (often some unexplained, non-specific point), a child transforms into a thinking thing with rationalist strings attached (Merleau-Ponty 318). Until then, they float in an in-between space, not quite ready in the eyes of philosophers to be considered people yet.

What happens when we understand the adult-child dynamic in children's literature as exemplifying the conflict between two philosophical worldviews, the Mediational and the Contact? Furthermore, what can giving each of these philosophical concepts character do to help us understand them? I argue that, in fantasy and non-fantasy children's literature alike, the distinction between adults and children is not just one of age or power difference but one of ontological importance. If you look at how children and adults act and fare in children's

literature, it becomes clear that adults are allied with rationalism, while children position themselves against it. The adult is defined by lack; what they cannot do. The children, on the other hand, are always gifted, whole, beyond the adults' capacities.

This difference between adults and children manifests in both stories with magic and those without. Often, in fantasy literature, the child has access to the magical or the supernatural that the adult does not have. The child might have magic powers, for instance, or the ability to see ghosts and other supernatural ephemera. In more realistic stories, the child tends to have some other kind of capacity which makes them ideal to take on the challenge facing them; perhaps they are very clever, or they are very small, or they are witnesses to a situation that no one else would believe.

This last point, the issue of belief, is also why children tend to not turn to adults when conflict strikes; whether magically enforced or socially constructed, the division between the adult and child worlds often necessitates that the children work alone or barely aided by adults because whatever the situation is, adults would either be unequipped to deal with it or unlikely to believe the testimony of children.

The child in children's literature is the hero, while the adult is harmless at best and a villain at worst, often falling somewhere in between as a hindrance. This is what demonstrates not only that there is a distinction drawn between children and adults, but that the framing of the child as the better of the two carries an implicit critique of the rationalist philosophy upon which the adult world is based.

In Fantasy: Percy Jackson and the Olympians

In the world of Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, humanity is split into two groups: mortal and non-mortal. The mortal world is essentially the adult world, the reality we are familiar with. The non-mortal world is dominated by children, particularly demigods, who have one mortal parent and one parent who is a Greek god or goddess. The main character Percy's godly father is Poseidon, god of the sea, and so he has powers relating to his father's: communicating with sea animals, water powers, and other abilities develop as Percy grows. Though he is still mortal in a sense (as in not *im*mortal), the designation "mortal" here means not related to the gods in any way. In the world of *Percy Jackson,* almost all of the non-mortal main characters are children, and the mortal world is represented by adults. There are a couple reasons for this: the first is the obvious, out-of-text explanation, which is that children's literature naturally situates children as its main characters. While this certainly contributes, I find that the more interesting question is the in-text justification for adults and children to live such different lives.

On a conceptual level, as the children of gods and mortals, the concept of the "child" is core to the identity of the demigod. They are defined by their parentage, characterized by the fact that they are the children *of* particular beings. So, even if not all demigods are children, all demigods are defined to some degree by being the children of gods and mortals.

However, in *Percy Jackson,* all demigods *are* children, and the reason why is explained to Percy when he arrives at Camp Half-Blood, the only safe haven and training ground for demigods. Once demigods reach a certain age, Percy is told, monsters are able to detect their scent, putting them in danger. This usually begins around the age of 10. Annabeth, daughter of

Athena, tells him that "demigods either make their way [to Camp Half-Blood], or they get killed off" (Riordan 96). By necessity, the demigods in *Percy Jackson* are children, since they come into their parentage at a young age and often don't survive into adulthood. Even with the training and safety provided by Camp Half-Blood, the life of a demigod is dangerous, and so the majority of their lives are spent in childhood.

It doesn't help demigods' chances of survival that mortals discount the testimony of children when it falls outside of the normal range of possibilities. This is another thing that unites the demigod with the child in general: they see things that regular adults cannot, and their views are not corroborated or taken seriously because they run counter to the rational. Percy recalls a time in his early childhood when he saw more than the rational, mortal adults could see, and how he wasn't believed: "During third grade, a man in a black trench coat had stalked me on the playground. When the teachers threatened to call the police, he went away growling, but no one believed me when I told them that under his broad-brimmed hat, the man only had one eye, right in the middle of his head" (40). The adults recognized the man as a potential threat to children, yes, but not the specifics of the threat he presented as a mythological creature. They ignored the possibility that he was not a normal human, despite Percy's claims to the contrary. The demigod child sees differently, even sees more, but cannot show the rational adult what they see.

Even physical proof of the mythological wouldn't work to convince mortals of the existence of monsters. In the world of *Percy Jackson,* when magic interacts with the human world, a byproduct called "Mist" is formed, which influences human perceptions of the magical event such that it fits with their framework and conceals the magical truth. Chiron, the mythological centaur and Percy's mentor, explains, "Whenever divine or monstrous elements

mix with the mortal world, they generate Mist, which obscures the vision of humans. You will see things just as they are, being a half-blood, but humans will interpret things quite differently. Remarkable, really, the lengths to which humans will go to fit things into their version of reality" (155). The idea of Greek gods is incompatible with mortal perception, so much so that they will twist facts and re-interpret events to make them make sense within their rational framework. The Mist assists in camouflaging magic from mortals, but what's fundamentally at play is the adult's inability to reconcile the magical world as being a part of their own.

Percy discovers this firsthand when his quest, the main plot of the book, nears its end, as reporters try to make sense of the series of freak accidents that followed Percy across the country. Over the course of the novel, Percy battles various Greek monsters, causing mass panic and destruction. Eventually, the god Ares shows up claiming to help, but ultimately makes things worse. The mortals construct a story explaining the magical consequences of Percy's quest as caused by gas leaks and earthquakes, and reinterpret Ares as a kidnapping madman rather than the god of war.

This story was so persuasive that eyewitnesses even convinced themselves retroactively of its validity. Ares only visited Percy twice, but the mortals insisted that he had been there all along. They attributed various disasters previously blamed on Percy to Ares, even when he wasn't ever there. Percy had an encounter with some monsters on a Greyhound bus, which ultimately caused the bus to explode. While he was blamed for this in the press at first, the story was retrofitted to suit the narrative of Ares as a dangerous man capable of causing mass destruction. So, despite Ares's lack of involvement in the incident, "witnesses would even swear they had seen the leather-clad man on the bus—'Why didn't I remember him before?'" (334). As

Chiron had said, the humans found a way to make magical goings-on fit into "their version of reality." It didn't matter that Ares had never been there; the mortals restructured all instances of mythological influence into something resembling a logical possibility.

They walk around New York City ignorant of the greater forces at play in their lives, unable to see monsters, unaware that the world of Greek mythology is in fact a reality. Mortals in *Percy Jackson* are, on a good day, harmless and somewhat pitiful. Often, their ignorance actively impedes the progress of demigods trying to go on quests and save the world. They are defined by their inability to see the world for what it really is. This leaves the demigods, the children, to defend the world from threats that the adults can't see and can't contend with. Adults, so dependent on rational Mediational Theory, cannot even experience the world as it is. Their own non-belief strengthens the Mist into a barrier which tricks both the mind and the body into believing what it wants to believe. Demigods, though, experience the world which is *right there in front of them*, and their sense perception is crucial in staying alive. Contact Theory, for the demigod, is survival. Mortals could never understand, and so a strong barrier forms between the demigod and the mortal and children and adults.

In Non-Fantasy: The Mysterious Benedict Society

Even in non-fantastical settings, this distinction between adults and children persists. In Trenton Lee Stewart's *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, a group of children come together all responding to an advertisement asking, "Are you a gifted child looking for special opportunities?" (Stewart 3). It turns out that in order to save the world, a group of children is needed because they categorically can do what adults cannot, because of their physical and intellectual differences.

The book sets up a dichotomy between children and adults almost immediately, presenting the main character Reynie Muldoon as an especially smart and capable 11-year old boy. He notes the peculiarity of the advertisement, pointing out how uncommon it is to have it directed towards kids specifically. The narrator notes that "the question was addressed directly to children, not to their parents. Reynie had never known his parents, who died when he was an infant, and it pleased him to read a notice that seemed to take this possibility into account. But still, how odd" (3-4). In just the first few pages, the book shows how unexpected it is for the newspaper advertisement to consider children as their target audience, rather than adults. It is unusual to see adults so brushed aside, and this reversal of traditional understandings of those worth talking to and listening to versus those who fade into the background is an important setup for the book.

Having responded to the advertisements and each passed a series of bizarre tests, four children become the team of protagonists in the story: Reynie, the cleverest one among them; Kate, a fearless girl raised in a circus; Sticky, a former quiz champion with a perfect memory (and so nicknamed because everything sticks in his head); and Constance, a stubborn but highly gifted toddler. They work together to infiltrate the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened (L.I.V.E., often simply "the Institute"), a boarding school established by a scientist named Mr. Curtain, who has been using it to broadcast hidden messages across airwaves and television in order to influence the world into believing that he is the only solution to global political issues. He plants messages into their subconscious, urging them to ignore the disappearances of important government officials and put blind faith into the Institute.

His plans for world domination hinge upon his invention called the Whisperer, which he uses to broadcast these hidden messages directly into the minds of the public without their knowledge. The Whisperer, crucially, relies on the minds and brainwaves of children to function. As Mr. Benedict (the man behind the newspaper advertisement) explains, "only a child's thoughts can be slipped into the mind so secretly. For some reason, they go unnoticed. [...] I believe [the Whisperer] uses children as a sort of filter. After passing through the minds of children, the messages become virtually undetectable. Where adult thoughts would lumber into the mind like an elephant, children's creep in on cat feet and find a shadowy place to hide" (100-101). While the scientific reason is not explicitly stated, it is clear that children's minds are different to adult minds, and that they are more well-suited to "filter" and deliver the hidden messages. It is no coincidence that the practical difference between the child mind and the adult mind is subtlety and detection. "Go[ing] unnoticed" is a familiar experience for children, Constance points out: "I've never met a grown-up who believed me *capable* of thought" (101). It is both a challenge and an advantage for children that they are so underestimated. Their thoughts sneak by easily in people's minds via the Whisperer, and as secret agents, these four children will not seem suspicious.

The children are ultimately able to confront the dastardly Mr. Curtain and his Whisperer because of their gifts. In a pivotal scene, one of the children's gifts of childhood—Constance's stubbornness—becomes crucial in defeating Mr. Curtain. The children surrounded Mr. Curtain and his machine, but they didn't realize that Mr. Curtain could use the Whisperer to bury their memories (or "brainsweep," as he calls it) as long as they were in his presence. The Whisperer resembled "an old-timey hair dryer," (352) and it was necessary for one to be seated in it, under a

helmet and cuffed, in order for it to perform. At least, such was the case until that moment. As the children panicked while their memories started to blur, the sensation suddenly disappeared. It took them a moment to realize that it was because Constance had chosen to take a seat in the Whisperer itself, and her unyielding personality required all of Mr. Curtain and the Whisperer's effort to combat:

> "Mr. Curtain must be focusing all the power on her," Reynie said in a wondering tone.
>
> "But why would he need to do that?"
>
> [...]"Because she's resisting!" Reynie cried. "And no one can resist like Constance!"
>
> For a moment Constance and Mr. Curtain both trembled violently, as if caught in an earthquake. Perspiration poured down the face of man and girl alike. And then, in a voice so loud it hurt everyone's ears, Constance exclaimed: "I..don't . .. CARE!"
>
> This was followed by a crazed string of negatives: "No! I won't! I will not! You can't make me! Uh-uh! Never! No!"
>
> Mr. Curtain hissed. "Bend, you obstinate child!"
>
> "NEVER!" Constance shrieked. And indeed it seemed she never would. Mr. Curtain's face had gone quite purple, and drops of perspiration fell from the tip of his lumpy nose like water from a leaky faucet. It was a fierce battle. The children's admiration soared. This was Constance's great gift—the gift of stubborn independence—and she was bringing it to bear with all her might. (458-459)

Mr. Curtain directly names the trait often associated with children when he calls Constance an "obstinate child," and it is this very characteristic which saves them all in the end. Constance, for her part, utters a phrase said by children constantly: "I…don't…CARE!" The "gift of stubborn independence" is one that many children have, though, as Reynie points out, "no one can resist like Constance." Constance weaponizes her childish willfulness, going toe to toe with Mr. Curtain, who, despite being very committed to his goals, gets exhausted by the tantrum of a toddler just long enough for reinforcements to arrive and manage the situation.

Constance and Mr. Curtain's battle can be read as the ultimate showdown between adulthood and childhood. Mr. Curtain is obsessed with control, often saying variations of the

phrase, “control is the key.” (461). He wishes to control the world and everyone in it, and that is what the hidden messages help him accomplish. Unfortunately for him, children are notoriously difficult to control, especially a child like Constance, who chooses to answer quiz questions with obnoxious rhymes, such as “rules and schools are tools for fools” (74). It certainly can be said that in some ways children are easy to ply with candy, and while that certainly is true in some cases, it is exceedingly troublesome to try to force a child to do something they don’t want to do. No amount of logic or reason stops a tantrum or convinces a stubborn child to change their mind. And Constance, more stubborn than most, exemplifies a childish resistance to control. Their battle of wills is like the clash of conformity and rebellion, order and chaos, Mediational and Contact. And Constance wins, demonstrating the strength of the child over that of the adult.

After Mr. Curtain is apprehended, Constance demonstrates both just how stubborn she is and how she navigates the world differently as a child, where nothing is built to suit her. When Mr. Benedict praises her heroic actions and asks her to come down from the Whisperer, the following exchange occurs:

> “But she *can't* climb down,” Reynie said, indicating the cuffs.
> “What do you know about it?” Constance replied grumpily, sliding her tiny wrists free of the metal bands and slipping her head out of the helmet.
> The boys gaped.
> “You mean you could’ve gotten out any time you wanted?” Sticky asked.
> “It would take some pretty small cuffs to hold *me* tight,” she replied. (463)

This shows how stubborn Constance truly is, seeing as she could’ve given up as soon as she got tired. It also shows how the Whisperer’s design, despite being to some degree meant to work with children, fails to consider Constance’s and other children’s diminutive size when creating the cuffs, rendering those security features completely useless. Once again, the peculiarities of child life elude the thoughts of adults, and the children are able to use this to their advantage.

So it is both the physical difference between adults and children and their emotional and intellectual gifts which allow the children to prevail over Mr. Curtain. As government agents come and go and clamor for the story, the reader is told that Mr. Benedict points out that "Mr. Curtain [...] was too smart to be outfoxed by adults. Only children could have accomplished it" (474). Mr. Curtain would've been able to anticipate resistance from adults (and already had, as he'd "brainswept" the memories of government spies trying to investigate him), and so it was the children who had the innovativeness, the guile, and the gumption to challenge him and win. Only a team of children could have succeeded against him.

Endings and Beginnings

Across both fantasy and non-fantasy stories, adults are unified by shared traits of predictability, ignorance, and lack of imagination. They are static, whereas the children in these literatures are dynamic, always gifted with capacities that, whether magical or not, help them prevail over challenges that adults could never surpass. It is my claim that this is a staple of a large quantity of children's literature; in the next chapter, I will dissect the overall category of children's literature into more distinct subsections, and speak to the philosophies at play for a particular kind of child in a certain kind of story.

Chapter II: Magical Children and Demigods

> *The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible. —Clarke's Second Law*
>
> *Do I contradict myself?*
> *Very well then I contradict myself,*
> *(I am large, I contain multitudes.) —Walt Whitman, Song of Myself, 51*

Taxonomizing Children's Literature

In children's literature, there are two types of ontological settings: some are set in one world, while others are set in multiple. In the single-world category there exists one world: one reality with one set of ontological principles. Here, we have stories that remain in the world we know, such as realistic and historical fiction (*The Secret Garden*, for instance). Within the story there may be a concept of different settings that metaphorically constitute different "worlds," but the basic ontology follows one reality. Also in this category you might find single-world immersive fantasy, such as *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien. The entirety of *The Hobbit* is set in a world called Middle Earth. Despite being a fantasy novel, and therefore not the world we are experientially familiar with, there is no aspect of the story which explicitly contrasts or recognizes the existence of another world, making it a single-world setting. Conversely, a multiple-worlds story is one in which more than one world or reality is explicitly laid out by the text. *Harry Potter* is a good example here, as are *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Both involve an explicit juxtaposition of a non-magical world and a magical one. It is the multiple-worlds setting that I focus on in this project.

Furthermore, these two examples constitute two different subtypes of multiple-worlds literature. *Harry Potter* belongs to the *superimposed worlds* type, which shows the multiple worlds in the story as existing on the same geographical plane. London, in *Harry Potter*, is both a magical and a non-magical place; there is flow and overlap between the two on a purely literal level. Any "magic-only" spaces have to be constructed and maintained against the fact that there is no natural boundary keeping the two worlds separate. *The Chronicles of Narnia*, on the other hand, belongs to the *separate worlds* type. In this situation, there is a boundary between the magical world (Earth) and its non-magical counterpart (Narnia). One cannot occupy both worlds at the same time; it is physically impossible. Instead, a gateway in the boundary must be found and crossed. In *The Chronicles of Narnia,* this takes the form of a wardrobe.

There are then two types of children that I have identified in these worlds. They tend to run parallel to the prior distinction, but with the possibility of overlap. For the most part, I find that in *superimposed worlds* there exists a Magical Child, and in *separate worlds* there exists a Child Wanderer. The Magical Child exists between the two worlds, having some claim to each. The Child Wanderer, on the other hand, is not intrinsically bound to the magical world, but manages to find the gateway out of their world and into the magical world. Both types of child characters have an idiosyncratic philosophy to them; in this project, I will focus on teasing out the philosophy of the Magical Child.

The Magical Child has a foot in two worlds, and struggles with figuring out who they are and where they belong. Existing as the point of overlap between two very different worlds, the Magical Child is pulled in different directions, doesn't fit in, and has a complicated, fractured identity. My description of the philosophical experience of the Magical Child combines

contemporary philosopher Mariana Ortega's account of the multiplicitous self with phenomenological accounts of embodied consciousness to create a way of being which is both uneasy in the world and also highly immersed in it. In order to better understand the philosophical problems that the Magical Child experiences, I will explore two case studies of Magical Children: the titular character of Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians,* and Terry Pratchett's Tiffany Aching from his *Discworld* series, particularly her adventures in the novel *A Hat Full of Sky.* Before I can do that, I will outline Ortega's account of the multiplicitous self, so that I can then relate it to these child characters.

Ortega's Multiplicitous Self

In *Race as Phenomena*, edited by Emily Lee, in a chapter entitled "Multiplicitous Selves," Mariana Ortega argues for a theory of the self which is "multiplicitous," which is to say not singular or linear in nature. She draws together Heideggerian Dasein with Latina feminist theories by Gloria Anzaldúa and María Lugones to synthesize an idea of one self which exists in the borderlands, in liminality, experiencing a multiplicity of identities and constantly existing and traveling between different worlds. Ortega describes this as "being-in-worlds and being between worlds," and "a singular self that occupies multiple locations" (Ortega 20). Ortega's account develops a phenomenology of the self which rejects linearity and simple categorization. Here, I will summarize her account of the multiplicitous self and her account of being-in-worlds and being-between-worlds, and then turn to her account of the multiplicitous self as uneasy. Through Ortega's multiplicitous self, I hope to show that Magical Children experience Ortega's theory in their own fantastical and magical ways.

Ortega's definition of *world* combines Heidegger's idea of world, embedded in his term being-in-the-world, with Lugones's concept of "worlds," stylized with quotation marks, meaning a place where "flesh and blood people" are. Ortega elaborates on her understanding of "world" as she synthesizes Heidegger and Lugones:

> Adding an ontological dimension to Lugones's understanding of "world" by way of Heidegger's account of being-in-the-world brings to light the fact that the world understood as an actual society, given dominant or nondominant construction of life, constructions of a small portion of society, visionary constructions of life, communities of meaning, and so forth, is inextricably linked to the self and vice versa. That is, when we think about worlds [...] we have to think about the ways such worlds are connected to the self and the ways the self is in them, the way the self fares in them. Losing this connection allows for the possibility of not only understanding the self as apart from worlds but also of providing theories that are not connected to lived experience. (21)

Ortega's being-in-worlds unites Lugones's emphasis on the world as experienced, not constructed, with Heidegger's emphasis that being-in-the-world is a core part of the self. She argues that worlds are "inextricably linked to the self," and that trying to theorize about the self without thinking about the self in the world would be an incomplete account of selfhood. Therefore, Ortega's account relies on "being-in-worlds," as that condition emphasizes the experience of the self across multiple worlds. This in turn fundamentally suggests a multiplicity of the self, since the self and the world are linked together.

In order to illustrate this further, Ortega provides an example of multiple-world occupation and movement. She draws on her own life, illustrating her own multiplicity:

> As multiplicitous, the self has various social identities and the possibility of being in various worlds. For example, as multiplicitous, I am in many worlds--the Latino world, the Nicaraguan world, the lesbian world, the Latina lesbian world, the Spanish-speaking world, the academic world, among others, these worlds crisscrossing and overlapping in my many experiences.

Ortega continues:

> While I am in specific spaces, say the university where I work, I am being-in-worlds in the sense that I have a sense of how I, as a Latina, fare in that space. Moreover, I am also in the world of middle-class white selves, the world of primarily white students, the world of teachers, and so forth. (21)

In this example, *worlds* include identity spheres, geographical spaces, methods of thought, and so on. Being "in" a world doesn't require belonging, as Ortega points out; she can be "in the world of middle-class white selves" though it is not a world of her own identity. Ortega inhabits different worlds, some of them identity-based, others of them not. Her experience of each world is informed by her experience as having been between and in other worlds.

That Ortega can be both between-worlds and inhabiting multiple worlds all at once seems contradictory, but this is actually core to understanding the experience of the multiplicitous self. Being-in-worlds and being-between-worlds doesn't follow linearity or mutual exclusivity, but can happen simultaneously, as she clarifies:

> These notions of being-in-worlds and being-between-worlds are not to be understood as being static or excluding one another. I can be in various worlds and at the same time be in-between worlds. I may be in some worlds at a particular time in my experience and then have travel [sic] to other worlds. Yet I constantly remain in-between some worlds. (22)

The simultaneity of being-in-worlds is an important detail. For Ortega, the relationship between the self and worlds is also multiplicitous, and isn't limited to a "static" or sole way of being. The idea of travel is not literal or linear, and neither is the concept of being-in; these things can happen simultaneously, and the contradiction of both being-in and being-between and being-in-transit is part of the multiplicitous experience, and isn't really a contradiction at all.

It is important to recognize that though Ortega speaks to the nature of the self in general, her points are particularly salient when it comes to selves which are often marginalized in society. She writes,

> While the account of multiplicitous selfhood offered here is to be understood as a general account of self—that is, all of us are multiplicitous selves—here I pay particular attention to those multiplicitous selves whose experience is marked by oppression and marginalization, those selves that have not figured prominently in the pages of philosophical discourses. Even though all of us are multiplicitous, those who are multicultural, queer, or border dwellers and whom Anzaldúa names *los atravesados* experience more of what she describes as "psychic restlessness" and "intimate terrorism" due to their marginalization and oppression. That is, these selves' multiplicity is sharper, sometimes piercing, thus leading to a sense of alienation and of Unheimlichkeit or uncanniness that makes their lives more vulnerable to injustice. (16)

The distinction between all selves as multiplicitous and the multiplicitous self as being of particular significance to marginalized selves is crucial in order to understand how Ortega's description of the self can be applied only to children in children's literature, as opposed to all people. Though everyone is a multiplicitous self, Ortega notes that there are some selves who experience a "sharper" multiplicity. These selves especially experience "a sense of alienation," which is an issue I particularly want to focus on in children's literature. So, despite the account being generally applicable, Ortega grants that there is merit in understanding a multiplicitous self as alienated against an unalienated backdrop, making it possible to examine a self—for her, perhaps a Latina self or a queer self, for my project a child character—as uniquely multiplicitous, and experiencing consequences from that multiplicity that are not universally shared.

Particular to the multiplicitous self is the experience of liminality, and the ways in which this unsettles the self. Ortega terms this the problem of being-at-ease. She explains,

> "Ease" is the term that Lugones uses to explain the sense of familiarity the self has when fluent in the language, norms, and practices of her culture. This ease is the result of a shared history with others. If we recall Anzaldúa's account of the new mestiza, it is clear that she is not at ease. Rather, a great deal of her experience in the borderlands is one of discomfort, distress, pain, and sometimes paralysis. Thinking about the experience of the new mestiza, together with the Heideggerian description of Dasein reveals an important difference. The ruptures in her everyday existence, given her multiple social, cultural, and spatial locations, prompt her to become more reflective of her activities and her existence, what we may describe as a life of not being-at-ease. While all selves may

> experience not being-at-ease occasionally, multiplicitous selves at the margins experience it continuously. (18)

Heidegger's Dasein takes for granted an ease that Anzaldúa's mestiza does not experience. She is "more reflective of her activities," and as a result doesn't experience the complete flow of being-in-the-world that Heidegger lays out. This feeling of not "being-at-ease" is experienced "continuously" by the marginalized multiplicitous self. What Lugones calls ease, a "fluency" and "familiarity" that the self has with the world, breaks down when one has to reflect on their "activities and existence" constantly. Thus, being a multiplicitous self in this way is characterized by "discomfort" as the self fails to fit seamlessly with the world.

Ortega elaborates on this, making a distinction between a "thin" and a "thick" sense of not being-at-ease, where the latter is particularly difficult for the multiplicitous self:

> However, there are different senses of not being-at-ease, including what I regard a thin sense of not being-at-ease, the experience of minimal ruptures of everyday practices, and a thick sense of not being-at-ease, the experience of a deeper sense of not being familiar with norms, practices, and the resulting contradictory feelings about who we are given our experience in the different worlds we inhabit and whether those worlds are welcoming or threatening.
> …a thick sense of not being-at-ease arises from ruptures in everyday norms, practices, and experiences that are more meaningful for the self and thus lead to existential crises regarding identity and other features of the self. This thick sense of not being-at-ease becomes even more pronounced when the self is in a condition of marginalization and oppression. (18-19)

The "thin" and the "thick" senses of not being-at-ease demonstrate a difference in the experience of "minimal ruptures" which happen to everybody, and the more deeply felt unfamiliarity of the marginalized self. A "thin" sense of not being-at-ease is the more typical kind; these moments are "minimal ruptures." Everyone experiences this from time to time in mundane circumstances. This can be described as basic phenomenological breakdown: when the door you're trying to push open turns out to be a pull door, you fall out of flow with the world and start actively

thinking about your actions. The same can happen when presented with a cultural difference that you aren't used to, bringing you to reflection as you try to figure out using a fork and knife when you're accustomed to chopsticks. This is a common experience, and not one which entails further reflection beyond resolving the present situation. A "thick" sense of not being-at-ease, on the other hand, is especially experienced by the marginalized multiplicitous self, and involves an existential question as the self struggles with "contradictory feelings about who [they] are." Identity is called into question, as differences in selfhood across worlds creates confusion.

Ortega provides a personal example to illustrate this confusion, explaining how not being-at-ease across worlds makes it difficult for her to determine features of her own self. She describes her experience of being playful in one world, the Latino world, but unplayful in another, the "U.S. white world." She says,

> In this case of having a thick sense of not being-at-ease, which can be rather painful and confusing, the uneasiness has to do not only with not knowing the norms and not having a sense of shared history in this particular world (a thin sense of not being-at-ease) but with the additional experience of being confused as to the kind of person that I am—am I playful or am I not playful? This confusion arises from the fact that I hold memories of myself connected to the attribute in question while I have traveled to other worlds. (31)

Ortega has evidence of herself as both playful and not playful, and cannot determine which is authentic to herself. Her nature is being called into question here, and that creates existential tension as she tries to determine which of two contradictory personality traits she embodies. This is what differentiates thin and thick senses of not being-at-ease; while everyone experiences a thin sense of not being-at-ease at some point, it is particularly the marginalized self which struggles with an uneasiness which penetrates all the way down to their selfhood.

The thick sense of not being-at-ease describes a challenging and painful part of the experience of the multiplicitous self, but Ortega maintains that there are aspects of the

multiplicitous self which are also positive. Ortega describes how both Anzaldúa and Lugones note this, stating that "Anzaldúa recognizes the creative potential of a life of not being-at-ease despite the tremendous pain associated with it," and quotes Lugones as saying that full being-at-ease "tends to produce people who have no inclination to travel across 'worlds' or no experience of 'world' traveling" (20). Not being-at-ease, despite the discomfort, creates conditions for "creative potential," while constantly being-at-ease makes world-traveling less likely, thus reducing this possibility for "creative potential." It is this "creative potential," this giftedness, which sets the Magical Child apart and makes them a powerful figure in addition to a burdened one.

Ortega elaborates on the gift of the multiplicitous self, explaining how multiplicity and liminality translate into a unique perspective and ability to deviate from the status-quo. She states that "it is precisely in the state of inhabiting the borderlands, in the state of liminality, of being-between-worlds, that possibilities of resistance arise, precisely because it is while being in-between that the multiplicitous self can recognize alternative visions of identity and of worlds" (26). By virtue of being situated at a crossroads, the multiplicitous self can access different perspectives. The self can "recognize alternative visions," moving outside of the boundaries of one world and seeing beyond it. "Possibilities of resistance" become clear to the multiplicitous self as a result of living on the borders of different worlds.

Ortega articulates a theory of the self that I'd like to use as my definition of the kind of phenomenological way of being that I see in children's literature. On the whole, I am arguing that there are characters in children's literature that exemplify the multiplicitous self, but instead of just traversing metaphorical "worlds," they are often also literally bridging fantastical worlds

with human ones. Ortega's point that the multiplicitous self can see things differently ("alternative visions,") is what I am arguing that children do in their own literature, even as they struggle with not being-at-ease.

Specifically, Ortega's multiplicitous self reflects points I want to make about the Magical Child, who exists both between and occupying two worlds, making them unique as not quite belonging in either and yet being a part of both. Ortega states, "Complete translation is not possible, and the self will, in some sense, always be an outsider" (22). Ortega is describing how multiplicity complicates the idea of belonging in a particular world. Access, exposure to, and travel to other worlds involves a kind of loss, and a complicated relationship to belonging. In *Percy Jackson and the Olympans*, the multiplicitous self's struggle to belong becomes particularly evident.

Demigods and the Multiplicitous Self

In the world of *Percy Jackson,* the gods of Ancient Greek mythology were, and continue to be, real forces. The gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus exist, as do legendary Greek monsters and villains. And now, just as then, it is the role of demigods, children of gods and mortals, to protect the world from them. Percy Jackson is one such demigod. The twelve-year-old son of Posiedon, Percy finds himself caught between the mythical world of his father and the mortal world he grew up in with his mother, and has to shoulder the responsibility which comes with being a demigod. One aspect of the multiplicitous experience, as Ortega shows, is how the multiplicitous self is in-between worlds and occupying worlds at the same time, not linearly moving from one to the other. This produces an "outsider," someone who, while somewhat belonging in each world, does not exactly fit in. This, Ortega points out, creates

a new kind of space with unique properties. As a demigod, Percy is literally half-moral, half-god, and living between the world of the gods and the mortal world reveals unique abilities and challenges not experienced by those who belong in either world.

The multiplicitous self struggles with the experience of "unease." This manifests in a couple different ways for demigods in the world of *Percy Jackson*: for one, the very literal experience of feeling uncomfortable in the world because they are anticipating danger, and also the awareness that demigods do not quite belong in the mortal world or on Mount Olympus, the home of the gods.

In the mortal world, demigods can see too much. Being able to see monsters makes it impossible to live like a normal mortal, whether one is aware that they are being hunted or not. Demigods are often diagnosed by mortals as having ADHD and/or dyslexia, which Annabeth tells Percy is part of his survival skills. She tells him that the dyslexia is due to his brain being "hardwired for ancient Greek," and that his impulsivity attributed to ADHD are "battlefield reflexes." Annabeth continues,

> As for the attention problems, that's because you see too much, Percy, not too little. Your senses are better than a regular mortal's. Of course the teachers want you medicated. Most of them are monsters. They don't want you seeing them for what they are. (Riordan 88)

Percy's ADHD is the direct result of being a demigod. He is marked by the mortal world as irregular: the narrative is that Percy has been lacking in comparison to his mortal peers, as he has struggled in school and faced challenges paying attention in his classes. Even before knowing that he was a demigod, Percy was told by the mortal world that he was not normal[6]. Annabeth

[6] While current disability activism argues against the worship of the "normal" (and this author wholeheartedly agrees), and instead advocate for a multiplicity of normalcy, or a dissolution of the concept of the "normal," the experience of being diagnosed with ADHD, both in Percy's experience and broadly in most educational spheres, is

turns this on its head; it's not that Percy is not attentive *enough,* but that he is more attentive than mortals, and is at the ready for threats that they will never face.

Annabeth also points out a more sinister aspect of Percy's diagnosis: that trying to eliminate this difference dulls his senses and makes him an easier target for monsters. To attempt to assimilate with the mortal world would be to make himself vulnerable to threats. What constitutes a learning disability in the mortal world is actually an asset for a demigod, and to try to suppress it would be to endanger himself. Fitting in is not an option for the demigod. Pretending to be normal, not to mention actually *being* normal, is outside the realm of possibility.

The demigod is thus always torn between two worlds, and has to learn how to live between them. In *The Mark of Athena* from the sequel series*,* one demigod thinks to himself, "It *had* to be possible to belong in two different worlds at once. After all, that's what being a demigod was all about – not quite belonging in the mortal world or on Mount Olympus, but trying to make peace with both sides of their nature" (Riordan 123). Demigods grapple with precisely what Ortega describes as the experience of the multiplicitous self, coming to terms with inhabiting "two different worlds at once."

This unease also manifests in issues of belonging for the Magical Child. In *The Lightning Thief,* Percy describes his hectic school history, with accident after accident leading to his expulsion from just about every school he's ever attended. These accidents, naturally, were a result of his demigod status. Percy realizes that "in every single school, something creepy had happened, something unsafe, and I was forced to move" (40). His demigod status causes this constant rupture, and results in alienation as he starts school over and over again, often

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being alerted to the fact that there is something wrong with you. At best, there is something different about you that needs particular care and attention. Realistically, you're different, and that's something other kids pick on you for.

immediately labeled as a troublemaker or a poor student. At Camp Half-Blood, he learns that many demigods experience the same thing in school (88).

Some demigods face the challenge of belonging at home as well as at school. Annabeth tells Percy that she stays at Camp Half-Blood all year-round and never visits her father because she feels she does not belong in her own family. After his relationship with Athena, Annabeth's father married a mortal woman, and their household was cold to Annabeth until she eventually ran away at age seven. She explains this to Percy, saying

> His wife—my stepmom—treated me like a freak. She wouldn't let me play with her children. My dad went along with her. Whenever something dangerous happened—you know, something with monsters—they would both look at me resentfully, like, 'How dare you put our family at risk.' Finally, I took the hint. I wasn't wanted. I ran away. (201)

Annabeth's father put the world of mythology behind him and embraced a mortal life, but she couldn't do the same. She was not normal, and she was reminded of this constantly, between her stepmother's attitude and the danger her demigod status attracted. Her family, the place where one should most expect to belong, became hostile to her. Annabeth's experience demonstrates the more extreme impacts of demigod life on belonging, turning her into an outsider in her own home.

While being a multiplicitous self comes with certain limitations, such as a difficulty in belonging, there are ways in which the demigod is also endowed with unique capacities. As a demigod, Percy can do what gods and mortals cannot; he can move freely between all places, mortal or mythical. When Percy's mentor Chiron explains being a demigod to Percy, he says,

> Gods cannot cross each other's territories except by invitation. That is another ancient rule. Heroes, on the other hand, have certain privileges. They can go anywhere, challenge anyone, as long as they're bold enough and strong enough to do it. No god can be held responsible for a hero's actions. Why do you think that the gods always operate through humans? (145)

Percy's status as a hero, as a demigod, opens up "certain privileges." He isn't bound by the rules of gods or the rules of mortals, making him free to do anything that he's "bold enough and strong enough to do." "Ancient rules" that the gods have no choice but to follow have no effect on demigods, and spaces that mortals couldn't possibly wander into because of the Mist are available to demigods as well.

Another advantage of the multiplicitous self is how, as Ortega points out, the multiplicitous self has a strong "creative potential" to see "alternative visions," and as a result make significant changes in the world, particularly along sociopolitical lines. This is reflected in the world of *Percy Jackson,* where scattered throughout there are references to demigods who changed the course of history. George Washington is revealed to be a son of Athena (358), and in the fourth book, *The Battle of the Labyrinth*, Harriet Tubman is a daughter of Hermes who may have used a version of Daedalus' Labyrinth in her Underground Railroad (*Battle of the Labyrinth* 228). Demigods influence history so much, in fact, that Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades decided not to have any more children, because of the destruction wrought by World War II, which "was basically a fight between the sons of Zeus and Poseidon on one side, and the sons of Hades on the other" (*The Lightning Thief* 113). Obviously, they didn't stick to this agreement, given Percy's existence, but the motivation behind this policy is a recognition of the impact that demigods have on world affairs.

Percy, too, has "alternative visions," which he shares with the gods at the end of the first series, when he demands that they take more responsibility for their demigod children. The gods are constant, with fixed natures. They have different facets, perhaps, but it is not in their nature to learn and grow. As one demigod puts it, "All the gods know how to do is replay their past" (366).

Demigods like Percy, however, are wild cards. They can change things up, reveal new truths, and disrupt the status quo. They have the vision to see changes in the world and the power to make them happen.

Percy Jackson's Powers and Skillful Coping

The Magical Child experiences unease, which in Ortega's account shows how Heidegger's being-in-the-world, specifically being in flow with the world, is challenging for the multiplicitous self. The Magical Child, however, is able to both experience this unease while accessing a deeper immersion in the world through magic. Magic, in this sense, can be thought of as an amplification of being-in-the-world, a breakdown of subject-object dualism which is so complete that it enables otherwise impossible interaction with the world. For Percy, this is his manipulation of water in his environment. I argue that rather than normatively terming this "Percy controlling water," it is more apt to say that Percy is entering a state of being-in-the-world in which the water is so responsive to him that the border between Percy and the water becomes blurred.

As I explained in Chapter I, skillful coping is the term Dreyfus uses to describe the kinds of things that people do that they can do without thinking. A skilled juggler doesn't think about how gravity affects the balls in the air; she just throws them, catches them, and then throws them again. Similarly, a skilled carpenter isn't thinking about the hammer in her hand as a particularly shaped block of metal mounted to a wooden stick; she's just driving in nails, maybe thinking about her overall task, maybe thinking about whether or not she should buy some milk on the way home. There is no need for reflection in these situations unless something goes wrong, like a

dog grabs a ball in midair or the head of the hammer comes flying off. Barring these unexpected interruptions, the juggler and the carpenter are in flow, not thinking about their actions.

The basis for Dreyfus's skillful coping is gleaned from Heidegger's description of equipment. Equipment is a term used to refer to the stuff involved in the skillful coping, like the juggler's rubber balls or the carpenter's hammer. Heidegger says that when equipment is used in skillful coping, it becomes "transparent," which is to say that the user becomes unaware of it. In his book *Being-in-the-World*, Dreyfus gives the following example to illustrate Heidegger's point:

> Consider the example (used by Wittgenstein, Polanyi, and Merleau-Ponty) of the blind man's cane. We hand the blind man a cane and ask him to tell us what properties it has. After hefting and feeling it, he tells us that it is light, smooth, about three feet long, and so on; it is occurrent for him. But when the man starts to manipulate the cane, he loses his awareness of the cane itself; he is aware only of the curb (or whatever object the cane touches); or, if all is going well, he is not even aware of that, but of his freedom to walk, or perhaps only what he is talking about with a friend. Precisely when it is most genuinely appropriated equipment becomes transparent. (Dreyfus 65)

The equipment, in this case a cane, is perceived by the blind man as having particular qualities. But when he actually uses it, these qualities fade away from his awareness. He doesn't think about the cane, he just uses it. Dreyfus, in his own philosophy built on Heidegger, has said the cane is an extension of his body. Taking these together, we could say that the blind man becomes as unaware of it as he might be unaware of each finger on his hand, because the material of the cane no longer becomes perceptible.

At first, this may seem like it relies on subject-object dualism as one becomes transparent to the other, but Heidegger asserts that the reverse also happens. Dreyfus writes,

> Not only is equipment transparent; so is the user. Heidegger calls the user's grasp of his environment in his everyday way of getting around, "circumspection." He describes for his class this everyday activity as a kind of "sight" which does not involve deliberate,

> thematic awareness…An extreme case of such nonthematic, non-self-referential awareness is the experience athletes sometime call flow, or playing out of their heads.

He then quotes Heidegger talking to a rock climber:

> A person in the midst of the flow experience is both keenly aware of his or her own actions and oblivious to that awareness itself. One rock climber remarks, "You are so involved in what you are doing you aren't thinking of yourself as separate from the immediate activity…you don't see yourself as separate from what you are doing." (66)

The user gets in the "flow" of things and also becomes transparent. For the blind man, the difference between himself and the cane becomes fuzzy as he enters a flow state with it. The rock climber describes the same phenomenon, that the border between a rock climber and the act of climbing the rocks is hazy, even nonexistent, since "you don't see yourself as separate from what you are doing." Previously, we might have said that the blind man's cane was an extension of his body; given this information, we could also say that the blind man becomes an extension of the cane. Subject-object dualism makes no sense in this context, as the barrier between the two breaks down.

Heidegger's work serves as the basis for Dreyfus's philosophy of skillful coping, which involves non-thinking action. This is possible because of the transparency of the equipment and the user which occurs in the Space of Motivations, muddling the distinction which is clearly demarcated in the Space of Reasons. One is entirely "absorbed" in the world (67). Their hands move independently of their minds, sometimes "knowing" what to do even if the mind does not, like how a person might remember their garage code by touch but couldn't tell you the numbers without watching their fingers on the keypad. Instead of consulting the rules and reasoning the next step, a skillful coper is immersed in their action such that they can perform it without having to think about it.

There are two main takeaways I would like to highlight from this discussion of Dreyfus and Heidegger: firstly, that subject-object dualism and the borders between user and equipment and activity break down in skillful coping; and secondly, that skillful coping is non-thinking, embodied action. In Percy's experiences of his own powers, it becomes clear that his powers exist in the Space of Motivations. I argue that we can understand Percy's powers as an augmented version of Heidegger's philosophy, with magic making the equipment more responsive than it usually can be. In order to demonstrate this, I will first show Percy's powers in the Space of Motivations, and then I will turn to discussing the powers as phenomenology magnified.

There are many instances throughout the novel of Percy using his powers, but the two I will focus on are one at the beginning of the story and one at the end. When Percy arrives at Camp Half-Blood, he meets Clarisse, the daughter of Ares. When Percy is threatened by Clarisse in the bathroom, he ends up causing the plumbing to explode, dousing everyone in the room except him with water. The act of using his powers manifested as "a tug in the pit of [his] stomach," which receded when he stopped using his powers (Riordan 90-91). Annabeth blamed him for getting everyone wet, and though he initially didn't claim responsibility, he realized he was the cause of the incident. He reflected, "I'd made water shoot out of the bathroom fixtures. I didn't understand how. But the toilets had responded to me. I had become one with the plumbing" (93). For better or for worse, Percy accessed a way of being in the world which changed his relationship to the bathroom from one of subject-object relation to one where the toilets could "respond" to him.

Though a seemingly throwaway comment, the idea that he "became one with the plumbing" bears a resemblance to the language used for real-life flow states that Dreyfus and Heidegger discuss. While in a flow state, the water and Percy were not separate entities; rather, they came together as one. They literally *flowed* as the water moved with Percy. This emphasizes that his powers rely on a relational interaction between the self and the world, rather than a subject-object dualist one.

Percy's fight with Clarisse was his first real test of his powers; by the time he faces Ares in battle, he has much more experience. Percy fights Ares, the god of war, on the beach. As he battles with Ares, he claims, "my body thought for me. The water seemed to push me into the air and I catapulted over him, slashing as I came down" (327). No longer in the Space of Reasons, Percy operated in the Space of Motivations, drawing on his power to enhance his connection to the world around him. Not only did he not have to think, but the water became an extension of him, "push[ing] him into the air" to help him fight Ares. He only delivers his final blow with the help of the sea:

> I lowered my blade, as if I were too exhausted to go on. *Wait for it,* I told the sea. The pressure now was almost lifting me off my feet. Ares raised his sword. I released the tide and jumped, rocketing straight over Ares on a wave.
>
> A six-foot tall wall of water smashed him full in the face, leaving him cursing and sputtering with a mouth full of seaweed. I landed behind him with a splash and feinted toward his head, as I'd done before. He turned in time to raise his sword, but this time he was disoriented, he didn't anticipate the trick. I changed direction, lunged to the side, and stabbed [my sword] straight down into the water, sending the point through the god's heel. (329)

It is clear in this passage that Percy doesn't control the sea so much as he works *with* it, alongside it. He communicates with it, harnessing its power to create a wave big enough to take Ares down. Percy's powers are like skillful coping in that he doesn't reflectively think, he just

acts. We can also see that Percy's connection to the water is not one of dominance; the water "responds" to him. He communicates and negotiates with it.

Endings and Beginnings

Ortega's account of the multiplicitous self is one full of unease and confusion, but also imbued with potential and unique perspectives. In the world of *Percy Jackson,* the multiplicitous self is found in the demigod, who experiences both unease and new ways of seeing the world. As a demigod, Percy found himself in two worlds, the mortal and the mythological. Though this caused him strain, it also empowered him to relate to the world in a different way, connecting to the sea at a deeper level than is possible for mortals.

Percy Jackson's relationship to these various philosophical lines of inquiry were distinct, with the multiplicitous self as one facet and magical immersion as another. In the third and final chapter, I will introduce Terry Pratchett's novel *A Hat Full of Sky.* Unlike *Percy Jackson*, this text has the multiplicitous self and magical immersion braided together without the possibility of untangling them. As a result, this next chapter will flit between subjects as I balance between the contour of the story and the philosophy in it.

Chapter III: The Phenomenologist's Witch

> *In the Nicholls-Clute Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, there was an ancient woodcut of a man pushing his head through the back of the world, past the sky, and seeing the cogs and the wheels and the engines that drove the universe machine. That's what people do in Terry Pratchett books, even if the people doing it are sometimes rats and sometimes small girls. People learn things. They open their heads. —Neil Gaiman*

> *The perception of other people and the intersubjective world is problematic only for adults. The child lives in a world which he unhesitatingly believes accessible to all around him [...] For him men are empty heads turned towards one single, self-evident world where everything takes place, even dreams, which are, he thinks, in his room, and even thinking, since it is not distinct from words. —Maurice Merleau-Ponty*

Introducing Tiffany Aching

Terry Pratchett's *A Hat Full of Sky* weaves a complex philosophy with threads of whimsy and literary genius. *A Hat Full of Sky* invents a new phenomenology of self and embodied consciousness. In order to make sense of it, I will knit together literary analysis and philosophical connections in order to show the Magical Child philosophy. Much like in *Percy Jackson*, magic in *A Hat Full of Sky* extends the possibility of existing philosophy into previously impossible spaces.

In the novel, a preteen girl named Tiffany Aching leaves home for the first time in order to be trained as a witch. She'd done magic before, but she wasn't sure how she'd done it, and so now she was going to apprentice with a witch who could teach her. Tiffany grew up on Chalk hills (akin to those in Southern England) as a dairy farmer, and while she is excited to become a witch, she's not entirely sure who she is away from her homeland. The novel explores the power of imagination and the struggle of belonging, as well as the challenge of learning who you are (and who you are not).

The Witch as Multiplicitous

In order to get to know Tiffany, we first need to understand the philosophy at play in the world she lives in, particularly paying attention to the experience of witches. Throughout the novel, Tiffany tries to determine what it is that being a witch really means, and finds that her apprenticeship is far from what she expected:

> Where was the *magic?* Oh, she understood that you had to learn about the basic, everyday *craft,* but when did the "witch" part turn up? [...]
>
> She'd expected—well, what? Well…to be doing serious witch stuff, you know, broomsticks, magic, guarding the world against evil forces in a noble yet modest way, and then *also* doing good for poor people because she was a really nice person. And the people she'd seen in the picture had had rather less messy ailments and their children didn't have such runny noses. Mr. Weavall's flying toenails weren't in it *anywhere*. Some of them *boomeranged.* (Pratchett 149)

She assumed there would be a lot of flying and magic and spells; however, she ends up doing a lot of everyday care for grateful and ungrateful people alike, running after children who kept getting sick because of their parents' negligence and tending to the hygiene of a decrepit old man.

But when Tiffany is tasked with a highly magical undertaking, showing a creature the way to Death, she realizes that "this is what we do. We live on the edges" (303). Sometimes the ordinary, sometimes the extraordinary, and always mediating between multiple worlds, being a witch is about existing on a border. In Tiffany Aching's world, as in Percy's, the magical is where we will find the particularly multiplicitous self. In this case, witches of all ages experience the multiplicitous self to a degree, as they exist on these "edges." There are, however, a couple figures who demonstrate the multiplicitous self in more unexpected literal ways as well. Magic amplifies the multiplicitous self, making it more visible. Two senior witches, Miss Level and

Mistress Weatherwax, both demonstrate how the multiplicitous self literally manifests through magic.

Witch Case Study 1 - Miss Level

Miss Level is the witch that Tiffany spends the book apprenticing with. Miss Level has a hard time holding on to apprentices on account of a particular condition of her being; namely, that she has two bodies. Often mistaken for twins, Miss Level clarifies that she is not two people, but one—one self with two bodies. When Tiffany refers to Miss Level as "both," Miss Level interrupts, her speech bouncing from one body to the other:

> "There is no both. There's just me, do you understand? I know it's hard. But I have a right right hand and a right left hand and a left right hand and a left left hand. It's all me. I can go shopping and stay home at the same time, Tiffany. If it helps, think of me as one—"
> "---person with four arms and—"
> "---four legs and—"
> "---four eyes."

Miss Level then tries to be even more clear, telling Tiffany, "I'm human, just like you, except that there's more of me" (82-83). Miss Level is one self with multiple physical identities. We cannot fathom what living like her must be like—does she ever mix up her bodies like I mix up my hands, trying to take a bite of a sandwich with the wrong mouth? When one talks to her, which pair of eyes are they meant to make eye contact with? Though it is impossible for us to imagine, multiplicity is woven into her being.

The way she speaks is a great example of how her multiplicity works, described at one point as similar to "players in a tennis match, slamming the words back and forth" (82). She switches between mouths as she tries to explain herself to Tiffany, reinventing what a two-person conversation sounds like. Furthermore, her two bodies can be separated for some considerable

distance, making it possible for her to be in a village with Tiffany at the same time that she is cleaning at home. She can experience the ease of being in her own space at the same time that she experiences the unease of being in town.

While Ortega didn't anticipate the possibility of a self with two *bodies,* the notion of the multiplicitous self applies to Miss Level, as she is one unified self with a diversity of simultaneous experience that she has to come to terms with. So, despite the lack of inclusion of multiple bodies in Ortega's work, the multiplicitous self here is expressed as literally as possible in the form(s) of Miss Level.

It should come as no surprise that the existing phenomenological discourse on the self, particularly the embodied self, was not quite prepared for this possibility either. At first, it seems that Miss Level's existence might reinforce the idea of a mind/body dualism, given that she seems to have one mind shared between two bodies, undermining the idea that the body is integral in developing a consciousness. A discomfiting possibility, yes, but a rather unlikely one, given how much Miss Level's being depends on her nature as twice-embodied. Tiffany describes how Miss Level's two bodies work as one unit when she sees her making tea, noting that "There are quite a few things that need to be done to make a cup of tea, and Miss Level did them all at once. The bodies stood side by side, passing things from hand to hand to hand, moving kettle and cups and spoon in a sort of ballet" (83). Furthermore, Tiffany describes Miss Level's eating habits, saying that "the bodies would pass plates to one another without saying a word, sometimes they'd eat off one another's forks, and it was rather strange to see one person burp and the other one say "Oops, pardon me"" (106). Miss Level's everyday life revolves around having two bodies; it is how she eats, how she goes about her day. She has two bodies, but they

are not treated as separate; when only one body appears or communicates, the text tends to refer to this as "one half" of Miss Level. She is whole when both bodies are together.

She can't imagine having fewer, as the reader finds out when one of her bodies is killed and completely destroyed in a magical explosion. She is existentially thrown, and trying to make sense of her situation. She says of her other body, "It's as though a part of me is…a long way off" (205). She continues,

> "How do you manage, seeing only one side of things?" said Miss Level dreamily to the world in general. "How will I get everything done with only one pair of hands and feet? Being in just one place all the time…how do people manage? It's impossible…. (206).

Ironic for the reader, who almost certainly has lived their whole life with just one body. Miss Level's experience makes our reality the strange one, the one which seems "impossible" to live. "How will I get everything done," she wonders (and we readers might smile ruefully and whisper, "you won't.") Miss Level finds herself in the kind of situation that the writers of modernism imagined, a Woolfian desire to have "fifty pairs of eyes to see with." (Woolf 198). She is trapped, knowing that there is a capacity for more, with a need to see beyond two pairs of eyes that cannot be realized. She can't fathom "being in just one place all the time," and "seeing only one side of things." Everything about who she is has relied on the nature of herself as having two bodies, and the way she *is* in the world hinges on this.

Even though one of Miss Level's bodies was vaporized, Miss Level does not stop being a multiplicitous self. After her incident, it is revealed that she can still use her other body, even if she cannot see it: "Every eye in the room watched Miss Level [...] making tea using four arms, two of which did not exist, and not realizing it" (244). You can take a witch away from one of her bodies, but you can't take the bodies away from the witch. But how can this be? Mistress

Weatherwax, a witch herself, gives Tiffany her best guess. She explains that she once knew a boy who had wooden legs after an accident crushed his own, and that sometimes he claimed he could still feel his toes. She says to Tiffany, "It's like the head don't accept what's happened. And it's not like she's…your everyday kind of person to start with. I mean, she's used to havin' arms she can't see" (245). What Mistress Weatherwax describes here is referred to in our world as *phantom limb syndrome*. When we say it, we mean *phantom* in the sense that we may feel that something is there, but we know it truly isn't. Just as the demigod in *Percy Jackson* is diagnosed with ADHD instead of being recognized for their reflexes, in the real world we identify phantom limb as a delusion, a trick of the mind and body. What we "know" is turned on its head in a world like Miss Level's, and what we believe is so self-evident turns out to be the illusion itself. For Miss Level, *phantom limb* becomes a much different, more literal possibility. Miss Level's other body reaches out beyond the grave, assisting Miss Level despite having disappeared. Instead of feeling that it is there but "knowing" that it truly isn't, it *seems* as if Miss Level only has one body, but we *know* that she has two.

When Miss Level sees that she's holding cups and saucers without hands she begins to wobble, not able to explain how she's doing it without her other body. Seeing her struggling, Mistress Weatherwax orders her to shut her eyes, telling her "you *know* the cup's there, you can *feel* your arm," and "Don't think about it, just do it!" (246). Heeding these instructions, Miss Level manages to get the hang of using her other body despite not being able to see it.

This distinction that Mistress Weatherwax draws—the one between thinking and doing—is one that is key in embodied phenomenology, and is described by philosopher Hubert Dreyfus as *skillful coping*. As I've described in previous chapters, In skillful (or skilled) coping,

one is so immersed in their action that it requires no active reflective thought. This is to say that though the mind need not be completely *empty,* doing the action does not require actively thinking about how to do it. Dreyfus sometimes calls this a flow state; everyday language often refers to it as being "in the zone." While kindergarteners have to think hard to write their S's and their Z's correctly, those "skilled" in writing, to use Dreyfus's language, would not need to think about what they're doing in order to write down a word with one of those letters.

Skillful coping extends to all kinds of tasks, and tends to "break down" only when something doesn't go as it's supposed to, taking a person out of the "flow" state and into reflective thinking. Imagine, for instance, playing a piano piece from memory. But if you focus on what you're doing too closely, doesn't some of that implicit know-how disappear? This is because the "flow" state exists on a level of being called the Space of Motivations. As I explained in Chapter I, The Space of Motivations can be thought of as where we *do* most of our *doing*: walking, cooking, speaking, opening and closing doors, using a fork and knife, responding instinctively to the calls of the world around us. Below the space of motivations is the Space of Causes, which includes things that we don't have to learn how to do, like obey gravity. But on the other side of the space of motivations is the Space of Reasons, where reflective thinking takes place.

Dreyfus argues that learning a skill means moving from the space of reasons into the space of motivations. A new bike rider, for instance, needs to learn how to brake, how to turn, and how to change gears. They need to learn how to become sensitive to different road conditions, changes in incline, different bicycles, and potential mechanical issues. These are rules that are to be followed regardless of context. As they follow these context-free rules until

they become more proficient, more "skilled," rules about bike riding that they learned transform into experience that they don't have to actively reflect on, but act on instinctively. Instead of remembering "I have to change gears when the incline is steeper" and then acting accordingly, they simply do what they need to do when it needs to be done.

Using one's body is an instance of the Space of Motivations; if we have functioning arms and legs, we don't have to tell our legs to move and our arms to swing when we walk. Miss Level's bodies similarly existed in the Space of Motivations, acting without needing to think, and it is this capacity (and a little magic) that makes it possible for Miss Level to continue her embodied practice despite the loss of one body. Even when one has all their usual fingers and toes, using them doesn't require looking at them; in fact, sometimes watching yourself do it makes it harder to complete the task. Miss Level takes it even further, embodying multiple worlds all at once non-reflectively.

Witch Case Study 2 - Mistress Weatherwax

Mistress Weatherwax, arguably the most respected witch among witches and Tiffany's mentor, also has a magical multiplicitous capacity. Hers is called Borrowing, and is an uncommon skill that lets a witch temporarily expand her embodied consciousness into an animal[7] . The creature doesn't even know she's there, she maintains (274). The name "Borrowing" suggests a muddlement of ownership, that the body which usually belongs to itself might temporarily belong to another.

The most multiplicitous application of this skill, Borrowing an entire beehive, is hinted at throughout the novel. Miss Level tells Tiffany at the beginning that it's common practice for a

[7] Philosophy around animal consciousness is well-worn terrain, and the conditions of Borrowing described in Pratchett's book thread the needle between these philosophies while maintaining a plausible deniability through a lack of specificity.

beekeeper to share a little gossip with their bees, and when Tiffany wonders if one could learn a lot from the bees as a result, Miss Level states, "You'd have to learn to think like a swarm of bees. One mind with *thousands* of little bodies. Much too hard to do, even for me" (89). Yet, Mistress Weatherwax is able to accomplish it. This is described in the following passage:

> Her eyes are shut, her hands are crossed on her chest, her mouth is open.
>
> And bees crawl into her mouth, and over her ears, and all over her pillow. They fill the room, flying in and out of the open window, where someone has put a row of saucers filled with sugary water on the sill.
>
> None of the saucers match, of course. A witch never has matching crockery. But the bees work on, coming and going…busy as bees. When the ripple of magic passes through, the buzz rises to a roar. Bees pour in through the window urgently, as though driven by a gale. They land on the still old woman until her head and shoulders are a boiling mass of tiny brown bodies.
>
> And then, as one insect, they rise in a storm and pour away into the outside air, which is full of whirling seeds from the sycamore trees outside.
>
> Mistress Weatherwax sat bolt upright and said, "Bzzzt!" Then she stuck a finger into her mouth, rootled around a bit, and pulled out a struggling bee. She blew on it and shooed it out of the window.
>
> For a moment her eyes seemed to have many facets, just like a bee's.
>
> "So," she said. "She's learned how to Borrow, has she? Or she's been Borrowed!" (191-192)

This passage demonstrates both Mistress Weatherwax's multiplicitous self in action and, more broadly, the nature of witches as multiplicitous. Hidden in this description of the bees coming to Mistress Weatherwax is the matter-of-fact statement that "a witch never has matching crockery." While this is a miniscule detail, it is a microcosm of witching as a whole; witches don't strive for consistency, and embrace contradiction and plurality, even in their homegoods. And it is these mismatched saucers, placed on the windowsill, which bring the bees to Mistress Weathermax. Mismatchedness at the edge and expanding consciousness beyond one body—what could be more multiplicitous than that?

The narrator pushes this even further, describing Miss Weatherwax's actions with a made-up word. When she tried to find the bee still trapped in her mouth, she "rootled around a bit" and then helped the bee out. This word, "rootled," conveys the immediacy of what she was doing even as it is a word reaching the eyes and ears of the reader for the first time. Reminiscent of the word "root," and maybe "doodle," the word stands at the edge of what exists.

As a whole, the passage describes how Mistress Weatherwax comes to learn so much from the bees. The bees themselves demonstrate multiplicity, as hundreds of them move "as one insect," and they seem to add Mistress Weatherwax to their ranks. After they departed, "for a moment her eyes seemed to have many facets, just like a bee's." Mistress Weatherwax temporarily almost *becomes* a bee, joins her self into the multiplicity of a swarm of bees. Unlike Miss Level, she can only do this "for a moment," but she is also joining with hundreds more bodies than Miss Level has.

Later, when Tiffany goes with Mistress Weatherwax into the village that Miss Level usually tends to, Mistress Weatherwax suddenly tells Tiffany, "Oh, that reminds me…them mysterious bruises Mrs. Towny gets is because Mr. Towny beats her, and the father of Miss Quickly's baby is young Fred Turvey. You might mention that to Miss Level." The text then notes that "as she spoke, a bee flew out of her ear" (267). Tiffany eventually puts two and two together, telling Mistress Weatherwax that next time she plans to visit her, she'll let the bees know so that Mistress Weatherwax can prepare them some tea (343). Mistress Weatherwax is accomplishing what Miss Level thought was nearly impossible, and extending herself into an entire swarm of bees, multiplying the amount of worlds she is in and between.

On one level, she's hearing gossip from so many different contexts, which is one kind of world-exploration, that of various social spheres; on another, she is experiencing what it is like to be a thousand different but unified things at once. The multiplicity of bee-self is more commonly referred to as a "hive mind," defined by Merriam-Webster as "the collective mental activity expressed in the complex, coordinated behavior of a colony of social insects (such as bees or ants) regarded as comparable to a single mind controlling the behavior of an individual organism" (Merriam-Webster "Hive Mind"). When she Borrows, Mistress Weatherwax adds herself to the hive mind, accessing the knowledge of the entire colony at once.

Mistress Weatherwax and Miss Level are two witches who demonstrate the way that multiplicity finds itself and blossoms when magic is involved. They expand, experiencing embodiment beyond the usual singularity. Miss Level has, depending on how you look at it, a doubled or halved embodied experience every day; Mistress Weatherwax, for her part, joins with the bees to experience an almost infinite multiplicity, if only for a little while.

Tiffany's Multiplicitous Self

Borrowing is a talent that Tiffany also has, though she does not realize it at first. The skill requires that the witch be able to walk out of her own body (Pratchett 176). The fact that she can do it at all underscores her multiplicitous self as particularly uneasy, as we see from her first foray into Borrowing. The first time she does it, she conceptualizes it as a little trick she made up, which she calls "See me." She uses it to see her body from outside of herself, mostly because she doesn't have a mirror. She describes the experience, revealing that she often sees herself from the third person, rather than from the first person:

> It had been a shock, the first time she'd done this. But she'd *always* found it easy to see herself, at least in her head. All her memories were like little pictures of herself doing

> things or watching things, rather than the view from the two holes in the front of her head. There was a part of her that was always watching her. (18)

Tiffany is always reflective, even panoramic, seeing herself from other angles rather than from her own perspective.

This is precisely what Ortega describes as an inability of the multiplicitous self to consistently lose themselves in immediate experience, as Heidegger implicitly claims all people do. Tiffany is able to step outside of herself because being multiplicitous so often means being aware of oneself in the world. As Ortega put it, "the ruptures in her everyday existence… prompt her to become more reflective of her activities and her existence, what we may describe as a life of not being-at-ease" (Ortega 18). This reflectivity reveals an unease in Tiffany's being, in particular an unease that reveals itself to stem from an inability to be properly integrated into the world.

Much like Percy, Tiffany's multiplicitous self contributes to questions of belonging and concerns about who she "really" is. She struggles with her deep sense of belonging to the Chalk while simultaneously knowing that she cannot stay there if she wants to train as a witch. On her way to Miss Level's house, as she flew on the back of Miss Level's broomstick, Tiffany was particularly torn about her decision:

> At that moment she wanted to jump off, fly back, get there by closing her eyes and clicking her heels together, do *anything*–
>
> *No! She'd bundled those thoughts away, hadn't she? She had to learn, and there was no one on the hills to teach her!*
>
> *But the Chalk was her world. She walked on it every day. She could feel its ancient life under her feet. The land was in her bones, just as Granny Aching had said. It was in her name, too; in the old language of the Nac Mac Feegle, her name sounded like "Land Under Wave," and in the eye of her mind she'd walked in those deep prehistoric seas when the Chalk had been formed, in a million-year rain made of the shells of tiny creatures. She trod a land made of life, and breathed it in, and listened to it, and thought its thoughts for it. To see it now, small, alone, in a landscape that stretched to the end of the world, was too much. She had to go back to it—*

> For a moment the stick wobbled in the air.
> *No! I know I must go!* (Pratchett 65).

Tiffany is deeply connected to the Chalk. She "breathed it in, and listened to it, and thought its thoughts for it." Her relationship to the land seems to be one of extension, that the Chalk is as much a part of her as she is a part of it. Her selfhood is wrapped up in it, and rather than a subject-object dualist perspective on the world, Tiffany describes the Chalk as something she is immersed in and always with.

Tiffany's struggle with leaving home, a place she feels is a part of her, in order to honor her capacities as a witch ends up impacting her sense of belonging, growing an insecurity and doubt in who she is. After a gathering with other witches her age ends with her being humiliated, Tiffany worries that she doesn't belong in the witch world, after all:

> She missed the sounds and the sheep and the silences of the Chalk. She missed seeing the blackness of the hills from her bedroom window, outlined against the stars. She missed...part of herself…
> [...] And she couldn't make a shamble [tool of witchcraft]. And she just had a green dress, while all the other girls wore black ones. Annagramma had a lot of jewelry, too, in black and silver. All the other girls had shambles, too, beautiful ones. Who cared if they were just for show?
> Perhaps she wasn't a witch at all. [...]
> She belonged to the Chalk. Every day she'd told the hills what they were. Every day they'd told her who she was. But now she couldn't hear them. (147-149)

Tiffany struggles with her identity and fitting in with the other witches. Tiffany doesn't wear black and can't get the hang of making basic witching tools. She is acutely aware of how she fails to fit in, and it makes her question if she is supposed to be there. "Part of herself" was left on the Chalk, and being away from it makes her feel less than whole.

It is interesting to note that Tiffany describes her relationship to the Chalk in relational language reminiscent of phenomenological voice. The Chalk "told her who she was," as she did

for it. In a world of magic, the line between the literal and the literary is confused by this language. The edge of metaphor is here for the multiplicitous self in her own description of her life, and whether literal or metaphorical, she feels a loss when separated from her Chalk hills.

It makes sense that she feels existentially displaced; if she doesn't feel like she is fully herself when she is away from home, but being a witch necessitates always being and feeling away from home, how does she reconcile these two opposing states? Being both a witch and a girl from the Chalk means reckoning with two seemingly incompatible natures. Tiffany experiences the tension and contradiction that Ortega describes as not being-at-ease, as she struggles with existential questions about how to live authentically.

Witchcraft and Skillful Coping

Part of Tiffany's struggle to belong lies in her trouble learning some practices from Miss Level. Since witchcraft relies on the witch's nature as multiplicitous, learning the tools of the trade is especially complicated since it relies on sensing and feeling rather than knowledge. For instance, one of the most useful tools for a witch is the shamble, which has many possible functions but is most often used to aid a witch in detecting other traces of magic around them. The shamble is described as a sort of cat's cradle, or dreamcatcher, or something of the like, involving string as well as other objects. There are no requirements for what must go into a shamble, except that there must be some element that is alive; a beetle, for instance, or a worm, or even a fresh egg. What it takes to create a functional shamble is not in the ingredients, but in a quality that cannot be described, only understood or felt. Tiffany asks an older witch, Miss Tick, if a shamble is magical, to which Miss Tick replies, "They're something to be magical through." She tells her, "You can make one out of anything, so long as it…looks right" (56).

The magic of the shamble could be described as momentarily plugging the witch perfectly into the world, fully immersed in the entirety of the moment. Miss Level explains this to Tiffany as they walk together.

> "A shamble is a very tricky thing. You can't even carry one around, except as an ornament. You have to make it for yourself, there and then, right where and when you want to use it."
> "To catch the moment," said the other part of Miss Level, coming in. "The way you tie the knots, the way the string runs--"
> "--the freshness of the egg, perhaps, and the moisture in the air--" said the first Miss Level.
> "--the tension of the twigs and the kinds of things that you just happen to have in your pocket at that moment--"
> "--even the way the wind is blowing," the first Miss Level concluded. "All these things make a kind of…of picture of the here and now when you move them right. And I can't tell you how to move them, because I don't know."
> "But you do move them," said Tiffany, getting lost. "I saw you--"
> "I do it but I don't know how I do," said Miss Level." (123)

The shamble is made of the moment, for the moment. It requires immersion in the moment in order to reveal it; the creation of a shamble is highly context-dependent. Things like "the freshness of the egg" and "the way the wind is blowing" impact the "picture of the here and now" that the shamble creates. Skillful coping is also context-dependent, and so it seems that the shamble itself, as well as the skill to make a shamble, requires a flow state. After all, Miss Level is able to do it without being able to explain *how* she does it. Rather than reflecting on rules and acting accordingly, the only way to make and use a shamble is to rely on non-thinking acts, following the lead of one's hands.

Miss Level makes a shamble and shows Tiffany, demonstrating in the process that contradiction and impossibility is also contained in the shamble. She explains as she works that she always keeps "the right sort of things" in her pocket so that she can make a shamble at any time. She assembles her shamble, and this is what Tiffany sees:

> [Miss Level] held up the shamble. There were sequins, and a fresh egg in a little bag made of thread, and a chicken bone and many other things hanging or spinning in the threads.
>
> Each part of Miss Level put both its hands into the threads and pulled…
>
> The threads took up a pattern. Did the sequins jump from one thread to another? It looked like it. Did the chicken bone pass *through* the egg? So it seemed. (124)

There is a non-linearity to the shamble. The sequins and the chicken bone seem to move in impossible ways. Since the shamble is meant to make "a picture of the here and now," it makes sense that there is a simultaneity in how the shamble interacts with space, with two objects occupying the same space at once. Since so much can happen all at once in one moment, the shamble needs to reflect that multiplicity.

Teaching Tiffany how to use a shamble is particularly challenging. With no rules to learn and then grow out of, all Tiffany can do is keep practicing. It's frustrating that "Miss Level could throw a shamble together in seconds, but Tiffany just got a tangle, dripping with egg. Over and over again." All Miss Level can tell her is that "One day, it'll come. The power does come, you know" (121). There is no linear path to mastering the shamble, and Tiffany can't think her way around the problems she is having with getting the hang of it. She has to keep practicing and hope that "one day, it'll come."

Tiffany and the Hiver

As Tiffany works to learn more about witching, she makes herself vulnerable to a creature called the hiver. The hiver is drawn to her because of her sharp multiplicity, and Tiffany's experience with the hiver ultimately reveals the nature of the human self as embodied, and the nature of *her* self as belonging both to being a witch and to the Chalk, not one or the other.

Defining the Hiver

The definition of a hiver is somewhat slippery as very little is known about it at the beginning of the book. It is, in essence, a parasite; it latches onto a body in order to survive, making it more powerful in the process, but ultimately ends up killing its host. A definitional entry is supplied in the text in order to help render a preliminary understanding of what exactly a hiver is:

> Hivers were formed in the first seconds of Creation. They are not alive but they have, as it were, the shape of life. They have no body, brain, or thoughts of their own…Yet a hiver does have the ability to fear and to crave. We cannot guess what frightens a hiver, but they seem to take refuge in bodies that have power of some sort. (94)

According to this, the "being" of a hiver seems to be barely there. It is clearly not a thinking thing; it is also not an embodied thing, as it has no body. All that is known about it is that it "takes refuge in bodies," possessing it, so to speak, either out of fear or desire for power. It has no self, and cannot really be described as anything else but a *thing* of some sort looking for something or someone strong to possess.

The Hiver Inhabits Tiffany: Studying Tiffany's Self

Tiffany is not careful when she performs the "see me" trick, and it is her multiplicitous self, and her failure to guard it, that attracts the hiver. The first time she does the trick, the hiver reacts: "*Such a strange mind, like a lot of minds inside one another, getting smaller and smaller! So strong! So close!"* (16). The hiver senses her multiplicity, the layers of existence in her mind and experience. It sees this as "strong," a compatible organism for it to attach to. The next time Tiffany performs the trick, the hiver finds her and takes her over.

When the hiver takes over Tiffany, it doesn't oust her personality and assert its own—it has no mind, no personality, and so possession of Tiffany is more complicated. This is described at the beginning of Chapter 7:

> Something that called itself Tiffany flew across the treetops.
> It thought it was Tiffany. It could remember everything--nearly everything--about being Tiffany. It looked like Tiffany. It even thought like Tiffany, more or less. It had everything it needed to be Tiffany…
> …except Tiffany. Except the tiny part of her that was…her.
> It peered from her own eyes, tried to hear with her own ears, think with her own brain. (176)

The hiver inhabits Tiffany, not like how a ghost possesses a person in a horror story, but in a more subtle way. It can think like Tiffany, at least "more or less." It even thinks it *is* Tiffany, but it is lacking "the tiny part of her that was…her." So what is this missing piece? Continuing from the above quote:

> A hiver took over its victim not by force, exactly, but simply by moving into any space, like the hermit elephant. It just took you over because that was what it did, until it was in all the places and there was no room left…
> …except…
> …it was having trouble. It had flowered through her like a dark tide but there was a place, tight and sealed, that was still closed. (177)

The part of Tiffany that is her, her *self,* has not been beaten by the hiver yet. This part of Tiffany is sealed away from the hiver, and we learn by watching the hiver control Tiffany exactly what it is that it cannot access: the hiver cannot replicate Tiffany's multiplicitous self and its contradictions; nor does it have or understand the concept of an embodied self, which Tiffany ultimately uses to her advantage.

When the hiver controls Tiffany, we see her personality change from uneasy, conflicted, and multiplicitous to something more like the opposite. The hiver leans into Tiffany as a witch, and discards the Tiffany of the Chalk. We can track this change by looking at how Tiffany's attitudes change, particularly towards her clothes and her dairy profession.

At the very beginning of the novel, as Tiffany prepared to leave the Chalk, she described how she didn't approve of her shiny new boots. She thought that

> The new boots were all wrong. They were stiff and shiny. Shiny boots! That was disgraceful. Clean boots, that was different. There was nothing wrong with putting a bit of a polish on boots to keep the wet out. But boots had to work for a living. They shouldn't shine. (15)

Tiffany is used to a life of working and of practicality, and these shiny new boots did nothing but look good. They weren't practical at all, and so she ends up switching them out for her old ones as soon as she can (26). Her staple outfit is a green or blue dress and her worn but dependable boots. But when the hiver takes over, this part of Tiffany disappears. She, or at least, the hiver version of her, begins to value presentation over substance, and practicality falls to the wayside:

> The green dress was rumpled, and really it needed a wash. She had her old blue one in the chest of drawers, but somehow it didn't seem right to wear it now. She'd have to make do with the green until she could get another one. She went to put on her boots, then stopped and stared at them. They just wouldn't do, not now. She got the new shiny ones out of her case and wore them instead. (155)

The hiver then goes out shopping for more clothes, and decides to buy a hat, since all witches have one. This version of Tiffany thinks, "if you were going to be a witch, you had to start by looking like one" (203). When the hiver controls Tiffany, she becomes preoccupied with the idea of 'looking the part' of a witch, trading in her trusty boots for shiny ones, her favorite green and blue dresses for a black one, and a flashy and showy witch's hat. The real Tiffany is modest, and knows that being a good witch means doing thankless work and flying under the radar (though she resents it sometimes). Tiffany knows, despite her insecurities, that being a witch is something that you *are,* not something that you dress like. The hiver, on the other hand, thinks that being a witch is all in the performance, and about how one *seems*. This Tiffany is proud and arrogant, and wants to be respected to the point of fear. The hiver's version of Tiffany rejects her connections to the Chalk, and the values of dependability, practicality, and simplicity that she learned there. Unable to hold both Tiffany's expectations of herself as a witch and her

understanding of herself as belonging to the Chalk, the hiver flattens Tiffany into a singularity rather than a multiplicity. Her multiplicity, then, is locked away in the part of her that the hiver cannot access.

The hiver cannot preserve Tiffany's multiplicity, nor, as it turns out, can it retain her skillful coping, particularly when it comes to her skills from the Chalk. The hiver's Tiffany rails against Tiffany's reputation as "good with cheese," and in the middle of her internal tirade she forgets what a cheese cutter is. The word is supplied to her by the real Tiffany, the Tiffany trapped inside, in the following passage:

> She slammed the door, went back to the dairy, and stared at the bowls of milk and curds as if she was seeing them for the first time. Good with Cheese. That was one of the things everyone remembered about her: Tiffany Aching, brown hair, Good with Cheese. But now the dairy looked all wrong and unfamiliar. She gritted her teeth. Good with Cheese. Was that really what she wanted to be? Of all the things people could be in the world, did she want to be known just as a dependable person to have around rotted milk? Did she really want to spend all day scrubbing slabs and washing pails and plates and…and…and that weird wire thing just there, that—
> …cheese cutter…
> —that cheese cutter? Did she want her whole life to—
> Hold on…
> "Who's there?" said Tiffany. "Did someone just say 'cheese cutter'?" (159-160)

In this passage, some of Tiffany's know-how actually disappears. The hiver cannot jump between worlds, and so Tiffany's knowledge of dairy becomes unreachable to it. The hiver can't identify the cheese cutter, something that Tiffany has been a master of for years. The dairy seems "wrong and unfamiliar," where it should be something that Tiffany immediately and innately understands. Her skill as a dairy farmer and cheese-maker is made opaque to the hiver.

Pushing this further, it turns out that skillful coping is inaccessible to the hiver, and this is how Tiffany's trapped self manages to assert itself. Tiffany attempts to act against the hiver and control her body again, only able to subvert the hiver through non-thinking physical acts.

The little part of her that is still *her* is fighting, but because she no longer has access to her mind, she uses her body to fight back. When the hiver tries to hit one of the goats with a broom, the hiver is unsure how it is that "somehow, the stick had twisted in her hand," preventing her from hitting the goat (157). This is the first instance of Tiffany's yet-unconquered self trying to assert itself and fight for control. Tiffany, the real Tiffany, would never hit the goat, and so she manages to prevent the hiver from doing so at the last possible moment, not allowing her arm to follow through with that action.

It isn't initially clear that this is Tiffany, but as she keeps acting out, it becomes clear that there is a part of Tiffany still in there, and that she is trying to communicate through non-thinking acts. In one instance, Tiffany tries to communicate by scrawling with chalk, and refusing to erase it:

> She looked down at the scrubbed wooden table.
>
> **HElp Me**
>
> Someone had written on the wood in chalk. And the piece of chalk was still in her hand— [...]
>
> Tiffany grabbed the pail, spat on her hand, and rubbed out the chalked ***HElp Me.***
>
> —*tried* to rub it out. But her hand gripped the edge of the table and held it firmly, no matter how much she pulled. She flailed with her left hand, managing to knock over a pail of milk, which washed across the letters…and her right hand let go suddenly. (158-159)

Here, the hiver and Tiffany fight for control. The hiver is thinking, but Tiffany is *acting*, taking control of one of her hands for a moment to try to write an SOS message. The hiver's thinking is detached and rational, but Tiffany operates outside of the detached in the realm of the embodied, acting without the hiver noticing.

Tiffany continues to fight against the hiver when the hiver runs away on a broomstick, refusing to lift her foot from the ground (166). Tiffany's fairy friends, the Nac Mac Feegle[8], see this moment and realize that there's still hope for her. They have been watching the hiver approach Tiffany for a while, unable to stop it and unaware if it had caught her. The Feegles, little blue men with Scottish accents, want to do whatever they can to help Tiffany, whom they affectionately call "our hag," meaning "our witch" in the Feegle language. They comment:

> "*Ach, we're too late, Rob. That wuz the hiver, that wuz."*
> *"Aye, but did ye see that foot? It's nae won yet--oour hag's in there somewhere! She's fighting it! It cannae win until it's taken the last scrap o' her!"* (167)

They determine that Tiffany must still be in there somewhere, on account of her stubborn foot which refused to mount the broom. They assert that the hiver doesn't have full control, and so there's still time to rescue Tiffany from it. The Feegles see that, since Tiffany can still assert some control through embodied acts, there must be a part of her still safe.

In order to rescue Tiffany from the hiver, the Nac Mac Feegle decide to enter her mind. Though it is easy to forget it on account of their fighting and swearing, the Nac Mac Feegle are magical beings, and they can travel across worlds. This is described by witch Miss Tick in her book *Fairies and How to Avoid Them*:

> No one knows exactly how the Nac Mac Feegle step from one world to another. Those who have seen Feegles actually travel this way say that they apparently throw back their shoulders and thrust out one leg straight ahead of them. Then they wiggle their foot and are gone. This is known as "the crawstep," and the only comment on the subject by a Feegle is "It's all in the ankle movement, ye ken." They appear to be able to travel magically between worlds of all kinds but not within a world. For this purpose, they assure people, they have "feets." (211)

[8] Feegles as described by Miss Tick: "The average Feegle man [...] is about six inches high, red haired, his skin turned blue with tattoos and the dye called woad, and, since you're this close, he's probably about to hit you" (9).

The process of world-crossing is an embodied one, even for fairies. World-crossing is not a purely mental or intellectual movement, but a fully immersed experience moving between worlds. The Nac Mac Feegle's world-crossing is especially physical: with the twist of an ankle, the Feegles enter Tiffany's mind.

The Selfscape and Confronting the Hiver

Tiffany's mind as an ecological setting reveals both her multiplicity and her struggle against the hiver. This landscape is more connected to Tiffany's self than it is to her brain; since "mind" is such a philosophically charged term, I've decided to call this setting Tiffany's Selfscape. When the Feegles first enter the Selfscape, this is what they see:

> The sky was black, even though the sun was high. It hung at just past noon, lighting the landscape as brilliantly as a hot summer day, but the sky was midnight black, shorn of stars.
>
> This was the landscape of Tiffany Aching's mind.
>
> The Feegles looked around them. There seemed to be downland underfoot, rolling and green.
>
> "She tells the land what it is. The land tells her who she is," whispered Awf'ly Wee Billy. "She really does hold the soul o' the land in her heid.…"
>
> "Aye, so 'tis," muttered Rob Anybody. "But there's nae creatures, ye ken. Nae ships [sheep]. Nae burdies [birds]."
>
> "Mebbe…mebbe somethin's scared them awa'?" said Daft Wullie.
>
> There was, indeed, no life. Stillness and silence ruled here. In fact Tiffany, who cared a lot about getting words right, would have said it was a hush, which is not the same as silence. A hush is what you get in cathedrals at midnight. (212-213)

In Tiffany's Selfscape, the Chalk is a core part of who she is. It is not a perfect replica of the Chalk, as the sky is "midnight black, shorn of stars," (incidentally, the color of witchcraft), and there are none of the usual creatures there adding their sounds to the landscape. The Feegles notice another difference between the Selfscape and the Chalk they are familiar with in that the Horse, the chalk carving on the hills, is in the wrong place and is raised instead of carved (213).

Tiffany's Selfscape, then, is highly influenced by the Chalk hills, but is not a reproduction of it. Rather than being realistic, the Selfscape employs the surreal, more like the shadows on the wall of Plato's Cave than the objects casting them. Of course, for Plato, the shadows are the illusion; in Tiffany's Selfscape, there is no guarantee that this is any less real than the world outside.

As they move forward in the Selfscape, the Feegles realize how hard Tiffany is fighting against the hiver. One Feegle, Awf'ly Wee Billy[9] the gonnagle (a poet or bard in Feegle society), says:

> "I'll tell ye I think she's hidin' somewhere close, like a hunted creature, Mr. Rob. This is a wee bit o' her memory, the place o' her granny, the place where she's always felt safe. I'll tell ye I think that we're in the soul and center o' her. The bit o' her that is her. And I'm frightened for her. Frightened to mah boots."
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Because I've been watchin' the shadows, Mr. Rob," said Billy. "The sun is movin'. It's slippin' doon the sky."
>
> "Aye, weel, that's whut the sun does—" Rob began.
>
> Billy shook his head. "*Nay*, Mr. Rob. Ye dinna understand! I'm tellin' ye that's no' the sun o' the big wide world. That's the sun o' the soul o' her."
>
> The Feegles looked at the sun, and at the shadows, then back at Billy. He'd stuck his chin out bravely, but he was trembling.
>
> "She'll die when night comes?" Rob said.
>
> "There's worser things than death, Mr. Rob. The hiver will have her, head tae toe…" (215).

Billy realizes that they are in "the soul and center" of Tiffany. The Chalk represents her actual self, and the sun is setting in her world. As the sun goes down, the strength of Tiffany's self diminishes. He asserts that "the hiver will have her," all of her, once the sun is gone. Her multiplicitous selfhood is at stake, and if the hiver wins, Tiffany's complex self disappears. The Feegles then plan to lure the hiver to Tiffany's Selfscape, so that she and they may fight it on home turf, literally her own ground.

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[9] Sometimes spelled "Billie"

In order to get the hiver to Tiffany's Selfscape, they need to help Tiffany strengthen her multiplicitous self, remind her body and the hiver of who she is. The Feegles are able to communicate with Tiffany inside her Selfscape, and are recruited to steal sheep's wool, turpentine, and jolly sailor tobacco, all things that Tiffany associates with the smell of home on the Chalk. They bring these things to her unconscious body, noting that "the nose disna sleep" (231) and hoping that the smells would be stronger than the hiver, and force the hiver to go to Tiffany's Selfscape, where they could fight it. Sure enough,

> Tiffany's nose twitched.
> The nose is a big thinker. It's good at memory—very good. So good that a smell can take you back in memory so hard that it hurts. The brain can't stop it. The brain has nothing to do with it. The hiver could control brains, but it couldn't control a stomach that threw up when it was flown on a broomstick. And it was *useless* at noses… (231)

Embodied consciousness prevails as the hiver fails to control the body. The smell of Tiffany's comfort place can't be stopped by the hiver, which "could control brains," but was "useless at noses." Rationality and the mind may be within the scope of the hiver, but controlling an embodied response to the smell of memories was beyond its capacity.

With the hiver delivered to the Selfscape, the Feegles prepare to fight. The first few moments that the hiver spends in Tiffany's Selfscape demonstrate how, though it tries to be Tiffany, it is lacking her multiplicity united under one self. It refers to itself in the plural, saying "We are you. We think like you. We're better at thinking like you than you are" (233). The hiver is not an "I." It does not know how to make sense of and unite a plurality of experiences into one self. It betrays itself by being unable to use the first person singular. It has been so many things: different animals, different people. Unlike Tiffany, it doesn't know how to make sense of multiplicity.

And it is Tiffany's multiplicity, her attachment to multiple worlds, which ultimately saves her in her Selfscape. She literally embodies the Chalk hills and scares the hiver away:

> The land…rose.
>
> Rolling down the shifting slope, the Feegles saw the hills climbing toward the sky. What was there, what had always been there, became more plain.
>
> Rising into the dark sky was a head, shoulders, a chest. Someone who had been lying down, growing turf, their arms and legs the hills and valleys of the downland, was sitting up. They moved with great stony slowness, millions of tons of hill shifting and creaking around them. What had looked like two long mounds in the shape of a cross became giant green arms, unfolding.
>
> A hand with fingers longer than houses reached down, picked up the hiver, and lifted it up into the air. [...]
>
> "She tells the land whut it is, and it tells her who she is," said Awf'ly Wee Billy, tears running down his face. "I canna write a song aboot this! I'm nae good enough!"
>
> "Is that the big wee hag dreamin' she's the hills or the hills dreamin' they're the big wee hag?" said Daft Wullie.
>
> "Both, mebbe," said Rob Anybody.
>
> They watched the huge hand close and winced. (233-234)

Tiffany's magic and strength of self manifests as she *becomes* the Chalk. The differences that the Feegles saw in the land earlier reveal themselves to have been Tiffany all along. The shape of the hills turned out to be her arms. Though not explicitly mentioned, The Horse, which the Feegles noticed was raised instead of carved, must be the silver one that Tiffany wears around her neck. A parting gift she received when she left the Chalk, the Horse is a piece of home that Tiffany always has with her. In a moment of magical immersion and absorption in the world, Tiffany *is* the land and the land *is* Tiffany. They are transparent to one another, becoming one fluid, flowing thing. All this time, when Tiffany said that the Chalk told her who she was, she didn't just mean it metaphorically. The Chalk is built into who she is, and who she is defines the Chalk, too.

Daft Wullie asks if Tiffany is "dreamin' she's the hills" or if the Chalk hills are dreaming that they are Tiffany. His words echo a similar philosophical question asked by Daoist Zhuangzi in his famous butterfly dream, where a man dreams he is a butterfly but then wakes up and

wonders if he is a man who dreamt of being a butterfly, or a butterfly now dreaming that he is a man (Möeller 439). Zhuangzi blurs the line between reality and dreams, sleeping and waking worlds; similarly, Daft Wullie's question and Rob's answer ("Both, mebbe,") eliminates the border between the subject and the object, creating a space where everything is everything.

Though Tiffany scares the hiver away in her Selfscape, it is her final confrontation with the hiver that demonstrates her witch's multiplicity the most. As the hiver approaches her, Mistress Weatherwax asks Tiffany, "Now, then…do you have it in you to be a witch by noon-light, far away from your hills?" (295). It is time for Tiffany to find out if she can unite her identities. She starts to make a shamble, using her Feegle friend Rob Anybody as her living component despite never having successfully made a shamble before, and finally reconciles the Chalk with the witch:

> She'd used the things she'd had, so that was right. Calm down. Slow down. Look at the shamble. Think about the moment. There were all the things from home…
>
> No. Not all the things. Not all the things at all. This time she felt the shape of what wasn't there—
>
> —and tugged at the silver Horse around her neck, breaking its chain, then hanging it in the threads.
>
> Suddenly her thoughts were as cool and clear as ice, as bright and shiny as they needed to be. Let's see…that looks better there…and that needs to be pulled *this* way…
>
> The movement jerked the silver Horse into life. Then it spun gently, passing through the threads *and* Rob Anybody, who said "Didna hurt a bit! Keep goin'!"
>
> Tiffany felt a tingle in her feet. The Horse gleamed as it turned.
>
> "I dinna want to hurry ye!" said Rob Anybody. "But hurry!"
>
> I'm far from home, thought Tiffany, in the same clear way, but I have it in my eye. Now I open my eyes. Now I open my eyes again—
>
> Ahh…
>
> *Can I be a witch away from my hills? Of course I can. I never really leave you, Land Under Wave*….(298)

Tiffany "felt the shape of what wasn't there," and what was missing was the Chalk Horse, the most important thing from home. Once she put the Horse in, she could intuit how she needed to

move the pieces of the shamble, successfully activating the shamble's multiplicity as the Horse "passed through the threads *and* Rob," filling the moment. Tiffany realizes that the Chalk is always with her, even if she isn't there. The italicized portion, presumably Tiffany's thoughts, says, "I never really leave you, Land Under Wave." Land Under Wave is what Tiffany's name sounds like in the old language of the Nac Mac Feegle (65), and the Chalk is the land that was once underwater, with fossils still studded throughout the landscape. Thus, the phrase "Land Under Wave" can mean Tiffany, or it can mean the land of the Chalk. The line can be interpreted as Tiffany saying she never leaves the Chalk, or as the Chalk saying it never leaves Tiffany. Rather than determine which, I think it's reasonable to apply Rob Anybody's response, and say that it might be both.

With her shamble assembled, Tiffany is able to catch the hiver and communicate with it. She learns that the hiver, working with the memory of being Tiffany, has realized that it has caused many problems, and wants to undo the damage. The hiver asks Tiffany to help it die:

> *Teach us the way to die*, said the voices of the hiver.
> "I don't know it!"
> *All humans know the way*, said the voices of the hiver. *You walk it every day of your short, short lives. You know it. We envy you your knowledge. You know how to end. You are very talented.* (301)

Humans die. Tiffany and the hiver both know this. But people don't consider death something they "know" how to do. It just happens. The brainless hiver just knows how to drift through space, and the hiver when it possesses a body only knows how to work with brains. Death isn't something the hiver understands, and so it is up to Tiffany to help it.

Tiffany needs to show the hiver the way to death, and learns in the process that magic is all about balancing on an edge, between the real and the unreal. Her multiplicity, particularly the

capacity to have "alternative visions," is what makes the magic possible. A hiver does not die, but Tiffany must imagine and realize a way for it to do what cannot be done. And, she must find a way to see death without dying herself. These are untrodden paths, ones which Tiffany must pave as she walks them. This is how it unfolds:

> Death is right behind us, she thought. Life ends, and there's death, waiting. So…it must be close. Very close.
>
> It would be…a door. Yes. An old door, old wood. Dark, too.
>
> She turned. Behind her, there was a black door in the air.
>
> The hinges would creak, she thought.
>
> When she pushed it open, they did.
>
> So-oo…she thought, this isn't exactly *real*. I'm telling myself a story I can understand, about doors, and I'm fooling myself just enough for it all to work. I just have to keep balanced on that edge for it to go on working, too. (302-303)

Tiffany is standing on the edge of metaphor, speaking her imagination into existence. She imagines what the door to death would look like, and it appears. She is "fooling [herself] just enough," simultaneously holding the literal and the literary in her head, knowing that what she is doing is unreal but still letting it happen.

Endings and Beginnings

The multiplicitous self has the power to imagine new possibilities, and Tiffany creates those possibilities. Tiffany's ability to exist in multiple worlds allows her to open the door to the next one, bringing the hiver to death. Tiffany and the witches around her are made of multiplicity, and this is part of their magic. Everything from a shamble to confronting an impossible creature depends upon the witch's nature as multiplicitous. A witch must be able to see all the strings, let the chicken bone pass *through* the egg, and hold the moment together. Even more importantly, a witch must be able to see the possibilities, explore "alternative visions," and dangle on the precipice of reality in order to reach those in need.

Conclusion

I regard this project as an act of tangling, taking philosophy and children's literature and tying them so tightly together that they cannot be separated again. Phenomenology ("to appear") and fantasy ("to make visible") had to be thrown together, and the result is a knotted web of associations between the two, and a visibility lent to each that I hadn't anticipated. Pratchett cannot be read without thinking of Ortega; and philosophy itself, recognized so often as a purely academic discipline, casts off the dusty drapes of Descartes and forms into a window, showing us a vision of life we hadn't expected, and at the same time projecting our hazy reflection. Phenomenology and children's literature together provide a new vocabulary to think about everything differently—a vocabulary somewhere between the literal and the literary, balancing on the edge.

Reflecting on Mistress Weatherwax's tough exterior, Tiffany Aching comments, "the edge is no place for people who break" (Pratchett 324). And yet, that is where the children are. The edge of human, the edge of reality, the edge of possibility—this is the child's playground. Irrationality, non-linearity, and plurality make up the ever-shifting ground upon which the child stands.

Seeing the between-space of the child required moving beyond the edge of philosophy and past the edge of literature. This endeavor was a multiplicitous one, filled with fertile unease and character-building disorientation. Ultimately, though, across the worlds of philosophy and literature, I was presented with an alternative vision, the kind Ortega helped me believe I would find. This project presented a new way of recategorizing and understanding children's literature

through phenomenological research, and understanding varieties of human experience through phenomenology to enrich our view by letting children show the way. It took multiplicity to show multiplicity, and the impacts of this research are scattered across the worlds that it has inhabited.

There is, still, so much left unsaid. I would have loved to give an account of disability and children's literature, to wander in and out of dreams, and to explore the Child Wanderer, who finds their way out of one world and into another by following their boredom and letting it transform into wonder. But worlds-traveling takes time, and though I feel that I occupied all these worlds during my research, not everything made it back to this project. It will be up to someone else to continue what I have started.

And what have I started? My research has created a new lens through which we can read children in children's literature, and it has given phenomenology a chance to expand its understanding. And while I'm glad of that, I think that this project has set other wheels in motion. In the spring of 2023, I had the opportunity to attend a talk by author Neil Gaiman at Bard College about the importance of stories and how writers craft them. I asked him what the difference was between children's literature and literature for grown-ups, as he's written both. He talked about his experience of writing the book *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, and said he came to the conclusion that "the difference between children's literature and adult literature is that children's literature needs to offer hope. Children's literature, by its very nature, needs to be hopeful—*doesn't mean it can't be sad*—but it needs to give hope."

Philosophy does not have a reputation for inspiring hope. But children's literature *must*. It is my hope that beyond the applications in the fields of literary study and philosophy, this project takes a step in the direction of making the world a better place by understanding it as

multiplicitous and complex, and truly investing in the idea that the children *are* our future, and our present, and our past. And the life of the child is characterized by its stories.

This may be my most impossible belief yet, but I think that the importance of stories, particularly children's stories, is not to be discounted. After all, as Mistress Weatherwax said, "It's all stories, really. The sun coming up every day is a story. Everything's got a story in it. Change the story, change the world."

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